

## The Lettuce and the Oak.

B. S. TAYLOR.

SOME lettuce, and, near by,  
Some acorns, planted I.

Quite soon the lettuce leaves were seen,  
All tender, large, and lightly green

As yet no oak 'bove ground appeared,  
A failure these, I thought and feared.

I cleared the surface dirt away,  
And there the lazy acorn lay.

Not idle he, but deep and long  
He rooted, wide and firm and strong.

At last a stub of oak was seen,  
Quite small beside the flaunting green.

The lettuce planned for only hours;  
The oak for years, and lasting powers.

The lettuce, for only summer tears;  
The oak, for storms of a hundred years.

The lettuce lay as the breeze went past,  
The oak bowed not before the blast.

The lettuce withered, ripe and dead,  
While the oak was in his cradle bed.

Above the oak the pigweeds grew,  
Concealed and hid him quite from view.

In calm content he bode his lot—  
"My time will come when these are not."

Of their quick growth he had no fears,  
For he was sure of the hundred years.

Lay your foundations deep and wide,  
If great and strong you would abide.

Nor mourn if earth gives not award  
Within the eternal ages stored.

## LESSON NOTES.

## SECOND QUARTER.

## STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A.D. 44.] LESSON VIII. [May 20.

## HEROD AND PETER.

Acts 12. 1-17. Commit to memory verses 5-8.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round  
about them that fear him.—Psa. 34. 7.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

Earnest prayer is always answered, but  
often in unexpected ways.

TIME.—A.D. 44. In the Spring. The  
Passover that year was April 1.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. The tower of Antonia,  
and the house of Mary, mother of Mark.

PAUL, aged 42. On his way to Jerusalem,  
to bring alms from Antioch.

THE FAMINE on the increase, continuing  
till 45.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—From the description of  
the progress of the church, we now turn to  
some of the dangers assailing her.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *About that time*—That Saul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem from Antioch with alms. Herod—Agrippa, king of most of Palestine. His full kingdom lasted only three years. 2. *James—Son of Zebedee*. 4. *In prison*—Probably in the tower of Antonia, adjoining the temple area. *Quaternions*—Bands of four. *Easter*—The Passover, called days of unleavened bread, because no leaven was allowed in their houses. 6. *Bound with two chains*—Each hand bound to a soldier. 7. *Behold the angel*—This must have occurred between 3 and 6 o'clock in the morning (see v. 18), and the sound of changing the guard. 10. *First and second ward*—i.e., Guards, the guards who were sleeping with him, the outer guards. 13. *Rhoda*—Our Boon. *Came to hearken*—They always ask "who is there" before opening the gate. 15. *It is his angel*—His guardian angel (Matt. 18 10), whom they thought had come in his form. 16. *They were astonished*—Not at the fact that their prayers were answered, but at the strange and wonderful way. 17. *D. parted*—It was not safe for him to remain where was a well-known resort of the disciples.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Herod—James—Peter.—The prayer of the church.—The sleep of Peter.—Ministering angels.—Peter's escape.—House of Mary, the mother of Mark.—Why the disciples were astonished.—Answers to prayer.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—To what place does the scene of our lessons now change? Where was Paul? How old was he? What trouble was upon all Judaea at this time?

## SUBJECT: PRAYER FOR HELP ANSWERED.

1. THE NEED OF PRAYER (vs. 1-4).—About what time? What season of the year was it? Who was this Herod? Meaning of *rhoda* here? Give some account of this James? Why did not God deliver him and Stephen as well as Peter? Why did Herod enter on this persecution? What did he do to Peter? How was he guarded? What is a *quaternion*? Meaning of "*bring him forth*"? Why were these persecutions a great affliction to the church?

2. THE PRAYER (vs. 5, 12).—Who prayed for Peter? Could they do anything but pray? What good could prayer do? What qualities do you find in their prayers? For what did they pray? Where were the people assembled for prayer? How can we pray "without ceasing"? What promises has God made to prayer? (Matt. 7. 7-11; Mark 11. 23, 24; John 14. 13.)

3. THE ANSWER TO PRAYER (vs. 6-17).—How long did they pray without any apparent answer? What was Peter doing on the last night? How could he sleep so near his execution? (Psalms 3. 5; 4. 8.) How was the prayer answered? At what time did the angel come? Are angels around us to help us? (Heb. 1. 14.) What comfort and strength in this fact? What did the angel do to Peter? Where did Peter go after he was released? Who came to the door? What did she do? Was her report believed? What did they think it was? What did they mean by *his angel*? When they saw him how did they feel? Did this astonishment show that they had not expected an answer to their prayers, or only that the answer came in an unexpected way? Where did Peter go? What became of Herod after this? (Acts 12. 19-23.) How does this show to whom the ministry of angels is a comfort, and to whom not?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Good men sometimes suffer, but God overrules it for good to all
2. Bad men care more to please men than God.
3. The refuge of the Christian in trouble is prayer.
4. Prayer should be as here: (1) earnest; (2) unceasing; (3) united; (4) believing; (5) for a definite object.
5. God sometimes delays the answer, but never fails to answer.
6. Prayer is answered in unexpected ways.
7. The angels are ministering spirits around God's people.

## REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert).

18. What trouble now came upon the church? Ans. Herod beheaded James the brother of John? 19. What more did Herod do? Ans. He put Peter in prison. 20. What did the church do? Ans. They prayed without ceasing for him. 21. How was their prayer answered? Ans. An angel was sent to release him.

A.D. 45-48.] LESSON IX. [May 27.

## PAUL AND BARNABAS IN CYPRUS.

Acts 13. 1-12. Commit to memory verses 2-4.

## GOLDEN TEXT.

Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.—Acts 13. 2.

## CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should labour to bring all the world to Christ.

TIME.—Between A.D. 45-48. The first missionary journey was probably in 47 or 48.

PLACE.—Antioch, and the island of Cyprus. PAUL, aged 46. Starting out on his first missionary journey, from Antioch.

RULERS.—Claudius Caesar, emperor of Rome. Cumanus, governor of Judea. Ananias, high priest.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—With chapter 13 begins the second part of the Acts, the history of the first missionary work. Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, where they remained preaching for some two years, A.D. 45-47, till sent out as missionaries to the heathen.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—1. *Prophets*—Those specially inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Teachers.—Pastors doing the regular work of training and instructing the converts. *Prophet*—Black. *Cyprus*—On the coast of Africa, west of Egypt, corresponding to modern Cyprus. 2. *As they ministered*—In public worship, probably in some meeting appointed to know God's will as to missionary work. *The Holy Ghost said*—Perhaps by one of the prophets, or by a general influence on all. 4. *Sebauc*—The port of Antioch, 16 miles distant. *Cyprus*—An island in the Mediterranean, 150 miles long by 50 wide. 5. *Salamis*—One of the chief cities. It was on the east end of the island, nearest Antioch. 6. *Paphos*—The large city at the other end, 100 miles from Salamis. *Sorcerer*—Magician. *A false prophet*—Speaking false things, and from a false motive,—his own gain. 11. *Thou shalt be blind*—A type of the blindness of his soul. Note this was not cruel, for (1) it was brief; (2) it was to save the souls of men; (3) it was also a warning to Elymas, that he might repent, as Paul did in his three days' blindness.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Prophets and teachers.—Ministering to the Lord.—The Holy Ghost said—Why they fasted.—The reason for foreign missions.—Cyprus—Elymas—Magicians.—The evil influences around Sergius.—The good influences.—The object of Paul's miracle.

## QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What change in the Acts begins with this chapter? How much time intervenes between this and the last? Where were Paul and Barnabas during this time?

## SUBJECT: ALL THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

1. THE GOSPEL FOR THE HEATHEN,—THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL (vs. 1-5).—Who were the leading preachers at Antioch? Give some account of each? What is the difference between prophets and teachers? Meaning of *ministered to the Lord*? Why did they fast? Were they seeking any special object? Did they take the wise way to learn God's will? How was that will revealed to them? How does the Holy Ghost speak to us? What was the work to which God had called some? How do we know to what work God has called us? Why were the best men sent as foreign missionaries? Should they not have waited till all at Antioch were converted? Why should we be interested in foreign missions? Was there any resemblance between the circumstances in those days and in ours, as to foreign missions? Where did Paul and Barnabas go? Describe these places? How were these missionaries sustained by the church at home?

2. A CONTENT FOR A SOUL (vs. 6-12).—Who was governor of Cyprus? What kind of a man was he? Who was leading him astray? Meaning of his two names? What is a magician? What is a *false prophet*? What was his character as described by Paul? What evil was he doing? Why did he oppose the Gospel? How did the governor show his prudence in sending for Paul? What would the Gospel of Paul do for him? Give the contrast between the work and character of Paul, and of Elymas? How did Paul overcome the magician? Was this blindness a punishment? Was it also to lead him to repentance? What experience had Paul had from blindness? What other good followed from this affliction? Why did the governor believe? What did he believe? Was it reasonable for him to believe?

## PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. In ministering to the Lord we learn the Lord's will for us.
2. The Holy Spirit will guide us as freely as he guided the early church.
3. It is our duty to send the Gospel to all the world.
4. We should find out the work to which God has called us.
5. If we cannot be missionaries, we should be their helpers.
6. Good and evil influences are drawing us different ways.
7. Wisdom and intelligence lead us to believe in Christ.

## REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in Concert).

1. What new era was now begun? Ans. The era of foreign missions. 2. Who were the first missionaries to the heathen? Ans. Paul and Barnabas. 3. Where did they first go? Ans. To the Island of Cyprus. 4. Who opposed them here? Ans. Elymas, the Magician. 5. What befell him? Ans. He was struck blind for a season. 6. What was the effect? Ans. The governor was converted to Christ.

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