



LESSON,—SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 1909.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey—The Riot at Ephesus.

Acts xix., 25-30, 35-41. Memory verses, 26. Read Acts xix., 23; xx., 1.

Golden Text.

He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.—II. Cor. xii., 9.

Home Readings.

- Monday, August 16.—Acts xix., 23-31.
- Tuesday, August 17.—Acts xix., 32; xx., 1.
- Wednesday, August 18.—Isa. lxiv., 9-19.
- Thursday, August 19.—Psalm cxv.
- Friday, August 20.—I. Cor., xvi., 1-9.
- Saturday, August 21.—Eph. ii., 11-22.
- Sunday, August 22.—Eph. vi., 10-20.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Does any one remember the name of the city where Paul was working in our lesson last Sunday? It was Ephesus, a great and important city, and, as the last verse in our lesson said, Paul was doing a great deal of good work there, for, mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed. What does 'prevail' mean? It means getting the victory in a struggle, doesn't it? Suppose Ted and Jack were to have a wrestling match and one got the other down on the floor so that he couldn't get up until he was allowed to, that one would have 'prevailed.' That verse we mentioned said 'the word of God . . . prevailed. What was the word of God struggling against? Against all the evil and misery and sin in that city. Are evil and misery and sin strong? Yes, indeed, and they fought and struggled so that at one time it looked as though they were going to get the victory after all. Now just as God used Paul and the other Christians to work for the good, so sin and evil had to work through men. You know Satan uses some people to work for him just as God uses others. Now in Ephesus there was a great big beautiful temple built to the goddess Diana, and people used to worship her there, coming from all over the world for that purpose. Then when they went back to their homes they wanted to take back with them what we call 'souvenirs' of the temple and the great goddess, and some of them wanted to take offerings of little silver things in to leave in the temple, so there were a great many men in Ephesus who made these little 'souvenirs' and offerings and got a good living by selling them. But by-and-by so many people became Christians that they found they were not selling nearly so many 'souvenirs' of the goddess as they used to do and so one man named Demetrius started a riot against Paul.

FOR THE SENIORS.

Following the events of last Sunday's lesson, in all probability Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians partly to tell them of his own intended visit as mentioned in verse 21, partly in sharp reproof for some evils which were being permitted in the church at Corinth under the name of 'liberty,' and to show them the folly of dividing the church over the claims of any leader, and partly to assure a fitting reception for Timothy his advance messenger (verse 22) and to avoid any delay or discussion over money matters when he should come. All this is evident from a glance over the chapters, and in the first few verses of the last chapter of the epistle, and is of interest as showing how full of plans and energy Paul was at this time in Ephesus. He, indeed, planned for a longer

stay in that city than he was permitted to make (I. Cor. xvi., 8), and in consequence of the riot of to-day's lesson he started earlier on his Macedonian trip. He seems to have been working not only in the city itself at this time, but also in outlying districts as Luke mentions 'Asia' (verse 22) rather than merely Ephesus as his field of work, and Demetrius in his attack on Paul, speaks to the same purpose (verse 26). The growth of the work was most encouraging to the apostle, that is evident from his own words (I. Cor. xvi., 9), and from the involuntary testimony given by Demetrius. Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen were touched in the most tender of all spots with them, the pocket. They would evidently have cared little who or what the Christians worshipped had they gone on obeying the shrines as usual, but they had the cunning to put before the people the plea that would excite. So, with the trouble at Philippi (Acts xvi., 19-22), and so in by far the greatest number of mob uprisings,—they are brought about by unscrupulous men or their own purposes under cover of some motive high in the esteem of the people, and, as in this case, very often the greater number in the crowd could give no real reason for the gathering. Paul was all eagerness to join his friends in their difficulty, but he was also amenable to reason, and the advice of Christian brethren and of heathen friends prevailed (verses 30, 31). The mob had to tire itself out before reason could have its way; then the foolish crowd were dismissed like children, but Demetrius and the others may have considered that their end was gained, for Paul found it wisest to withdraw. It was not Paul, however, but the truth against which they were arrayed, and that could never be conquered. Diana, 'whom all Asia, and the world worshipped,' claims now no votaries, and the religion of which Paul was the apostle is spreading its life-giving waters continually further over every land. A question arising from the lesson is—how far to-day do vested interests seek to block the true religion and its logical results? What about the liquor traffic in this connection?

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE'.)

Paul's Companions in Ephesus were Timothy, Titus (II. Cor. vii., 13, 14), Stephanas, Fortunatus, Apollos (I. Cor. xvi., 12, 17), Aquila, Priscilla, Chloe (I. Cor. i., 11), Gaius, Aristarchus, and Achaius.

The crowning glory of Ephesus was the great temple of Artemis or Diana, one of the seven great wonders of the world, whose magnificence has been a marvel ever since. It glittered in brilliant beauty at the head of the harbor, and it was said that the sun saw nothing in his course more magnificent than Diana's temple. Made of the purest marble, upon substantial foundations, which in that marshy ground were at once costly and essential, it confronted the mariner immediately at the landing place. It was four hundred and twenty-five feet long, and two hundred and twenty broad; its columns of Parian marble were sixty feet high, and thirty-six of them were magnificently carved. The porticoes in front and rear consisted each of thirty-two columns, eight abreast and four deep, and around the sides were two rows, the entire number of columns, one hundred and twenty-seven, being given each one by a king. The hall was adorned with the most wonderful statuary and paintings.—Lyman Abbot.

Verse 24. 'A certain man named Demetrius.' Probably the head of the whole guild of shrine makers. There has lately been discovered at Ephesus a stone, now in the British Museum, on which is engraved an inscription concerning a certain Demetrius belonging to about the same date as the events here described, A.D. 50-60, presumably an influential and wealthy man. Canon Hicks's Ancient Greek Inscriptions in the British Museum, vol. iii.

The shrines were often set up in their homes as objects of worship, and when carried about upon the person, were looked on as charms or amulets which had the power to avert diseases and other dangers from the bearers.—Professor Schaff. They were used as dedicatory offerings to the goddess, and placed in her temple, as now in many places in Europe such offerings are placed around the image of the Virgin Mary as thank offerings for favors, or peace offerings in hopes of answer

to petitions. They were purchased by pilgrims to the temple, just as rosaries and images of the Virgin are bought by pilgrims to Lourdes, or bronze models of Trajan's column or of the Colonne Vendome by tourists to Rome or Paris.—Prof. M. R. Vincent.

Verse 39. 'The regular assembly.' As M. Levy says, the Roman officials exercised the right themselves to summon a meeting of the Assembly whenever they pleased, and he also considers that distinct authorization by the Roman officials was required before an assembly could be legally summoned. Now, as we have already seen, the imperial government was very jealous of the right of popular assemblies. We may therefore conclude with confidence that the Roman officials were unlikely to give leave for any assembly beyond that certain regular number which was agreed upon and fixed beforehand. Thus the 'regular' assemblies had come to be practically equivalent to the 'lawful' assemblies; the extraordinary assemblies called by the officers of the city, which in the Greek period had been legal, were now disallowed and illegal, and extraordinary assemblies were now only summoned by Roman officials. It was, therefore, necessary for Demetrius to wait until the next regular assembly, before he could have any opportunity of legally bringing any business before the people.—W. M. Ramsay, in the 'Expositor.'

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, August 22.—Topic—Obedience to parents. Eph. vi., 1, 2.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, August 16.—Unanswered prayer. Deut. iii., 23-29.

Tuesday, August 17.—According to His will. John xiv., 13, 14; xv., 7, 16; xvi., 23-27; I. John v., 14.

Wednesday, August 18.—Christ's definite way. Mark ii., 20-26.

Thursday, August 19.—A powerful prayer. Jas. v., 13-18.

Friday, August 20.—When to pray. Eph. vi., 18; Heb. iv., 16.

Saturday, August 21.—A model prayer. Eph. iii., 14-19.

Sunday, August 22.—Topic—Two prayer lessons. Matt. vi., 5, 6; xviii., 19, 20.

Needed a Sense of Proportions

I remember once reading of a gift to the Lord's work placed on the collection plate at the Sabbath service. The incident ran something in this wise: The giver had slept upon a bed of ease in a home of comfort; he had partaken with a wholesome appetite of goodly food and he put a nickel on the collection plate.

He had been prospered in business during the week—yet he put a nickel on the plate.

He had enjoyed pleasures for which he had unhesitatingly paid a good fee—yet he put a nickel on the plate.

He had long professed his love for the Father of all, in whose name the offering had been asked—yet he dropped a nickel on the plate.

He had declared his belief in the great Creator by whose power the earth had been fashioned, who made the stars in order, and by whose immutable decree the heavens stand—and he dropped a nickel in to support the church militant. And what is the church militant? The church militant is the church that represents upon the earth the church triumphant of the great God, to whom the man gave the nickel.

And the man knowing this put his hand in his pocket and picked out the nickel and gave it to the Lord.

And the Lord being gracious and slow to anger, and knowing our frame, did not slay the man for the meanness of his offering, but gives him this day his daily bread.

But the nickel was ashamed, if the man wasn't.

The nickel hid beneath a quarter that was given by the poor woman who washes for a living.—'The Home Mission Monthly.'

If you can't help, don't hinder. If you can't smile, don't frown. There are plenty to scold, scowl and discourage.