



LESSON IX.—August 29.

Paul Opposed at Ephesus

Acts xix., 21-34.

Read Acts xviii., 18 to xx., 3. Commit verses 24-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'Take heed and beware of covetousness.'—Luke xii., 15.

Home Readings.

- M. Acts xix., 1-20. Paul preaching at Ephesus.
- T. Acts xix., 21-20. Paul opposed at Ephesus.
- W. I. Cor. xvi., 1-24. Paul's many adversaries at Ephesus.
- Th. II. Cor. i., 1-24. 'Trouble which came to us in Asia.'
- F. I. Tim. vi., 1-21. Love of money 'the root of all evil.'
- S. Isa. xlv., 9-20. The makers of idols are vanity.
- S. Luke xii., 13-36. 'Take heed, and beware of covetousness.'

Lesson Story.

Paul had been about three years in Ephesus, teaching and preaching daily, and probably making journeys out to the surrounding districts, for we are told that 'all they that dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul.'

Seeing these miracles, 'certain vagabond Jews, exorcists—probably sorcerers like Elymas, thought that they would do some of these wonderful works. By using the name of Jesus they expected to obtain the same results as Paul did. There were seven sons of Sceva, one of the chief priests, who attempted to cast out an evil spirit in this way, but the evil spirit cried out—'Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?' And the demon-possessed man, leaping upon them, drove them naked and wounded from the house.

This event caused no small stir amongst all those who dwelt in Ephesus, and they began to realize the power of the very name of Jesus Christ. Many believed, and confessing their evil deeds, gave up their wicked practices, and those who had used 'curious' or black arts, brought their books of necromancy, or magic, and burned them publicly. This was a sacrifice of thousands and thousands of dollars' worth of property. 'That they might be clean and unfettered to serve the Lord.

After these things, Paul made up his mind to go to Jerusalem, by way of Macedonia and Achaia. So he sent Timothy and Erastus, before him, but he stayed on in Ephesus for a while.

Just about this time there arose a great commotion in the city about the Christian religion. Demetrius, a silversmith, whose business was to make shrines for the goddess Diana, feared that if the people became Christians and gave up their idols, his occupation would be gone. So, calling together those of his trade he harangued them on this subject, saying that they would lose their own wealth as well as having their great goddess set at naught, if this Paul were allowed to preach.

This speech touched the Ephesians as nothing else could, and for hours the whole city was in a tumult, crying out loudly 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' They caught Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions in travel, and rushed into the theatre. Paul tried to go into the theatre to speak to the people, but his friends and disciples would not allow him to endanger his life in that way.

The mob was confused, and most of them knew not why they were there; some probably thought that the Jews were at the bottom of all the trouble. The Jews put forward Alexander to speak for them, but when the heathen saw that he was a Jew, they

cried out again for their own goddess. Finally, the town-clerk came out and pacified the mob. After these things Paul bade farewell to the disciples and departed for Macedonia.

Lesson Hymn.

Jesus calls us from the worship  
Of this vain world's golden store;  
From each idol that would keep us—  
Saying, Christian, love Me more,

Jesus calls us—by Thy mercy,  
Saviour, may we hear Thy call,  
Give our hearts to Thy obedience  
Serve and love Thee best of all.

Lesson Hints.

Ephesus was the greatest and most influential town of all Asia Minor. Its chief glory was the immense Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world. This magnificent temple contained a rudely carved wooden image of the goddess Diana, supposed by the Ephesians to have fallen from the sky. Small shrines containing the image were made and sold as charms and household gods.

'Demetrius,' an influential citizen of Ephesus, derived his wealth from this trade, by making silver images and shrines. Doubtless many shrines also were made of copper or wood and most of the city was concerned directly or indirectly in the traffic. The mob, therefore, was particularly inflammable on this point.

The same cry is constantly being raised to-day against those who preach truth, purity and righteousness. 'These men are ruining our business'—cry the rumsellers, 'do we not get our wealth from this trade? and yet, these men who preach Christ are constantly drawing away our customers!'

'Alexander,' supposed to be 'the copper-smith' mentioned in Paul's letter to Timothy. The Jews put him forward as having some influence with the other metal-workers, supposing that they could show the difference between Christians and Jews. But the speech was lost in the uproar, which immediately followed the sight of a Jew.

Search Questions.

Give six verses warning against covetousness.

Primary Lesson.

The lesson to-day is about the Ephesians who worshipped an idol called Diana. They used to have little silver images of this idol, Diana, in their houses and many carried the little images around with them, as charms to protect them from evil.

When Paul preached to the Ephesians he told them about the true God, and how they should not worship idols made by hands, because they could not help them.

This made some people very angry. The men who got a great deal of money by selling these images were furious because the people were being taught to love and serve Jesus. Their religion allowed them to be selfish and mean; they would rather get money for themselves than have the people learn how to be happy and good. The religion of Jesus Christ does not allow us to be selfish. God gave his most precious treasure for us, and nothing could be too precious for us to give him. Jesus came and spent his life for others, and we must follow his example, living for others, not for ourselves. We must ask Jesus to teach us by his Holy Spirit how to be unselfish.

As the Ephesians carried around with them the image of Diana, so we should carry the image of Jesus Christ with us. Not a silver or wooden image, as some people do, but the image, the likeness, the character of the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts and lives, yes, and even in our faces.

A great many of these Ephesians had given their hearts to Jesus and set out to lead a Christian life, but they found that there was something that kept them from following Jesus, it was the bad books that they had. These books were worth thousands of dollars, but when they found that the books led them away from Jesus they brought them and burned them publicly. They made a big bonfire of the things that kept them from Jesus. Now, there are still a great many bad books in the world and a great many bad papers that lead us away

from Jesus if we read them. What should we do with them?

We should shun them, as we would a snake or any kind of poison.

A good rule about reading is to never read anything that your mother does not know about and approve. I am sure none of you dear little people would be so mean as to hide the things you do from your mother. Just show her everything you want to read, because some kinds of reading turn our hearts away from Jesus, and put wrong thoughts in our minds which hurt Jesus. You know it hurts Jesus whenever you do anything naughty or even think a naughty thought.

Take the name of Jesus, ever,  
As a shield from every snare—  
When temptations round you gather  
Breathe that holy name in prayer.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name,' 'Take the Name of Jesus With You,' 'Jesus Calls us,' 'Oh, God, our Help in Ages,' 'Consecration.'

Practical Points.

(By A. H. Cameron.)  
(Acts xviii., 21-34.)

Paul had his work planned beforehand. He displayed wisdom in the choice of his helpers, and sent the right man to the right place. Verses 21, 22, also Acts xv., 38, 40.

Nothing causes so much stir as aggressive Christianity. Verse 23.

Verses 24 to 27 contain the creed of those who control or operate Sunday street cars, Sunday theatres or Sunday newspapers. Compare Col. iii., 5, last clause.

The shortest way to many a man's heart is through his purse. Verse 28.

Paul may now consider the advice he gave to the Philippian jailer before he pointed him to Christ. Verses 30, 31; Acts xvi., 28.

It is unreasonable to dislike any man merely on account of his nationality. But covetousness, like fortune, is blind.

Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Aug. 29.—The idols we are likely to worship.—Ex. xx., 1-6; Luke xii., 13-21.

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Aug. 29.—What are some idols we are likely to worship? I. John v., 13-21.

Led by a Little Child.

The Rev. E. Payson Hammond relates the following touching incident of a child's conversion and how it was made the means of bringing a mother to Christ:

'At a recent children's meeting in Washington a young mother was present with her little boy. Dr. Rankin, the minister of the church, approached the two, and addressed himself first to the mother. He then turned to the little lad, and soon found that his heart had been touched with a view of Jesus on the cross "lifted up for him," and very soon the little fellow was weeping for his sins. He prayed with him; the boy, too, prayed for himself, and finally looked to Jesus, and believed on him as the Saviour of little children. It has since been evident that he was truly converted by the Spirit of God. The unconverted mother sat looking upon this with much displeasure. Finally she expressed her belief that the boy was too young to understand such a difficult problem. But said Dr. Rankin to her, "You need not shake your head; this boy knows more than you do on this subject."

'On the way home the boy seemed very much interested in his mother's salvation, and said, "Mamma, what did Dr. Rankin say to you?" She avoided giving him an answer; and he added: "Didn't you give yourself to Jesus who died for us? I did; and oh, it's so easy, mamma! Won't you come to him, too? I know he'll receive you, and we shall be so happy!" The mother's heart was deeply moved. That night after he had retired, he called his mother to his bedside. He arose, knelt down, and prayed to God to forgive him and her. The boy would not rest until his mother promised to go back to the meeting with him the next evening. She went and was glad to have Dr. Rankin talk with her; and now she and another of her children are rejoicing in Jesus.'—'Christian Herald.'