



LESSON.—SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1909.

Paul a Prisoner—the Arrest.

Acts xxi., 27-39. Memory verse 39. Read Acts xxi., 17-xxii., 29.

Golden Text.

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. II. Tim. ii., 3.

Home Readings.

Monday, September 27.—Acts xxi., 17-26.
 Tuesday, September 28.—Acts xxi., 27-40.
 Wednesday, September 29.—Acts xxii., 1-16.
 Thursday, September 30.—Acts xxii., 17-29.
 Friday, October 1.—Luke xxiii., 8-23.
 Saturday, October 2.—Acts xvi., 35-40.
 Sunday, October 3.—Rev. ii., 1-11.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Before starting our lesson study let us all say the Golden Text over together carefully.—There is a word in that Golden Text that I am sure you are all interested in; what word do I mean? 'Soldier.' Do you like to see the soldiers go by? They look very trim and neat in their nice uniforms, don't they? Just as though they were having a fine time. And perhaps you sometimes feel that you would like to be a soldier, too. But do soldiers always have an easy time? Does our Golden Text say anything about a soldier having an easy time? No, it speaks about a soldier having to 'endure hardness.' It was Paul who wrote these words in a letter to a young man once. How did Paul know anything about soldiers? He used to see the soldiers everywhere he went, pretty nearly, and when he was a little boy going up to the services in the temple at Jerusalem he used to see them tramping up and down around a castle wall watching the people worshipping in the temple. For two whole years at one time in his life he had a soldier beside him all the time, day and night, and one time a band of soldiers came when he was in great danger and saved him from being killed by an angry mob of people. They had a hard time saving him, too, for the people crushed around them so that at last they had to pick Paul up and carry him to get him safely away. It is about that time that our lesson story tells to-day, and it was some of those soldiers from that castle by the temple in Jerusalem who saved him.

FOR THE SENIORS.

Paul's readiness to meet the objections of the Christian Jews on the place of their own belief, however much he may have advanced beyond it himself, proclaims him the broad-minded, great-souled man he was. He was a Jew himself, and for that matter, very proud of his nationality, but he had been fearlessly preaching the freedom of Christ to the Gentiles rather than the bondage of the law. He had not, however, himself neglected those Jewish observances and ceremonials in which Christ had lived, nor had he taught Jewish converts to neglect them. He was quite willing to prove as much by following the advice of the church in Jerusalem. How great had been the growth of this church is indicated in verse twenty. The unjustified attack on Paul, based on a mere assumption (verses 28, 29), was promoted by outsiders, Jews from Asia, some of whom perhaps, would recall the similar riot at Ephesus (Acts xix.), raised at that time by the Gentiles on an equally unfounded charge of sacrilege (Acts xix., 32), and the remembrance of how unsuccessful had been their attempt at the time to disclaim any connection with Paul (Acts xix., 33, 34), would

make them all the more bitter against him when the opportunity offered. Their ready 'jumping at conclusions' carries its own lesson for each of us to-day. Paul's courteous form of address after the unwarranted rough handling and his acknowledgment of their 'zeal towards God' (Acts xxii., 3) 'compel our admiration again. He was one of them and understood their point of view and from this common ground he started his address. This record of the vision accorded him on the occasion of his first visit to Jerusalem (Acts xxii., 17-21) is of interest. It is well to notice how Luke brings out the fact that in any case where religious prejudice takes Paul before Roman authority he is declared free from blame (Acts xviii., 14; xix., 35-37; xxiii., 25-29; xxiv., 23; xxv., 24-27; xxvi., 32; xxviii., 30, 31). There are seven lessons in all in the series taken for study from the time of Paul's arrest in Jerusalem to his imprisonment in Rome. It should be noticed that the incidents of to-day's lesson occurred just twenty-seven years after the foundation of the Christian Church, for it was again the Pentecostal season which Paul had so earnestly desired to spend in Jerusalem (Acts xx., 16).

SELECTIONS.

Paul did not come alone to Jerusalem, but was accompanied by Luke, his beloved physician ('we'), Trophimus of Ephesus (Acts xxi., 29), and probably Aristarchus of Thessalonica (Acts xxvii., 2). Rendall thinks that all who are mentioned as beginning the journey with Paul (Acts xx., 4) continued with him to the end at Jerusalem; thus adding to those mentioned above, Sopater of Berea, Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Berea, Secundus of Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, Timothy of Lystra, and Tychicus of Ephesus (Eph. vi., 21). The number and character of these men must have made an impression on the Christians of Jerusalem.

Verse 29.—'Make no accusation which you can not prove, and believe no accusation which is not proved to you—is as good a rule for the street corner as for the court room.—'Youth's Companion.'

Verse 33.—'Bound with two chains.' One from each of his arms to a soldier on each side of him (compare Acts xii., 6). This secured the prisoner, yet left him free to walk away with his guards when the detachment was marched off. The prophecy of Agabus was here fulfilled (Acts xxi., 11).

Verse 35.—'He was borne of the soldiers.' 'No sooner had he got on the stairs which led up to the top of the cloister, and so into the fortress, than the mob, afraid that they were going to be balked of their vengeance, made another rush at him, with yells of "kill him! kill him!" and Paul, unable in his fettered condition to steady himself, was carried off his legs, and hurried along in the arms of the surrounding soldiers.'—Farrar.

Verse 38.—'Art thou not then the Egyptian?' 'The Egyptian' is twice mentioned by Josephus: in his 'Jewish War' he says he had thirty thousand followers; and led a rabble out of Jerusalem, promising to show them that the walls would fall down at his command. A large portion of them were killed or captured by the Procurator Felix; in his 'Antiquities' he says fourteen thousand were slain.—'The Assassins.' They were the 'Sicarii,' 'men of the dagger,' members of a secret society.

Verse 39.—Citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can now migrate to a new city, and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to another city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his Fatherland, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. His descendants, too, continued to be mere resident aliens. Occasionally, and as a special compliment, a resident alien was granted the citizenship with his descendants, but a special enactment was needed in each individual case and family. The city that was his Fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul. It had a place in his heart.—W. M. Ramsay, in 'Pauline and Other Studies.'

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, October 3.—Topic—In everything give thanks. I. Thess. v., 18. (Consecration meeting.)

C. E. Topic.

Monday, September 27.—The eternal purpose. Eph. i., 1-14; ii., 10.

Tuesday, September 28.—My great desire. Eph. v., 22—vi., 9.

Wednesday, September 29.—My spiritual resurrection. Eph. ii., 1-10.

Thursday, September 30.—The old man and the new. Eph. iv., 17-25.

Friday, October 1.—Walking in the light. Eph. v., 1-21.

Saturday, October 2.—Social relationships. Eph. v., 22—6., 9.

Sunday, October 3.—Topic—Life lessons for me from the book of Ephesians. Eph. iv., 1-6, 25-32. (Consecration meeting.)

How the Absent Teacher Works.

I was a 'last resort.' The superintendent frankly admitted that he could think of no one else to ask to take the class, which consisted of seven bright-eyed girls. Friends advised me not to take up the work, for they said, 'You are at home only five months in the year, and the children will become indifferent, and drift away from Sunday-school if they do not have a permanent teacher.' But out of pity for the superintendent I consented to teach the class until another teacher could be found.

Seven years have passed. I still have the class, and not only has it kept together, but it has grown larger. How has it been done? By showing a loving interest in the girls whether I have been at home or on the other side of the continent.

First, with the consent of the superintendent, I provide my own substitute. I talk the matter over with my class, and together we decide on a teacher. Thus they do not have an unwelcome teacher forced upon them. They have a choice in the matter, and they are loyal to that choice.

Second.—At a certain hour each day we read the Home Readings connected with the lesson. So once, at least, during the day we feel that we are close to each other.

Third.—We keep in close touch by letters. Last winter, out of a class of thirteen, I received letters from all but one. Several of the girls wrote every week, and the others wrote frequently. In these letters I have their full confidence. I know their friends, their home and school associations, their doubts and perplexities.

In return, I answer every letter. Sometimes it is a heart-to-heart talk, sometimes a word of encouragement, sometimes a bit of advice, but I always try to show that absence is not a barrier between us. Then my girls and I travel together by means of illustrated letters. I send post cards, curios, pressed flowers, books, anything I can find that will give them a better understanding of the wonderful country in which we live.

Fourth.—Holidays are always remembered by some little trifle indicative of the spirit of the day. A birthday calls for the tenderest, most helpful letter that it is possible for me to write.

Fifth.—A class record is kept during my absence by one of the members of the class. I provide a dainty note-book,—for girls love dainty things,—and in this book is kept a record of each pupil's attendance at church and Sunday-school, preparation and recitation of the lesson, behavior, punctuality, and amount of money given. This book is sent to me just before my return, and then, after it has been carefully examined, I send a message to every girl, expressing my pleasure or disappointment, as the case may be, although I seldom have reason to be disappointed.

You say, 'But all this takes time and money!' What does not that is worth while? And yet the expenditure of money need not be great, and surely one can deny one's self a few things for the sake of giving help and pleasure to these pure young lives. As or the time, an average of less than one hour a day will probably be sufficient, unless the class is much larger than mine.

I have not a model class, but together we are striving to show our loyalty and love to the Sunday-school, where we learn of Him who is the children's Friend.—'A Massachusetts Teacher.'