



THIRD QUARTER.—LESSON I.—July 4.

First Converts in Europe.

Acts xvi., 6-15. Commit vs. 13-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'The entrance of thy words giveth light.'

HOME READINGS.

M. Acts xv., 36—xvi., 5.—Paul's second journey begun.

T. Acts xvi., 6-15.—First Converts in Europe.

W. Acts x., 1-22.—Peter called to the Gentiles.

Th. Acts x., 23-48.—Peter obeying the Call.

F. Phil i., 1-30.—Paul to the Saints at Philippi.

S. Phil. iv., 1-23.—My Brethren dearly Beloved.'

S. I. Cor. i., 18-31.—The Gospel is the Power of God.

Lesson Story.

After some useful services to the church at home Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should set out again and visit the churches they had established in Asia Minor. Barnabas was pleased with the idea and thought his nephew, John-Mark, must go too. Paul thought it would not be wise to take Mark, as he had drawn back from the work on their first journey, and the result was that Barnabas decided to take Mark and go over part of the ground, namely, the island of Cyprus, his own native country, while Paul went to Asia Minor, being accompanied by one of the principal teachers of the Antioch church, named Silyanus, or more briefly, Silas. Paul and Silas visited the cities where there were converts and told them specially what the council at Jerusalem had decided with regard to the law of Moses. They kept on going westward, sometimes preaching, and sometimes pressing forward without stopping to preach, for, as events proved, there was a divine purpose taking them to the coast. At Troy, that most ancient city, a vision came to Paul in the night. He saw a man whom he recognized, perhaps by his clothes, perhaps by his features, as a Macedonian. This man begged him to cross the sea and bring help to those in Macedonia. The whole party, which by this time included a young man, half Jew and half Greek, called Timothy, and a devoted doctor called Luke, gathered from this dream that God had called them to preach the gospel even in Macedonia. Reaching Philippi, a large and important city, they looked about for a suitable place to begin preaching. They found that those who held the Jewish faith met by the river-side for some sort of service. So they went to the river and on the first occasion addressed a congregation of women. The first person converted in Europe was a business woman. Lydia, 'a seller of purple,' had lived in Asia-Minor and was perhaps on that account at first interested in the strangers. She seems to have been an independent householder, for when the Lord opened her heart, she and her household were baptized, and she urgently invited the apostles to stay at her house.

Lesson Hymn.

The tender light of home behind,
Dark heathen gloom before,
The servants of the Lord go forth
To many a foreign shore.
But the true light that cannot pale
Shines on them from above,
The light divine that shall not fail,
The smile of him they love.

Lesson Hints.

Paul did not say, 'I have no help to spare for Macedonia, because Asia Minor has not all been converted.' He was sure the Lord had called him on and he went gladly to do God's will, not wearing himself out with anxiety over the things he was not permitted to do. If Paul had spent his time preaching

in Bithynia and Mysia, as he probably intended to do, there might have been a few more Asiatic churches formed, but it was in Europe that the great conquests of truth could best spread at that time. God's will with regard to the preaching of the gospel is evidently that it should go forward and onward rather than be centralized. We should follow Paul's example, pressing on into far countries. We cannot tell where the gospel will be most glorified, our work is to give it a chance in every nation. II. Thess. iii., 1.

Search Questions.

How do we know that Luke accompanied Paul when he crossed over from Asia to Europe?

Why do we think that Timothy was also of the party?

Primary Lesson.

Suppose you were fast asleep and saw a man calling you to help him, would you want to go? That was what Paul saw. He saw in a dream or vision a man who begged him to come to his country and help the people by telling them about Jesus and heaven. When Paul woke up he told Silas and Luke and Timothy, and they all said they would go and preach in that country because they were sure God had sent Paul the dream on purpose to encourage them to go. So they went on board a ship and sailed to Macedonia, where they found some people who were glad to hear about Jesus. There was a kind woman named Lydia who listened carefully to the preaching and made up her mind to follow Jesus always. She was a rich woman and had a large house, so she asked Paul and Silas and Luke and Timothy to stay at her house. We cannot all do as much as Lydia, but we must do all the kind things we can, and try to help those who are preaching about Jesus.

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'There's a Cry from Macedonia,' 'Far away, in Heathen Darkness Dwelling,' 'Holy Spirit, Faithful Guide,' 'Jesus shall Reign where'er the Sun,' 'The whole Wide World for Jesus.'

Practical Points.

A. H. CAMERON.

The sovereignty of the Spirit is taught as clearly as the love of God. Vs. 6-8.

Paul received a call to preach in Macedonia. That was good.—Vs. 9-10.

Paul obeyed the call at once. That was far better. Vs. 11-12.

Many noted events have taken place 'within the gate.' Vs. 13.

Compare Heb. xiii., 12, and Acts vii., 58.

When the Lord opens the heart, his servants will be given a royal reception. Vs. 14-15.

Tiverton, Ont.

Daily Searching of the Word.

(By Rev. W. H. Bucks).

The bible is an inexhaustible mine of truth. Its treasures are open to all who will search for them. But they must be searched for if they are to be found. Diligent and constant search will be rewarded. It is a privilege and a duty to read the bible, but the real benefit comes when we search for its hidden treasures. The Saviour says: 'Search the Scriptures.....for they testify of me.' When Paul came unto Berea and entered into the synagogue of the Jews, he found there more ready hearers than elsewhere. This is the testimony concerning the Bereans: 'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.'

Paul searched the scriptures and thus was enabled to give each Scripture prophecy its proper setting, collating the events and facts of Jewish history and applying them to the immediate needs of his hearers and the circumstances surrounding them. Thus a bible-searching-preacher will produce a bible-searching-people. A Sabbath-school teacher can have a similar influence over his

class. It is to be feared that in this age of progress when the country is flooded with Sunday-school literature, that some teachers will allow others to do all the thinking and searching for them after bible truths. How many simply use the questions found in the Quarterlies, and they go through the questions as mechanically as you please. As a result there will be a mechanical teacher, a mechanical class of scholars, and mechanical impressions and results. The excellent helps which are furnished for the studying of the lesson are not intended as a substitute for the teachers' personal research. They are helps, afford suggestions, explanations, and should act as spurs to push us on and up into the fertile realm of truth. Some teachers study the Quarterlies or Lesson Leaf but not the bible. The teacher ought to do with the teaching helps as the Bereans did with Paul's sermons: 'receive the word with a ready mind,' but also 'search the Scriptures daily, whether those things are so.'

The searching should be reverent and submissive, being open to conviction to believe every truth which the Word affirms. Everything which the Word urges upon us as a duty is right, and what it prohibits is wrong. We must not put the Word on trial, but rather our knowledge and comprehension of it is to be tested. We must not prejudge the word. It will vindicate its own teaching, if fairly tested. The study should be diligent, daily and consecutive. We must rely upon the Holy Spirit for guidance, for the Holy Spirit is the great interpreter of the bible to believing hearts. We must feel our dependence upon this Divine Guide—for he shall guide us into all truth — saving truth.

May the Lord increase our love for his Word and to understand it.—Living Epistle.

Real Study.

An exchange says:—'Very little real study is done by the average Sunday-school teacher.' He must, of necessity, read over his lesson, and somewhat of the comments upon it. He may, in addition, attend a teachers' meeting, and listen to able expositions, or engage in animated discussions. He may commit to memory some parts of the lesson, and secure some pertinent anecdotes and illustrations; and yet, with all this done, he may have done no real study. Study is a setting of the mind upon a subject, with the view of comprehending it fully, and learning concerning it some things not before known, and not easily acquired. Mere perception will place many parts of a lesson within grasp. A glance only is bestowed, and these parts are secured. But reflection upon what is perceived, careful thinking upon what is known, a looking under and into that which readily appears, is included in the true idea of study.

The fifth Gospel—have you read it? In the New Testament there are four records of the life of Christ. While they agree as to the great fundamental facts of our Lord's life, they differ in details. Each writer has left the impress of his own individuality upon the record, according as the truth passed through the prism of each mind. But the fifth Gospel—where is that, and what is that? It is the Gospel 'according to you.' It is a book read by people who have never read the Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, and who probably never will. What impression do the men and women with whom you mingle all the week long gain of the value of the religion of Jesus Christ from the way you are living it? Every man and woman of us is writing some sort of record daily; and we are transcribing it in a dialect which all men understand and read: 'Known and read of all men.' We need to be very clear as to one thing, viz: We cannot determine whether we will be witnesses or not. The mere fact that we go up to the house of God and have to do with religious matters and religious people is sufficient to make the world judge religion by our example. We bear witness unconsciously as well as consciously. Men are born imitators. Mere association produces a powerful influence upon the formation of character. Jesus Christ is daily at the bar of public opinion; and whether men accept or reject him depends very largely upon the evidence we give as to his divinity, and upon the influence we exert over those who are not his followers.—Rev. Chas. H. Jones.