



## LESSON IX.—MARCH 1.

## Paul and Apollos

Acts xviii., 24-19-6.

## Golden Text.

'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' Luke xi., 13.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Mar. 2.—Acts xix., 8-20.  
Tuesday, Mar. 3.—Luke xi., 14-26.  
Wednesday, Mar. 4.—Luke x., 17-24.  
Thursday, Mar. 5.—Eph. ii., 1-10.  
Friday, Mar. 6.—Eph. ii., 11-22.  
Saturday, Mar. 7.—Mark ix., 38-50.  
Sunday, Mar. 8.—Acts v., 12-16.

(By R. M. Kurtz.)

24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.

28. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

1. And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

2. He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

3. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

4. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

As we have already seen, after Paul left Corinth he came to Ephesus, and from there he went to Jerusalem, then to Antioch, and afterward made a visit to the churches in Galatia and Phrygia. His return from Corinth closed his second missionary journey, and his third began with his setting out from Antioch to visit the brethren in Phrygia and Galatia, which were in Asia Minor. It is hardly possible to have a correct and clear idea of Paul's travels without the aid of a map. The exact nature of Paul's vow mentioned in Acts xviii., 18, is not known, though it is believed that it could only be fulfilled by his going to Jerusalem. Cenchrea was the seaport of Corinth, about nine miles from that city. Paul took with him his two friends, Aquila and Priscilla, but left them at Ephesus, to which place he promised to return, if it were the will of God, after he had gone on to Jerusalem. Antioch, from which city Paul started upon his third journey, was Antioch

in Syria, not the Antioch in Asia Minor, a place also visited by Paul. Our present lesson deals with what occurred in Ephesus during Paul's absence, and with the way in which Paul took up the work at Ephesus when he returned. The time of this lesson was 52 or 53 A.D. Claudius Caesar was Emperor. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province in Asia, and was especially famous for its great temple of Diana.

In Paul's absence from Ephesus an eloquent Alexandrian Jew comes to Ephesus. Although his knowledge is imperfect, he teaches diligently. Aquila and Priscilla instruct him more fully. He leaves for Achaia, the province of which Corinth was the capital. Paul returns to Ephesus and a 'new Pentecost' results among the believers there. We know nothing of this man Apollos, except what is told us here. He seems to have been one of those earnest, devout souls that hunger after the truth and eagerly receive it when it is offered to them. Not only so, but Apollos was an eloquent man, one naturally gifted to address large bodies of men. From these qualifications he would naturally be regarded as a great acquisition by the early church. When he went to Corinth he would appear to have become a leader in the church there, both from verse 28 and from Paul's reference to him in the first epistle to the Corinthians. Alexandria, from which city Apollos came, was a large city of Egypt, founded by Alexander the Great. It was a centre of learning, and especial attention was given to the study of languages, and the ability to speak and write correctly and forcibly. It was here that the Old Testament was translated into Greek, giving us the version we commonly know as the Septuagint. It would seem natural that from such a centre of language study an eloquent man should come. The Revised Version says a 'learned' man, the word being capable of both translations. The idea is that he was gifted for speaking.

We find that he was also 'mighty in the Scriptures,' a thorough student of the Old Testament. Not only so, but, as verse 25 says, he was 'instructed in the way of the Lord.' He had already a knowledge of the Messiah, who was predicted in the Old Testament, and also knew something of Christ's life, for this had been widely spread throughout that part of the world, as well as foretold. Still, he had only known John's baptism, that is, the baptism of repentance. He taught in the synagogue at Ephesus, and was heard by Paul's two devout friends, Aquila and Priscilla. They perceived that the knowledge of Apollos concerning Christ was very incomplete, and so instructed him, as they had learned from Paul. Apollos was soon led to go over to Corinth. The brethren at Ephesus evidently held him in high esteem for they gave him a letter asking the brethren at Corinth to receive him favorably. This is a very early case of giving a 'church letter.'

Apollos, when he reached Corinth, 'helped them much which had believed through grace.' The words 'through grace' can be taken to modify the word 'helped,' that is, Apollos through grace helped them much which had believed, and this appears to be the better meaning. 'He mightily convinced the Jews.' The Greek word translated, 'mightily convinced,' is a very strong term, and is translated in the revised version, 'powerfully confuted.' The idea is that Apollos argued thoroughly and with great force against the Jews concerning Jesus, proving from the Scriptures that He was Christ. Paul had planted the seed, and, though the ground seemed barren, another laborer was sent to carry on the work. Paul says, 'Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.'

From the few verses which deal with this mighty Gospel preacher we find further evidence that learning is not to be despised in the work of spreading the Gospel. Then, with all his learning, he was willing to have his knowledge of Christ enlarged by two humble but spiritual members of his congregation at Ephesus.

Notice how God prepared for the work Apollos was to do. He had Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus just at the right time, and led them to teach Apollos more fully the way of God, so that he might be a well equipped Christian preacher. God uses lowly people often to advance His cause. Then we notice that God does not destroy the individuality of those who yield to him, but uses the gifts of various men to the best advantage. Paul, great as he was, did not seem to make much headway among the Jews of Corinth, but Apollos 'mightily convinced' them. Paul's great work was among the Gentiles. You may not be so well adapted to one kind of work as to another, but there is a place for you somewhere.

About the time that Apollos was in Ephesus, preaching and enlarging his knowledge of the Gospel, Paul was in Antioch and in various places in Asia Minor, strengthening the churches there. The upper coasts of Acts xix., 1, refer to highlands of the interior. After this he comes back to Ephesus, but Apollos had already left for Corinth. Paul at once begins his work here at Ephesus. He finds 'certain disciples,' who were about twelve in number, as we learn from verse 7. It is not known how these 'disciples' came to be in Ephesus. The apostle evidently perceives a spiritual lack in them and at once asks, if they have received the Holy Ghost. The revised version gives us the more correct form of his question, 'Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?' The answer as given in the revised version, seems also to be better than that of the King James version, 'Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given.' If they were familiar with the Old Testament they must have heard of the Holy Spirit; John the Baptist also foretold that Jesus would baptize with the Spirit. These disciples had not heard of the fulfillment of this promise, they did not know of Pentecost.

Further questioning revealed the fact that they had received only John's baptism, the baptism of repentance, of hope in a Messiah to come. They had not yet been baptized in the name of a Messiah whose earthly work had been accomplished, who had already come and had died in their behalf. Paul explains to them what John's baptism was. Then they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

'When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.' A little while before this they had not known that the Holy Spirit had yet been given; now they themselves are partakers in it. These disciples at Ephesus, before the return of Paul, have been likened to one who has lived a life of comparative poverty, when riches have been all the while within easy reach, had he only known it. What spiritual light and life, peace and happiness, wisdom and power enter into the soul's experience with the full acceptance of Christ, full consecration to Him, and the outpouring of the Spirit! This is a good lesson with which to take up the study of the gift of the Spirit. The church seems to be awakening to the importance of the subject, and there is much being written and spoken upon it.

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Mar. 1.—Topic—Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount: what Christ teaches about blessedness. Matt. v., 1-12.

## Junior C. E. Topic

## LESSONS FROM LIONS.

Monday, Mar. 2.—Satan a lion. 1 Peter v., 8.

Tuesday, Mar. 3.—We may conquer. Ps. lxi., 13.

Wednesday, Mar. 4.—Saved from lions. Dan. vi., 22.

Thursday, Mar. 5.—Faith and lions. Heb. xi., 33.

Friday, Mar. 6.—Delivered from lions. 2 Tim. iv., 17.

Saturday, Mar. 7.—No lions in heaven. Isa. xxxv., 9.

Sunday, Mar. 8.—Topic—Bible lessons from lions. Ps. xxxiv., 10; Prov. xxviii., 1.