

**Paul at Ephesus.**

APRIL 13.

ACTS XIX., 8-22.

*Golden Text, Acts 19: 18.*

**T**HIS was Paul's second visit to Ephesus. On his way from Corinth he had stopped here for a short time and left his friends Aquila and Priscilla who made this their home, ch. 18: 18-21. Now, that he had come back to remain for some time, he probably lived in their house working as formerly at his trade during part of the time, ch. 20: 34. V. 8. In the Synagogue Paul would meet the Jewish inhabitants to whom he felt it his first duty to preach. *Boldly*—it required boldness to declare to these bigoted Jews that Jesus was Messiah. *Disputing*—reasoning out of the Scriptures. Vs. 9, 10. *Hardened*—consider well what is implied in that word. Ps. 95: 8; Heb. 3: 8-13. They not only resisted the truth themselves, they did all they could to prevent others from believing. *Departed*—he had delivered his message faithfully; on the Jews now rested the responsibility of rejecting it. *Separated*—Himself a Jew, it would be with deep regret he parted from them. Seeing further progress impracticable, he secured the lecture-room of Tyrannus in which to conduct his meetings. Vs. 11, 12. *The special miracles* met the special circumstances of time and place. The Ephesians were notorious for their belief in and practice of necromancy. V. 13. *Vagabond*—"strolling" Jews—a class of impostors who went from place to place professing to cure diseases by their magic arts. *Exorcists*—who claimed power to cast out evil spirits, and who now impiously used the name of Jesus as a charm. Vs. 14-16. The maniac upon whom these fellows experimented turned upon them, their deceit was exposed, and the power of the Almighty vindicated. V. 17. Reports of this extraordinary occurrence soon spread over the whole city. *Fear fell on them*—reverence, in many instances, took the place of scepticism and ridicule, and the name of Jesus was magnified above that of Diana, Ephes. 1: 19-21. Vs. 18, 19. Many that had believed in the incantations of the exorcists publicly confessed that they were wrong in countenancing them. *Showed their deeds*—exposed their witchcraft; while not a few of the sorcerers themselves gave proof of their honest conviction, by publicly burning their books or parchments containing the secrets of their trade; these being in manuscript could not be replaced. True repentance implies more than contrition and confession, Isa. 1: 16, 17. *Fifty thousand peices*—computed to be about \$10,000—a noble testimony to the power of the Gospel. V. 20. The scene was one which would never be forgotten in Ephesus, more remarkable in that it was a voluntary act on the part of the exorcists. *The Word of God grew and prevailed*—the new converts were strengthened in their faith, and many others were moved by this example to join the Church. The result was a great religious awakening in the voluptuous city of Ephesus where it was least to be expected.

**Paul's Preaching.**

APRIL 20.

1 CORIN. I: 17-31.

*Golden Text, 1 Corin. 1:23.*

**T**HIS epistle was written at Ephesus, ch. 16: 8, towards the close of Paul's three years' residence there, in the spring of A. D. 57. Its immediate object was to counteract the divisions that had crept into the Church at Corinth founded by him on his second missionary journey some five years before this time, Acts ch. 18. Not long after he left Corinth, Apollos came thither and won many followers by his eloquence, Acts 19: 1. There were others, false teachers, some pretending to follow Cephas, some Apollos, some Christ Himself, v. 12. These gave out that Paul was not one of the twelve and was unworthy of credence. Another section professed to be followers of Paul, but they were so in a sectarian spirit. Before rebuking their divisions Paul commended such as were steadfast in the faith and helpers in the good work, vs. 4-8. V. 17. *Not to baptize*—Paul does not despise baptism; elsewhere he speaks highly of it, but he means that *his* particular function was to *preach the Gospel*, ch. 9: 16—"o proclaim the good news. *Wisdom of words*," wordy wisdom, or philosophical reasoning set off with rhetoric, such as the Greeks prided themselves so much upon. *None effect*—such teaching is worthless compared to a simple and earnest presentation of saving truth. V. 18. *The Cross*—the "atonement" is *foolishness* to those who have no experimental acquaintance with it. *Which are saved*. Eternal life is a present gift, ch. 15: 1, 2. Vs. 19, 20—see Isa. 29: 14. The general idea is that God's dealing with men are often misunderstood because his ways are entirely different from ours. V. 21. History proves that mere human wisdom never yet taught men the knowledge of the true God. *Foolishness of preaching*—not foolish preaching, but such plain practical preaching as unbelievers count foolishness. V. 22. *A sign*—Matt. 12: 38; Mark 8: 11. The Greeks, on the other hand, demanded logical demonstration which would be as clear to their minds as the solution of a mathematical problem. V. 23. A crucified Messiah was not in accordance with Jewish expectation: they looked for a temporal prince. Vs. 26-28. The early preachers were not chosen from great philosophers nor orators, and early converts were drawn largely from the poorer classes. The weakness of the instrumentality was proof of the inherent power of the Gospel. *Things which are not*—means so insignificant as to escape observation God uses to accomplish his ends. V. 29. The design of the Gospel is to humble human pride. V. 30. To believers it is given to understand and accept the Gospel. To them Christ becomes *wisdom*, by enlightening them; *righteousness*, by justifying them; *sanctification* by purifying them; *Redemption* by purchasing eternal life for them. V. 31. See Isa. 9: 23, 24; 2 Cor. 10: 17, 18. We can be pardoned and saved only by Him, who died on the Cross for ours sins. Acts 4: 12.