

## PAUL'S PREACHING IN CORINTH.

In Athens, Paul came into direct contact with the wisdom of the world in its most brilliant form. Instead of being impressed by its power he was filled with scorn at its weakness. The preaching of a world-Redeemer who had been nailed to a cross, might be derided by a fastidious taste, but Paul knew that it was the power of God to Salvation to all who accept its humbling but quickening truths. The Gospel did not represent the impotent effort of man to soar away on the wings of speculation from earth to heaven, but the omnipotence of divine love reaching down from heaven to earth to lift man into purity and eternal life. Whatever may have been Paul's feelings in recalling his address on Mars' Hill, it is certain that his arrival at Corinth was marked by a determination to divorce his preaching alike in matter and manner from every appearance of accommodation to worldly wisdom. Between this and the wisdom of God there was no common ground. Hence his resolve at any cost of personal reputation to himself to abide by a Gospel that centered upon the cross of Christ.

## FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

## International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON VII.—PAUL PREACHING TO THE GENTILES—MAY 10.

(Acts xiv. 11-22.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles."—Acts xiii. 47.

TIME AND PLACE.—A.D. 46. Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe.

INTRODUCTION.—The effect of Paul's preaching in the synagogue of Antioch is described in the latter part of the thirteenth chapter. Many Jews and proselytes seem to have accepted his teaching, and the interest excited was so great that we are told on the next Sabbath *almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God*. But when the Jews found that the gospel was offered freely to the Gentiles, they raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them from the city. Iconium was the next point reached in their journey, and there they sojourned, *that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks, believed*. And we are told that they abode there a long time, *speaking boldly in the Lord*. At length, however, they became aware of a conspiracy to assault them, and fled to Lystra and Derbe. At Lystra they wrought a miracle of healing, which led the people to regard them as gods, and they proposed to offer sacrifices to them, as related in our present lesson.

VERSE BY VERSE.—V. 11. "Lycaonia."—A name given to the great plain in the centre of Asia Minor.

V. 12. "Jupiter."—In the Greek mythology, Jupiter, which is the Latin name of Zeus, was regarded as the supreme ruler of gods and men. "Mercurius."—The Greek deity of eloquence, he was said to be the messenger of the gods.

V. 13. "Brought oxen."—To be offered in sacrifice. "Garlands."—To be hung in front of the temple and around the necks of sacrifices. "Gates."—The gates of the city.

V. 14. "Rent their clothes."—As a token of their abhorrence of the act proposed.

V. 15. "Those vanities."—Referring to their false gods.

V. 17. "Left not himself without witnesses."—The works of nature testified to the being and the goodness of God.

V. 19. "Certain Jews."—Unbelieving Jews who had shown their hostility in persecuting the apostles before. "Iconium."—An important city; at one time the metropolis of Lycaonia. "Stoned Paul."—Designing to kill him, and supposing they had done so. "Drew him out of the city."—Dragged him out.

V. 20. "The disciples."—Those who had been converted by the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. "Rose up and came into the city; and the next day he departed."—There seems to be implied a supernatural recovery taking all the facts together. If he had fallen into a swoon he might have risen up, but after being stoned apparently to death, he would scarcely have been able to take his journey the next day. "Derbe."—A small town of Lycaonia, not far from Lystra.

V. 22. "Confirming."—With further teaching and exhortation. THORNTON.—Paul healed a cripple at Lystra. He had been thus afflicted from his birth. He could neither walk nor stand. His case was deplorable. He heard Paul preach, and believed that there was a power in Christ Jesus to heal him. He desired and hoped for it in his own case. Paul, under the power of the Holy Spirit, cured him. He leaped up from the place where he sat, stood upright, and walked. This was a fulfilment of the words of the prophet: "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart." Isa. xxxv. 6. "Those that by the grace of God are cured of their spiritual lameness, must show it by leaping with a holy exultation, and walking in a holy conversation." The healing work of these missionaries

made the people wonder. Miracles are a sign "to them that believe not."

The apostles were revered by the heathen populace. They looked upon them as two of their gods. "Proud enough they were to have a visit from them." Their religion required that they should be received with appropriate religious honors. They proposed to offer sacrifices to both of them. The people join with the priest in it. The apostles are horrified. They rejected this self-worship. There was a strong temptation presented to these men. They withstood it with a holy indignation. Paul and Barnabas protest against this undue respect paid them, and prevent it.

These two missionaries preached to these idolaters the nature of the God to whom they should offer their worship. All the gods of the heathens, Paul told them, were cheats and counterfeit. They deceive those that trust in them and look for help from them. The God whom they would have them turn to is "the living God." This God has life in Himself, and imparts life to all His creatures. His life is the life of the universe. He is the patient Governor of all men. He is the efficient and constant worker of the universe. "He works everywhere in nature, always doing good, always blessing His creatures, and all His works are witnesses of Himself."

These devoted apostles and missionaries, after this, loose their unlooked-for and uncoveted popularity. The people become terribly incensed against them. Certain Jews, from localities where they formerly evangelized, told the people of Lystra that they were seditious, unruly persons, not fit to be harbored. "By this attack, the enthusiastic adorers are transformed into malignant foes. The men who are honored as gods one hour, are treated as wretched criminals the next. They who shouted 'Hosanna' on Sunday, cried 'crucify him' on Friday. They who sought to worship Paul and Barnabas, now attempt to kill Paul with stones. These are the methods used to defeat the progress of truth by those who have no arguments. But in this instance we find "sermons even in stones." We are not to expect gratitude if we are doing good."

Little men seek popularity. Great and noble souls care nothing for it. "These men counted not their lives dear unto them." They returned to the places of former labor and suffering, to confirm, establish and exhort the believers to continuance in well-doing.

## CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR.

## DAILY READINGS.

First Day—The Gospel rejected by the Jews. Acts xiii. 44-46.

Second Day—"His own received Him not." John i. 1-18.

Third Day—Fleeing to cities of Lycaonia. Acts xiv. 1-10.

Fourth Day—Paul preaching to the Gentiles. Acts xiv. 11-28.

Fifth Day—The Apostles prepared for Persecution. Matt. x. 14-42.

Sixth Day—Christ's Disciples shall suffer persecution. 2 Tim. iii. 1-17.

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC, May 16, SOME THINGS WORTH LIVING FOR. 1 John ii. 12-17.

## AIMS IN LIFE.

"Live to learn their story, who suffered for your sake,  
To emulate their glory, and follow in their wake,  
Bards, Patriots, Poets, says, the noblest of all ages  
Whose deeds crown history's pages, and time's great volume make.

Live for those who love you, for those who know you're true,  
For the heaven that smiles above you, and waits your spirit too,  
For the wrongs that need resistance, for the cause that needs assistance,  
For the future in the distance, and the good that you can do."

"If life be worth living, it is so only when we live it ourselves,  
and help others to live it, in a manner worthy of life."

"Show by your life that you live, move, and have your being  
in the sunny element of God's love."

"Come, let us live while we live! Let us serve God to the utmost stretch of our manhood. Let us ask the Lord to brace our nerves, to stir our sinews and make us true crusaders, knights of the blood-red cross, consecrated men and women, who for the love we bear Christ's name will count labor to be ease, and suffering to be joy, and reproach to be honor, and loss to be gain."

## SOME THINGS TO LIVE FOR.

To do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue, that the storm of time can never destroy. Write your name by kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of the hundreds you come in contact with year after year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your name, your deeds, will be legible on the hearts you leave behind. Good deeds will shine as bright on the earth as the stars in heaven.