

SCHOLAR'S NOTES.

(From International Question Book.)

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles.

LESSON IV.—JANUARY 25.

PAUL GOING TO JERUSALEM.—ACTS 21:1-14.

COMMIT VERSES 12-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The will of the Lord be done.—Acts 21:14.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should be faithful to duty, no matter what the danger or difficulty in the way.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 21:1-14.
T. Acts 8:26-40.
W. Acts 11:19-30.
Th. Matt. 10:17-39.
F. Luke 9:51-62.
Sa. Matt. 26:31-46.
Su. 2 Cor. 4:1-18.

TIME.—Paul left Miletus on Monday, April 24, A.D. 58.

PAUL.—Aged 50, near the close of his third great missionary journey.

INTRODUCTION.—After the touching interview with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Paul and his companions resume their journey to Jerusalem.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. WE.—Paul, Luke, Trophimus (v. 20), Aristarchus (27:2). Timothy went back to Ephesus. Coos (or Cos)—a small island 40 miles south of Miletus. RHODES—an island and a city fifty miles south-east of Coos. PATARA—a seaport of Lycia on the mainland, opposite Rhodes. 2. PHENICIA—a country of Syria, north-west of Palestine, on the coast. Its chief cities are Tyre and Sidon. 3. DISCOVERED—came in sight of. CYPRUS—a large island south of Asia Minor. SYRIA—the country on the east of the Mediterranean, of which Palestine is a part. 4. WHO SAID THROUGH THE SPIRIT—the Spirit informed them of the dangers threatening Paul, and they inferred that he should not go to Jerusalem. 7. PROTEMAIS—a city on the coast, anciently called Acoch, now Acre, named after Ptolemy Soter, king of Egypt, B.C. 10. It is 30 miles south of Tyre. 8. CAME UNTO CESAREA—by land. They finished their voyage at Ptolemais. CESAREA—the chief Roman city of Palestine, 47 miles north-west of Jerusalem. PHILIP, THE EVANGELIST—or missionary. ONE OF THE SEVEN (DEACONS)—(Acts 6:5.) 9. PROPHECY—(1) foretell; (2) to speak or preach the word God puts in their hearts. 10. MANY DAYS—rather, more days, more than they expected to. AGABUS—who is mentioned in Acts 11:28. 11. BOUND HIS OWN (AGABUS') HANDS AND FEET—This served to place the event foretold more vividly before them; the scene, being thus acted out before their eyes, was rendered present, real, beyond what any mere verbal declaration could have made it. 12. WE RESOUGHT HIM—This explains v. 4. 13. Paul was set on going to Jerusalem because it was (1) a great opportunity to meet great numbers of Christians at the feast; (2) he could declare there what God had done for the Gentiles; (3) this would unite the two great parties in the church—the Jewish and the Gentile; (4) this would be aided by the contributions he brought for the poor; (5) by the incoming of the Gentiles he could hope to win his own country near to Christ.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Where was Paul at the time of our first two lessons? Doing what? What year and what season of the year? How old was Paul? On which of his great missionary journeys?

SUBJECT: FAITHFULNESS IN THE PATH OF DUTY.

I. PAUL'S OBJECT IN GOING TO JERUSALEM.—Where was Paul going? What was one of his objects? (Acts 21:17; 1 Cor. 16:3, 4.) How would this help to unite the Jewish and Gentile portion of the church? To refute what calumnies may have another object? (Acts 21:21.) For whose sake did he endure all things? (v. 13.)

II. THE DISCIPLES AT TYRE.—A TEMPTATION TO TURN ASIDE (vs. 1-7).—Trace out the journey from Miletus to Tyre. Give a brief account of Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre. Who were Paul's companions? How long did they remain at Tyre? How did these disciples try to persuade Paul not to go on? Did the Holy Spirit really forbid him to go, or only show him the dangers in the way? How is this shown in v. 11? Was this a severe temptation? Was it resisted?

III. THE PROPHETS AT CESAREA.—A SECOND TEMPTATION (vs. 7-12).—Trace out the course from Tyre to Cesarea. Give a brief account of Ptolemais, Cesarea. Where did they stop at Cesarea? What can you tell about Philip? (Acts 6:3-6; 8:23-40.) What is said of his family? Meaning of prophecy? Where was such prophesying foretold? (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28, 29.) How does this agree with 1 Cor. 14:31; 1 Tim. 2:12? What light does this throw on woman's work in the church?

What prophet came from Jerusalem? Where have we heard of him before? (Acts 11:28.) What did he foretell? In what way? What did the disciples do in view of this? Did they do right?

IV. PAUL'S TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION (vs. 13, 14).—How did Paul answer them? What was he willing to do? Was Paul right? For whose sake was he willing to suffer? Should this be our motive in life? How will it help us to overcome temptation? How did the disciples acquiesce? Why should we also say "The will of the Lord be done"? Is that the safest and happiest way? Why?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. God uses commerce and the works of man to aid the cause.

II. Wherever we go we should seek out Christians.

III. It is blessed to have good men visit our homes.

IV. Difficulties in the way are no proof that we should not walk in it.

V. We should go on in duty no matter who hinders us.

VI. We are not wise enough to choose our own way; but should rejoice to commit it to God, who has all wisdom and knowledge and love.

LESSON V.—FEBRUARY 1.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.—ACTS 21:15-25.

COMMIT VERSES 17-19.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.—Acts 21:20.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

We should rejoice in the progress of Christ's kingdom, though it be by other means and in other ways than our own.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 21:15-26.
T. Rom. 15:13-33.
W. Acts 14:19-23.
Th. 1 Cor. 9:1-27.
F. Acts 15:1-30.
Sa. Num. 6:1-21.
Su. Psalms 46:1-11.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—After a brief visit of four or five days at the home of Philip, the evangelist, in Cesarea, Paul continues his journey to Jerusalem, and completes the third great missionary journey.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

15. CARRIAGES—baggage, including the money contributed for the poor at Jerusalem. 16. MNASON—an early disciple, one of the first, having his home in Jerusalem. 18. JAMES—the brother of our Lord, pastor of the church at Jerusalem, and author of the Epistle of James. 20. ZEALOUS OF THE LAW—the Jewish laws of circumcision, sacrifices, meats, festivals, etc. 21. INFORMED THAT THOU TEACHEST THE JEWS—he taught, as they had agreed (v. 25) these things to the Gentiles; and that they were not essential to salvation even to the Jews (Gal. 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:19; Rom. 2:28, 29). 22. WHAT IS IT—What shall we do about it? 23. WE HAVE FOUR MEN—Christians of Jerusalem, WHICH HAVE A VOW—the Nazirites' vow (v. 21; Num. 6:1-21). PURIFY THEMSELVES WITH THEM—join with them in the closing rites and offerings. BE AT CHARGES WITH THEM—rather for them; pay all their expenses, temple fees, and cost of sacrifices. For each of the five the sacrifice would be two lambs, a ram, unleavened bread, cakes of flour and oil, and wine. It would be no small expense. 25. AS TOUCHING THE GENTILES—see Acts 15:1-30. He need not retract any of his teachings.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—To what city was Paul on a journey? How long since he had been in Jerusalem? (Acts 18:21, 22.) The feast was probably Tabernacles, Sept. A.D. 58.) Note the events of each day from the time Paul came to Cesarea till the end of this lesson. Where did Paul stay at Cesarea? Describe the parting scene.

SUBJECT: THE RETURNED MISSIONARY.

I. HIS RETURN (vs. 15-17).—How long had Paul been absent on his third missionary journey? How far had he come on his way home? How far is Cesarea from Jerusalem? What time is meant by "those days" in v. 15? What were the "carriages" mentioned? Of what doubtless did a part of this baggage consist? (Acts 21:17.) Who accompanied them from Cesarea? When did they arrive at Jerusalem? With whom did they lodge there?

II. HIS GREETING (vs. 17-19).—How was Paul received on the first evening? By whom? Whom did he meet the next day? Which James was this? How was he greeted here? (Rom. 16:16.)

III. HIS REPORT (19, 20).—What did Paul report to this assembly? How many great missionary journeys had he made since he met the Jerusalem Church in the great conference? (Acts 15.) Name some of the leading events in his second missionary journey. (Acts 16:1; 18:22.) Did he visit Jerusalem at the close of his journey? (Acts 18:21, 22.) What had God done through him on his third journey? (Acts 18:23; 21:8.) To whom did Paul ascribe these works? Why? How did the assembly receive the report? What is it to glorify God?

IV. SLANDERS AGAINST HIM (vs. 20-23).—What is said of the number of Jewish converts? Of what law were they zealous? What had been told them against Paul? Was it true? What foundation was there for this slander? (Gal. 5:6; 1 Cor. 7:19; Rom. 2:28, 29.) Are the worst lies those that have a mixture of truth?

V. THE SLANDERS REFUTED (vs. 23-26).—What did the assembly advise Paul to do? What vow is referred to? (Num. 6:1-5.) Would the charges be heavy? (Num. 6:13-17.) How would this course refute the slander? Was it consistent with Paul's teachings? How did they show this? (v. 25.) Had he done anything like it before? (Acts 18:18.) Was this plan successful?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. There will arise differences of opinion among the best of people.

II. Each one should try and understand the others.

III. Each one should do all he can for the general peace, and the correction of misunderstandings.

IV. But we should never yield a great principle for the sake of peace.

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IDLE WORDS: A STORY FOR GIRLS.

I wonder if any of us ever think of the harm that may be done by a jesting, careless word. How quickly it is spoken! How merry the laugh that follows! and yet, often, if we could look below the surface, I fear we might see a deep scar upon the heart. Five minutes after they are uttered the speaker forgets them, but perhaps for days they rankle in the mind of the hearer.

Some months ago a dear friend of mine lost her large Sunday-school class. One by one withdrew; some by marriage, some by leaving the city, and some by death, till her flourishing class was reduced to one scholar, and continued this size for two years. During that time, much was the fun I "poked at her."—"It must take you a long time to prepare your lesson for your large class," or "I suppose you have no time in the week except to visit your numerous scholars," or "Which one of your class came late to-day?" And with many such funny speeches did I amuse myself, and apparently her. She suffered and gave no sign. Only recently did I learn that this had been to her an awful trial. Every effort that she made to increase the number of her scholars proved vain. She seriously thought of abandoning the Sunday-school work, where in former years she had been so successful. The heavens seemed as brass to her fervent prayers. But all that time God was only trying her. Her class is full now, and her hands and heart entirely occupied. She has been too generous to remind me of my thoughtless words, but I need no reminder, for my own heart condemns me. Girls, take warning.

Said a lady to me the other day,—"Nearly two decades have passed since I made my public profession of faith, but all the joys and sorrows of these many years have not obliterated a scene from my mind and of how my heart was wounded by a thoughtless friend.

"It was on the Monday morning following that sacred Sunday I walked into the schoolroom a few moments before nine. A crowd of girls were gathered around the old-fashioned stove, studying a little, and laughing and talking a good deal.

"Oh, here she comes now," called out Sophie—which gave the disagreeable sensation that I had been the subject of conversation—"Girls," she continued, "you ought to have seen her walk up the aisle yesterday; here she is, now look."

"And drawing down the corners of her mouth and rolling up her eyes, she began slowly walking between the long row of desks. How my cheeks tingled! I fear that the entrance of the head-teacher, and not my religion, prevented the angry retort. I thought then, as we hurried to our seats, that it was very hard in the other girls to laugh. I see now that they could not help it.

"That girl was my most devoted friend. Not for the world would she have hurt me, but her jest was from pure thoughtlessness."

"Girls, be happy, be merry, let your very spirits bubble over. It is your prerogative, your birthright, I might say, but, oh, restrain the sharp words, conquer the desire to mimic, and remember, that

"Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart."

—Sel.

TAKE MOTHER TO CHURCH.

True, her eye is dim, she cannot see as she once did; her voice is weak, she cannot sing as she once did; her ear is dull, she cannot hear as she once did. She is not as she once was. The years have bowed her body, and her step totters.

But, dear heart, she wants to go to church yet. She has not lost her love for the house of the Lord. The Songs of Zion refresh her, and the Bread of Life nourishes her yearning soul. The "dark valley is before her, may be near at hand, but she would more firmly lay hold of his rod, and his staff for the time of passage and peril. Her consciousness tells her to go. It is her privilege to go, and you, son, daughter, must take her.

She has unquestionable claims on your strong arm, upon your time, attention and care. Her arm was wearied with working for you. Lavishly her time, her attention, her care for you. For you she gave her strength. Full many a Lord's day she stayed from church because you were too young, sick or too restless to be taken with her. For you she was compelled to give up the

blessed privileges of many a Sabbath in the courts of the Lord's house. These days she should now enjoy,

Take mother to church, and father, too. Shame on that son or daughter who invents excuses and will not do it: "Horses too tired; day too hot; can't do them any good; it's too much trouble."

Yes, take them to church. Drive slowly. Hand them carefully, gently, from the wagon. Lead them safely to their seats. Help them in the services of the sanctuary, if they need your aid. Their souls take comfort and find strength while they wait before the Lord in his house.

It cheers their hearts to meet old friends at the church door, to greet those who began life with them, but who now, even as they, lean heavily upon the staff while they make the down-hill slope of life's pilgrimage. They can gather a flower and drop a tear where they laid loved ones to sleep in the old church-yard long years ago. It makes the whole week bright if they may but spend the Lord's day in the Lord's house and with the Lord's people, in the Lord's service. Why not take them? You must.

God's holy commandment does not read: "Honor thy father and thy mother while they are young and strong and able to help themselves." God demands honor from you for them as long as they live. Nor does it read: "Honor thy father and thy mother until thou art eighteen, or twenty-one, or thirty years of age." Long as you live it is your duty to honor them.—The Workman.

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