

were forbidden" of the Spirit to carry out their intention to preach the word in Asia and Bithynia, a province on the northern coast of Asia Minor, to the east of Mysia, vs. 6, 7. This restraint was exercised either by the word of prophecy or by inward revelation. The gospel was afterwards preached in these regions with great success; and in Nice, the capital of Bithynia, a general council of the church met in the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor. (b) It seems plain that this restraining of the missionaries by the Spirit was in order to hasten their arrival in Europe; and to impress their hearts with the thought that no limitation should be set to the Saviour's great commission, and no delay made in carrying it out: "Go ye into all the world," etc. (Mark 16: 15.)

3. *The vision of Paul.* (a) A man from Macedonia—recognized as such by Paul, we know not how. It may have been by his dress, his language, a direct announcement, or an inward revelation. (b) The place from which he hails is significant, Macedonia, the part of Europe nearest to the sea, the centre of the highest form of heathen civilization, the historic home of Grecian literature, philosophy, science, art. But all these—excellent, and to be commended in their place—did not meet the deepest wants of men. And they cannot do so now. Our secular education is not enough. "Professing themselves to be wise," etc., Rom. 1: 22. Hence (c) The prayer of the representative of the western world, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." With all their wealth of knowledge and culture, he confesses they need the help the gospel alone can give. What can we do without the knowledge of the true God our Saviour? (d) The apostles hastened to obey the heavenly vision. They "came with a straight course," that is, with a fair wind, without tacking, from Troas to Philippi. Here triumphs and trials awaited them. It is evident Luke joined them, probably as Paul's physician. He says, v. 10, "immediately we endeavored," etc. So he uses the term "we," ch. 21: 17; 27: 1.

4. *The beginning of the work at Philippi.* (a) It was a humble beginning—"by a river side" (v. 13), a small stream called

Gangites; among a company of praying women. (b) The hand of the Lord was with them and He "opened the heart" of Lydia—a beautiful description of regeneration and conversion—"that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." "Faith cometh by hearing," etc., Rom. 10: 17. (c) She at once showed herself to be an active believer, "was baptized, and her household," and "constrained" the missionaries to become her guests, v. 15.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

No teacher probably should, and certainly no two good teachers will, take the same way of teaching a lesson; for to teach is not to crowd something into the mind of the scholar or force something upon his conscience, but it is to draw out the scholar to think for himself, that so heart and conscience may be stirred, and right action follow.

One way into this lesson lies through the map; but the teacher must be ready for all sorts of questions. Our writers have kept this in view, and in the Exposition, Points and Paragraphs, Light from the East, as well as in Principal MacVicar's Analysis and the Dictionary for the Quarter, there is abundant assistance. But do not let the lesson degenerate into a mere exercise of geography and history. Keep God's gracious providence in view, which guided the footsteps of the apostles, and God's saving power, which brought Lydia so quickly and so sweetly into the Kingdom of God.

Here is another plan:—

1. *A door that shut.* All went well with Paul and his fellow-missionary (Don't forget to bring out the exceeding good fortune which came to them and to Timothy by the call of the latter to their help, vs. 1-3), until they had finished their tour of Phrygia and Galatia, v. 6. Then the Holy Ghost forbade, v. 6; and again, v. 7; and led them down to a sort of Land's End at Troas. What it all meant, they could not guess. It certainly was not what they had set out to do, ch. 15: 36. But God was leading and that was enough. They followed as He directed.

2. *A gleam of light.* It came to Paul in the darkness of the night, v. 9 (Compare ch. 10: 30). It was but a gleam, but it was