



LESSON,—SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1909.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey—The Philippian Jailor.

Acts xvi., 25-40. Memory verses 29-31. Read Acts xvi., 16-40.

Golden Text.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts xvi., 31.

Home Readings.

Monday, July 5.—Acts xvi., 16-24.
 Tuesday, July 6.—Acts xvi., 25-40.
 Wednesday, July 7.—I. Thes. ii., 1-9.
 Thursday, July 8.—II. Cor. xii., 1-10.
 Friday, July 9.—Dan. iii., 19-27.
 Saturday, July 10.—John vi., 37-47.
 Sunday, July 11.—John iii., 9-17.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Is there any word in the title that any one of you is interested in? Of course, we are all interested in Paul, but who is the other person mentioned? The jailor: and who is a jailor? A man who looks after the people who are kept in prison, isn't he? If I were to lock you all up here in this room, and not let you go home, I would be your jailor. But, of course, I wouldn't be allowed to do that even if I wanted to. Why are people ever allowed to be locked up in prison? Only when they have done what is wrong you say, but sometimes people who haven't done wrong get locked up by a mistake, because people think they have. Indeed a great many very good people have been locked up in prison, and once, while Paul was out as a missionary telling people about Jesus, he and his friend Silas got locked up, and it is about that time and about the man who was their jailor that our story tells to-day. Paul and Silas got put into one kind of prison because they helped a poor girl to get free out of another kind of prison. Then God set Paul and Silas free from their prison, and when they got out they helped the jailor to get free from still another kind of prison. So you see that our lesson is all about prisons and the people or things that keep people prisoners, about the prisoners themselves and how God set them all free. You know when Jesus was here on earth He said that He 'came to set the captives free.' He didn't mean that He was going to open up all the jails and let all the wicked people in them escape, but when He said that, He was speaking about the two other kinds of prison that we have in our lesson to-day, the prison of sickness which keeps us shut up away from so much of good in this world (Luke xiii., 16), and the prison of sin which keeps us away from God (John viii., 34-36). So in our lesson to-day we have the story of a young girl who was set free from the prison of sickness, the story of Paul and Silas who were set free from the usual kind of stone wall prison, and the story of the Philippian jailor who was set free from the prison of sin.

FOR THE SENIORS.

There could hardly be a greater contrast than between the owners of the slave girl at Philippi and Paul and Silas. The former, parasites of society, trafficking in another's misfortune, and gaining their living from the ignorant credulity of their fellow beings: the latter, their opposites in every particular. It is the old conflict of oppression and justice, wrong and right, and the apparent victory of evil over good was turned by God into defeat. Although Paul and Silas were forced to leave the city, Luke remained behind, as is evident by the change from the use of 'we' in the case of their arrival (verses 11, 12) to 'they' in the case of their departure (verse 40). Possibly Timothy also remained, as he is not mentioned as of Paul's company early in the next chapter (verse 4), but if he did he certainly

rejoined them shortly (verse 14). It seems probable that the work was left entirely in the hands of Luke and the early converts, and no finer commentary on the success of their labors could be had than is the epistle to the Philippians, written by Paul from another prison, eleven years after.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verses 27, 28.—It was midnight, and the jailor had to call for lights; how could Paul from the inner prison see that the jailor was going to kill himself? We must understand that the inner prison was a small cell, which had no window and no opening except into the outer and larger prison, and that the outer prison had one large door in the opposite wall; then, if there was any faint starlight in the sky, still more if the moon was up, a person in the outer doorway would be distinguishable to one whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, but the jailor would see only black darkness in the prison.—William M. Ramsay, in 'St. Paul the Traveller.'

Verse 30.—Man can not save himself. God never does anything for us that we can do for ourselves. He never gave a system of philosophy. The universe is before us, and we are left to our intelligence to frame a reasonable explanation of it. He never gave us a system of government. We were left to discern by reflection and experience the laws which determine human welfare. He never gave us a system of science. We were left to puzzle out for ourselves the problems of nature. What we are capable of doing God leaves us to do, although we may serve a long apprenticeship of thought and suffering before we attain the necessary proficiency. But we could not save ourselves, and therefore God has stepped in to deliver us by a mighty act of extraordinary grace. He has acted in the moral kingdom as He does not in the intellectual and social development of the race, the reason being that we have a natural power adequate to the situation, but not a moral power. The Incarnation was the stoop of God to do for mankind what it could not do for itself.—W. L. Watkinson, in 'The Duty of Imperial Thinking.'

I know much less about the atonement than I knew ten years ago; but I know that Christ came to save and that He does save.—G. Campbell Morgan.

Verse 37.—'They have beaten us, men that are Romans.' 'It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen—a crime to scourge him—almost parricide to put him to death,' said Cicero. 'In the most distant lands, even among barbarians, that cry ("Civis Romanus sum"—I am a Roman citizen) has often brought succor and safety.'

Verse 37.—'Let them come themselves and bring us out.' Those were brave words because it took a strong man to send back such an answer to magistrates who had treated him so outrageously only the day before. They were wise words, for they give us an apostle's interpretation of our Lord's language in the Sermon on the Mount concerning the non-resistance of evil, and show us that in St. Paul's estimation Christ's law did not bind a man to tolerate foul injustice. Toleration of injustice is unfair and uncharitable towards others if it can be lawfully redressed or at least apologized for. It is a Christian man's duty to bring public evil-doers and tyrants, instruments of righteousness like these 'Dumvirs' of Philippi, to their senses, not for his own sake, but in order that he may prevent the exercise of similar cruelties against his weaker brethren. We may be sure the spirited action of St. Paul, compelling these provincial magnates to humble themselves before the despised strangers, must have had a very wholesome effect in restraining them from similar violence during the rest of their term of office.—G. T. Stokes, in 'Expositor's Bible.'

(FROM PELOUBET'S 'NOTES.')

Verse 16.—Virgil's description of the Cumaean Sibyl Deiphobe, in the 'Æneid,' written B.C. 30-20, furnishes a good idea of this slave girl's appearance when the afflatus came upon her. Even when the sibyl comes in view of the awful doors she begins to go through the terrible struggle which, according to all legends, invariably accompanied this form of prophecy.

'Unearthly peals her deep toned cry.

'Her color changed, her face was not the same;

Her hair stood up, convulsive rage possessed
 Her trembling limbs, and heaved her laboring
 breast: . . .

Her staring eyes with sparkling fury roll,
 When all the god came rushing on her soul.
 Swiftly she turned, and foaming as she
 spoke.'

'One of the marked characteristics of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians is its joyful, hopeful tone. As in the Philippian prison he sang songs of praise eleven years before, so now a Roman prisoner, worn, fettered, diseased, hated, he rejoiced. 'It has been said that the sum of his whole letter is, "I rejoice, rejoice ye!" . . . His letter is like one of those magnificent pieces of music, which, amid all its stormy fugues and mighty discords, is dominated by some inner note of triumph which at last bursts forth into irresistible and glorious victory.'—Farrar.

Farrar, in his 'Messages of the Books,' pp. 303-306, contrasts Paul's rejoicing in prison with great and world known men in far less painful circumstances, such as Ovid, Seneca, Dante. On the other hand, 'Sir Thomas More was as cheerful in his prison as in his beautiful home at Chelsea. John Bunyan turned his jail into a sanctuary. Both of them adopted the same scheme as the apostle—praying to God and singing hymns.'

It is an historical fact that Christianity is the only religion that inspires men to sing. 'Mohammedanism has no hymnal, nor has Hinduism, nor Buddhism. No glorious outburst of sacred song from the hearts and lips of the people ever awoke the echoes of any heathen or Mohammedan temple.'

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, July 11.—Topic—Standing or falling. I. Cor. x., 12, 13.

C. E. Topic.

Monday, July 5.—Life and light. John i., 1-13.

Tuesday, July 6.—How Jesus found me. John i., 40-51.

Wednesday, July 7.—Heavenly things. John iii., 12, 13, 16-21.

Thursday, July 8.—The living Fount. John iv., 10, 14; vii., 37.

Friday, July 9.—The living Bread. John vi., 52-59.

Saturday, July 10.—The pledge of life. John xx., 1-18.

Sunday, July 11.—Topic—Life lessons for me from the Gospel of John. John xiv., 1-21. (Consecration meeting.)

The Sunday School and the Minister's Training.

There is no single part of a minister's work more important than the Sunday School.

The divinity student is to be trained in the fine art of teaching. He is 'to be apt to teach;' for this we have high authority, and for it there is a great and crying need. He is to know what good teaching is, and how to train teachers to teach, for he is the chief teacher in this parish school.

These are the four courses that the modern Sunday School has added to the curriculum of the theological seminary, and now requires every man to pursue who would be prepared to do his parish work: The pastor must know his place in the school, he must know the school, he must know his child, and he must know his method.

The conditions of modern life lay upon the church and the ministry a large responsibility for the moral and religious education of our youth. This responsibility may not be met by the ministry without thorough, scientific instruction of the divinity student in this vast department of church work, and in the four directions indicated above.—Rev. George B. Stewart, D.D.

Sunday School Offer.

Any school in Canada that does not take the 'Messenger' may have it supplied free on trial for three weeks on request of Superintendent, Secretary or Pastor, stating the number of copies required.