



LESSON,—SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1909.

**Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Farewells.**

Acts xx., 17-35. Read Acts xx., 2-38. Memory verses 31, 32.

**Golden Text.**

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Phil. iv., 13.

**Home Readings.**

- Monday, August 30.—Acts xx., 2-12.
- Tuesday, August 31.—Acts xx., 13-24.
- Wednesday, September 1.—Acts xx., 25-38.
- Thursday, September 2.—Col. i., 21-29.
- Friday, September 3.—Col. ii., 1-9.
- Saturday, September 4.—II. John.
- Sunday, September 5.—II. Tim. iv., 1-8.

**FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.**

We have learnt a lot about how Paul came to one town or another and how he had to leave them generally in a great hurry because there was a riot among the people. That didn't leave him much time to say good-by to any of his friends, did it? At least we haven't studied much in our lessons about how Paul went around wishing his friends good-by in any city, have we? Do you think Paul ever wanted to see his friends and say good-by to them just as you and I do if we are going away? Oh yes, indeed, because he loved some of the people very much and he used to write letters to them afterwards, and I daresay when he was hurrying away from some city or other he would say 'I wish I had had time to see So-and-So. He was very much troubled about something when I saw him last, and I would have liked to thank So-and-So for coming to see me the other day when I was out. Be sure to give them my love and tell them I will pray God to take care of them.' You know he lived and worked and preached for nearly three years in that city called Ephesus and he had a great many friends there, then at the last he had to go away in a hurry because of that riot about the goddess Diana, but he didn't forget his friends there and that he hadn't really said good-by to them. So one day when he was sailing back to Jerusalem and was stopping at a town about thirty miles away from Ephesus, he sent over and asked that some of the people should come and say good-by to him. He thought he would never see them again, because he thought he was likely going to be put in prison again when he got to Jerusalem, so he was very anxious to see these friends from Ephesus. He had to stay at the place where his ship was because he didn't know when it would be ready to go, but the people came from Ephesus very gladly and they had a happy meeting together. So this was one time Paul got a good chance to say good-by, and let us see what he thought was so important to say at such a time as this.

**FOR THE SENIORS.**

The quantity of work and travel from one church to another that Paul put into a few months, is indicated by the brief summary Luke supplies. Leaving Ephesus earlier than he had intended he had first planned to go to Corinth (II. Cor. i., 15-16), but not knowing how the church there had taken his earlier letter of rather sharp reproof and being far from well (II. Cor. i., 8, 9), he decided to change his route somewhat (II. Cor. ii., 1.) So deeply was he feeling the distress caused by the trouble in Corinth that not hearing from Titus who had gone to find out how

matters really stood there, he was unable to settle to the work that plainly offered in Troas (II. Cor. ii., 12, 13). He went instead to Macedonia visiting the churches there and finally hearing a good report from Corinth went on there and stayed some three months (Acts xx., 3.) Hearing of the plots of the Jews he was again forced to change his plans, and instead of sailing direct to Jerusalem to be in time for the Passover, he found it wisest to return through Macedonia. On this trip Luke joined him at Philippi, as the use of the pronoun 'we' indicates (verse 6). Paul seems to have been far from well, but fired with unconquerable energy. He was determined at least to be in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost (verse 16) and anxious as he was to see the good people of Ephesus he would not touch there nor even leave Miletus lest he risk losing his ship. Possibly Luke 'the beloved physician' went with Paul watchfully guarding the enthusiast's health, anyhow he did not again leave him until after the arrival in Rome. Paul expresses his own earnest intention as his being 'bound in the spirit.' This journey to Jerusalem with all its perils, which he considered by no means lightly, was to him a solemn duty and nothing could turn him from it. The spirit of his address to the Ephesian elders may be judged by its effect on them. We have here the picture of a man laboring under intense emotion whose spirit chafed against the limitations of his flesh. But like our Lord he had 'set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem' knowing well what that would mean. In parting from the Ephesian elders he impressed on them that it was not himself but his message he had sought to exalt, giving to all men alike the simple injunction of repentance and faith. The same burden he laid upon them, warning them of the difficulties that would arise and urging upon them the life of practical self-support and charity towards others as the true Christian ideal.

**(SELECTIONS.)**

Verse 20.—'I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.' Such openness was quite contrary to the religious ideas of the Ephesians. Mysteries, open only to the initiated, abounded at that period; and, as elsewhere, secrecy and esotericism were important elements in Ephesian superstition. Such ideas of a knowledge known only to the enlightened few, who are the 'elect,' the 'spiritual,' the 'knowing ones,' were soon to invade the Church. In his Epistles to the Colossians Paul had to combat its incipient traces.—R. B. Rackham.

Verse 24.—How often Paul draws his figures from the athletic games! Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run, that ye may attain (I. Cor. ix., 24). I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. iii., 14). I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness (II. Tim. vii., 8). Here in his speech to the Ephesian elders Paul tells them that as the object of the race is the goal, so the object of his life is the completion of his course, the accomplishing of the ministry assigned him by God; the value of his life to him was not what he might get out of it, but what he might do in it. Just as in the stadium the goal, where the judge sat, reward in hand, was plainly in the view of the runners as they stood at the starting point at the other end, so Paul would have his hearers mindful of the object which it is their aim to reach in their life's course. His own object never changed, and his purpose to attain it never faltered.

Verse 30.—'The most dangerous errors are truths distorted and perverted; truth enough to make some believe them, and error enough to injure or ruin those who do believe. Few fishes are caught with the bare hook of error or falsehood. Even in the New Testament writings no fewer than six of the pioneers of these fatal teachers of error are mentioned as belonging to Ephesus.'—Schaff. 'Hymenaeus and Alexander (I. Tim. i., 20), Phygellus and Hermogenes (II. Tim. i., 15), and Philetus (II. Tim. ii., 17), fulfilled this prediction.'—Cook.

Verse 31.—'Therefore watch.' The Greek

word means wake up, 'keep awake,' be alert as a soldier on picket duty. It expresses not a mere act, but a state of wakefulness and watching; the wakefulness and diligence that overlooks no duty, indulges no indolence. The metaphor of the flock is continued, and the picture is of shepherds ever watching each sheep in the flock lest it go astray, and day and night keeping watch over the fold against every attack of robber or ravening wolf. They should watch against dangers, seen and unseen, against wolves in sheep's clothing, against the perversions of the truth. But they should watch still more alertly for the good to be cherished, for opportunities of doing good, for unnoticed qualities that might be developed. Paul's own example had been before them for the space of three years.

Verse 35.—'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Here we have a word of Christ rescued from sinking into oblivion; a word of Christ with a word of Paul wrapped around it; the level and its setting. (1) It brings greater happiness, more intense. (2) It produces a higher quality of happiness. (3) It is the mark of a nobler character. (4) It is the blessedness of God, who is the Great Giver. (5) It is the blessedness of Christ, who 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' (6) It is the blessedness of heaven, where the inhabitants are ministering spirits. (7) It is the blessedness of the Christian religion, which is founded on love, and lives in loving and giving. (8) It is a blessedness that endures, not like a glass of water, but like a fountain; not like a tune, but like the instrument that sends forth music.

**Junior C. E. Topic.**

Sunday, September 5.—Topic—Armor we may wear. Eph. vi., 10-17. (Consecration meeting.)

**C. E. Topic.**

- Monday, August 30.—What sin does for man. Rom. i., 18-32.
- Tuesday, August 31.—Justification by grace. Rom. v., 1-11.
- Wednesday, September 1.—Yielding to God. Rom. vi., 12-23.
- Thursday, September 2.—The burden of the flesh. Rom. vii., 14-25.
- Friday, September 3.—Freedom by the Spirit. Rom. viii., 1-17.
- Saturday, September 4.—Fulness of redemption. Rom. viii., 18-30.
- Sunday, September 5.—Topic—Life lessons for me from the book of Romans. Rom. xii., 1-21. (Consecration meeting.)

**The Opportunity of Summer**

During the coming summer unlimited opportunities for open-air services are at the disposal of God's people; and we earnestly urge that the fact should be laid to heart as it never has been before. In theory Evangelical Christians recognize the duty and privilege, yet in the majority of cases the open-air service is treated as a mere adjunct to that within doors. Nor would it be too much to say that it is frequently relegated to less experienced leaders. There are greater difficulties to be met than in dealing with a seated congregation; but it has been abundantly proved that energy and ability may be expected to lead to more rapid progress here than in any other direction.—'Christian.'

**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.

**BOYS**

If you would like a nice rubber pad, with your own name and address, also a self-inking pad—all for a little work, drop us a card and we will tell you about it. Splendid for marking your books, etc. Address, John Dougall & Son, 'Witness' Office, Montreal.