INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

A. D. 44. LESSON I. ST. PAUL IN CYPRUS; or, The Gospel of Power. Acts 14. 1-13.
July 1.

EXPLANATORY.

CHURCH...AT ANTIOCH. The first Gentile church. (Chap. 11, 9-30.) Sent out the first missionaries to the Gentiles. *Prophets and teachers.* The prophets were probably those who had power to foretell, (chap. 11, 28; 21, 10,) and the teachers, something like pastors. *Barnabas.* See chap. 4, 36, and 11, 30. *Simeon...Niger.* Probably an African convert, as *Niger* means *black*. *Lucius of Cyrene.* Not Luke ...a different name. Probably one of the converts at Pentecost. (See chap. 2, 10, and 11, 19, 20.) Cyrenè was on the coast of Africa. *Manaen.* Nothing more is known of him. Foster-brother of *Herod the tetrarch*, the Herod before whom Christ was brought, now in exile—may we not imagine him a witness of that scene of sorrow?

AS THEY MINISTERED. Those who are in the way of work for God will find work to do. It is those who minister to whom the Spirit comes. What this ministry was, more than worship and work, we do not know. *Fasted.* Doubtless seeking for guidance. *Separate me*, that is, *set apart* for holy work. Saul was already aware of his mission, (see chap. 22, 21,) but he had not been ordered thereto. Notice, the best men in the church were called for missionaries. The ablest generals are needed at the front.

LAID HANDS ON THEM. Not apostolic hands, but the hands of the prophets and teachers. First used as a rite of ordination by Moses (Num. 17, 18,) the ceremony was used in the Christian church for a like purpose. See chap. 6, 6; 1 Tim. 4, 14, etc. *Sent by the Holy Ghost.* Notice the personality of the Spirit, and how he works through the church. *Selucia.* The sea-port of the Antioch, at the mouth of the Orontes. *Cyprus.* A large island, sixty or seventy miles distant, the birthplace of Barnabas, of much recent interest because of the extensive discoveries of antiquities there by De Cesnola, adding to the many proofs of the truth of the Bible. The Gospel had been before preached here. Chap. 11, 19.

SALAMIS. At the eastern end of the island; its ruins are still to be seen near the modern town of Famagousta. *John.* John Mark, the author of the Gospel of Mark. Of pious parentage, (chap. 12, 12,) converted under Peter, (1 Pet. 5, 13,) he went with Saul and Barnabas from Jerusalem, (chap. 12, 25,) and was now with them as *their minister*, or assistant; possibly as courier, or provider.

PAPHOS. At the other end of the island, about one hundred miles distant, notorious for wickedness. *Bar Jesus. Son of Jesus* or Joshua. He was a Jew, but had so far forsaken his faith as to set himself up as a Magician, falsely claiming to be a prophet of God, a very common profession in that age, and similar to the "spiritualists" of the present day.

DEPUTY. Or, *proconsul.* This has been supposed to be an error, but later research has shown it to be the correct term for the ruler *at this time*, a notable proof of the truth of the whole narrative. He was a *prudent man*, that is, *intelligent.* Though like all Romans of his day, he employed Magi, his course in sending for Barnabas and Saul showed his longing for something better. The soul that longs for God's word will find it.

ELYMAS. Arabic, meaning *wise man*, or *magian.* He so called himself. Like all of his kind, he sought to *turn away* others *from the faith.* Beware of all such, of whatever name or profession.

SAUL...PAUL. Before this always called Saul, and after this always Paul. *Why* he now took his Roman name is only a matter of conjecture. Two names were very common. Under this name he steps to the front. He was now *full of the Holy Ghost*; his indignant look, his withering rebuke, his sentence of temporary blindness, were no outburst of human antagonism, but the moving of the Holy Ghost. *Full of subtilty and mischief.* Wholly given up to *deceit and reckless trickery. Child of the devil.* Not a "son of the Saviour," as he was named, but of the father of lies. (John 8, 44.) *Pervert the right ways*, turn aside the straight paths (Matt. 3, 3. There is a woe to all who thus make the Lord's ways crooked.

THE HAND OF THE LORD. Paul had felt that hand upon himself. Though it was punishment it was the hand of love. Shutting the eyes enables us to look the clearer within. *Not seeing the sun.* Total blindness. *A mist and a darkness.* See the gradual approach of blindness, and compare with the cure of the blind man. Mark 8, 23-25.

WHEN HE SAW. His eyes were opened; he was convinced; but that he had a saving faith is not certain. He was *astonished.* It was a new doctrine to him, this great *loving* Saviour. Well might he wonder at the story of the Cross. But it is not said that he "turned to the Lord" as did those at Antioch, (chap. 11, 21,) nor are we told that he was baptized.

PAUL AND HIS COMPANY. See note above ver 10. *Loosed.* A nautical term. They went by water. *Perga.* An important city situated at what was then the head of navigation of the river Cestrus, and noted for the worship of Artemis [Diana]. *Pamphylia.* A province of uncertain boundaries in the southern part of Asia Minor. *John...returned.* Paul afterward blamed him for this act as one of desertion. (Chap. 15, 38.)

GOLDEN TEXT: Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. Acts 13, 12.

The next Lesson is Acts 13. 26-41.

THE war in Europe has revived the old prophetic verse, uttered in 1453.

In twice two hundred years the Bear
The Crescent shall assail,
But if the Cock and Bull unite
The Bear shall not prevail,
But look in twice ten years again,
Let Islam know and fear.
The Cross shall wax—the Crescent wane,
Grow pale and disappear.

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