

LESSON NOTES

FIRST QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

A.D. 58.] LESSON X. [March 8.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

Acts 24. 10-27. Commit to mem. vs. 14-16.

GOLDEN TEXT.

A conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.—Acts 24. 16.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

A clear conscience, an hope toward God; a guilty conscience, and a terror at the judgment to come.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 24. 10-27. T. John 16. 1-13.
 T. Mark 6. 14-30. F. 2 Cor. 5. 10-21.
 W. Phil. 3. 7-21. Sa. John 5. 17-29.
 Su. Prov. 1. 20-33.

TIME.—Tuesday, May 30, the fifth day after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Caesarea, 47 miles north-west of Jerusalem. A residence of the Roman governor. The home of Philip, the evangelist, and Cornelius, the centurion.

CIRCUMSTANCES.—Paul, having escaped from the murderous attempt upon his life at Jerusalem, by being brought to Caesarea under guard, is kept in prison for five days, till his accusers came from Jerusalem. They brought a lawyer with them, who made three charges against Paul: (1) of sedition, exciting a tumult; (2) of heresy, preaching a false religion; (3) of sacrilege, profaning the temple. The lesson begins with Paul's answer to these charges.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—10. *Many years a judge*—About six years, unusually long for a governor of Judea. *I the more cheerfully answer*—Because Felix had had opportunity to know the character of Paul's accusers, and also the good character of the Christians. 12. *Neither in the temple disputing*—He here denies the charge of sedition. 14. *But this I confess, etc.*—Here he answers the charge of heresy, or founding a sect. *First*—It is only called a sect by them. It was a sect only as the Sadducees and Pharisees were sects, and these were allowed by Roman law. *Second*—He worshipped the same God as the Jews. *Third*—He believed in the same Bible. *Fourth*—He held the same hopes as the majority of his nation. *Fifth*—His desire was to do right. 17. *After many years*—It was 21 years since his conversion, and 10 since he went as a missionary. He now answers the charge of profaning the temple. *First*—He came to help his nation by alms, not to overthrow it. *Second*—He brought the temple offerings for the feast, and for purification. 18. *Purified in the temple*—His third answer. He was not profaning, but going through Jewish ceremonies in the temple. 22. *Felix . . . having more perfect knowledge*—He knew enough about these things to see that the charges would not hold. 24. *Drusilla*—She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and the wife of Azizus, king of Emesa, whom she left to live with Felix. 25. *Temperance*—Self-control, mastery over every passion and appetite. 27. *After two years*—Paul now had opportunity for rest, for meditation, for helping Luke write the Gospel and the Acts.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The intervening events.—Felix.—Drusilla.—The three charges against Paul.—Paul's answer to the first; to the second; to the third.—v. 16.—Paul's sermon to Felix.—Why Felix trembled.—Paul's two years in Caesarea.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Why did Paul leave Jerusalem? Where did he go? How long after did his accusers come? Who argued the case for them before Felix? What three charges did he make against Paul?

SUBJECT: AN APPROVING AND A CONDEMNING CONSCIENCE.

I. A GOOD CONSCIENCE (vs. 10-23).—How did Paul begin his answer? How would Felix' acquaintance with the Jewish nation aid Paul?

THE FIRST CHARGE ANSWERED (vs. 11-16).—What was the first charge against Paul? What was his answer?

THE SECOND CHARGE ANSWERED (vs. 14-16).—What was the second charge? What was Paul's first answer? Meaning of heresy? The second answer? Did he worship the same God as the other Jews? What was the foundation of his religious belief? How was this another answer to

the charge? What was his fourth answer? (v. 15.) What is the Christian's hope? Is this a fear to the sinner? What other answer did he make to this charge? (v. 16.) Meaning of "exorcise myself"? Does it require training to live without offence?

THE THIRD CHARGE ANSWERED (vs. 17-25).—What was the third charge? How did Paul explain his conduct? What was the answer to the charge? Who should have come to accuse him? What did Felix do at the close of this trial? Why did he not give Paul his freedom? What favours did he grant him? What friends did Paul have in the city?

II. A CONDEMNING CONSCIENCE (vs. 24-27).—About what did Felix have interviews with Paul? What was his object? How could he expect money from Paul? What was the subject of Paul's discourse before Felix and Drusilla? What is temperance? Were his audience guilty? What was the effect upon them? Why should Felix be terrified before Paul? How did Felix attempt to quiet his conscience? Did the convenient season ever come? How do such excuses harden us in sin? How long did Paul remain at Caesarea? What may he have been doing? Was this rest of any advantage to Paul?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The charges against Christianity by unbelievers are best answered by the simple facts.
2. The Christian's life is full of hope.
3. The Christian must exercise and train himself in virtue, as a soldier in arms, or an artist in art.
4. Paul convinced men of sin by preaching righteousness.
5. The conscience of the sinner makes him tremble when he thinks of his sins.
6. The folly of putting off repentance till a more convenient season.
7. Even in prison one need not be useless.

REVIEW EXERCISE. (For the whole School in concert.)

6. With what did the Jews charge Paul before Felix? ANS. With sedition, heresy, and profaning the temple. 7. What was Paul's answer? ANS. He refuted every charge by a simple statement of the facts. 8. About what did Paul discourse before Felix in private? ANS. About righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. 9. What was the effect? ANS. Felix trembled, but put off repentance. 10. How long did Paul remain a prisoner at Caesarea? ANS. For two years.

A.D. 60.] LESSON XI. [March 15.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.

Acts 26. 1-18. Commit to mem. vs. 16-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.—Acts 26. 15.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The Gospel is shown to be true by what it does for men.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Acts 25. 13-27. T. Matt. 17. 1-9.
 T. Acts 26. 1-18. F. Gal. 1. 11-24.
 W. Acts 9. 1-20. Sa. Luke 1. 67-80.
 Su. Isa. 42. 1-12.

TIME.—First of August, A.D. 60, two years after the last lesson.

PLACE.—Caesarea, 47 miles north-west of Jerusalem.

RULERS.—Nero, emperor of Rome. Porcius Festus, governor of Judea. Herod Agrippa II., king of Trachonitis, and the country east of the upper Jordan.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS.—Gov. Felix is recalled to Rome, accused by the Jews, whom he had tried to please. Porcius Festus succeeds him, reaching Caesarea in June, A.D. 60.

INTRODUCTION.—Paul had lain in prison at Caesarea when a change was made in governors. Immediately on his arrival in Jerusalem (July 1-12), the leading Jews ask the governor to send Paul to Jerusalem, intending to kill him. The governor refuses, and summons the Jews to Caesarea. They accuse Paul bitterly. Paul denies the charges, but, fearing lest the governor be persuaded to send him to Jerusalem, he appeals to Caesar, and it is determined to send him to Rome for trial; but Festus can find no charges to send with him. King Agrippa and his sister Bernice about this

time visit Festus, and Paul is called before him, in order that he, being a Jew by education, may discover some accusation.

THE TRIAL SCENE.—(1) *The place*. Herod's judgment-hall, or palace. (2) *The prisoner*. Paul, aged 58, bound by one hand to a Roman soldier. (3) *The judges*. Festus, of good character, comparatively; Agrippa, a bad, hard man; Bernice, his sister, living with him as his wife. (4) *The audience*. The leading people of Caesarea, officials in their rich robes, military officers in gorgeous uniforms, and a brilliant assembly.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—3. *Expert*.—Agrippa was trained as a Jew, and had studied their sacred books. His father, though not a Jew, lived in the Jewish ways. 5. *Straightest*.—Most exact, particular. 7. *Our twelve tribes*.—The nation as a whole. Many of what are called the lost ten tribes were mingled with the tribe of Judah, and the Jews were a commingling of all the tribes. 11. *Compelled*.—Strove to compel. 14. *Pricks*.—Goads with which oxen were driven; the more they kicked against them, the worse they were hurt.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—Festus.—The preliminary trial before Festus.—Agrippa.—Object of the trial before him.—The scene of the trial.—Why Paul recounted his early experience.—Kicking against the goads.—The object of Paul's conversion.—The darkness of worldliness.—The light of Jesus Christ.—The inheritance of the saints.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—How long did Paul remain in prison at Caesarea? What change was made in the governors of Judea? Who did the Jews ask of the new governor? Where were they summoned to accuse Paul? What was the result of this trial? Why did Paul appeal to Caesar? How was this aiding him in his desire to go to Rome? Who came to visit Festus? What favour did Festus ask of them? Why? What trial was now held? Who were the audience? Was this a favourable time to preach the Gospel?

SUBJECT THE GOSPEL DEFENDED AND PROVED.

I. BECAUSE IT IS THE FULFILMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES (vs. 1-7).—How did Paul open his address? What can you tell about Agrippa? What special fitness had he for judging Paul's case? What does Paul say of his early life? Why does he refer to this? What was the promise made by God to the fathers? (Job 19. 26; Dan. 12. 2, 3; Luke 20. 37, 38; Psa. 72. 8-11; Isa. 9. 7; 10. 1-22; Dan. 7. 9, 10, 14, 27.) How did the Israelites feel toward this promise? Meaning of "instantly serving God day and night"? How was the Gospel a fulfilment of this hope? How does this show the truth of the Gospel?

II. BECAUSE IT IS REASONABLE (v. 8).—How did Paul come now to speak of the resurrection? Why was it not incredible? Had they been raised from the dead? (1 Kings 17. 22, 23; 2 Kings 4. 32-35; 13. 21; see also Luke 20. 37, 38.) Is the Gospel reasonable? Are all its teachings reasonable?

III. BECAUSE OF THE WONDERFUL CHANGES IT WORKS TO INDIVIDUALS (vs. 9-16).—Give a brief account of Paul's conversion? Did he see Jesus in the bright light? What did he hear him say? Was this a proof that Jesus was living, and divine? (v. 16; ch. 9. 17.) Meaning of "hard to kick against the pricks"? How did it apply to Paul? How does it apply to us? What change was wrought in Paul? How do the wonderful changes the Gospel works in the character of men prove the truth of the Gospel?

IV. BECAUSE OF ITS RESULTS IN THE WORLD (vs. 16-18).—Why did Jesus appear to Paul? Was he to have a new light? How does this bear upon the inspiration of his epistles? What was to be the effect of the Gospel? What is the darkness referred to? How does the Gospel bring light? What are the four steps in the Gospel work in v. 18? What is the inheritance of the saints?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. The hopes and promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the Gospel.
2. The Gospel is proved by the marvellous changes it has wrought in men.
3. It is proved by its purpose and work. Note the results of Christian missions in transforming nations.
4. When God calls us to be converted, he calls us to some worthy work.

5. Christian knowledge and experience is progressive.

6. We should all join with all our hearts in turning men from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God.

(REVIEW EXERCISE. For the whole school in concert.)

11. What was done with Paul after two years' imprisonment? ANS. He was tried again before Festus, the new governor. 12. What was the result? ANS. He appealed to Caesar, and they determined to send him to Rome. 13. What hearing did he have before he went to Rome? ANS. Before King Agrippa. 14. What was his argument here? ANS. He proclaimed the Gospel to be true because (1) It was the fulfilment of the Jewish Bible; (2) It was reasonable. (3) It wrought marvellous changes in the character, lives, and hopes of men.

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