

PAUL GLORIFYING IN REVELATIONS.

Paul's bodily sufferings were the outward proofs of his apostleship. The revelations which were vouchsafed him were the inward proofs. The latter he could refer to in a general way only. He could not ask his converts to follow his ecstatic flight into the third heaven. He could not even prove to them the fact of such transcendent experiences. But he could at least remind them that "the thorn in the flesh," so familiar to them, was no meaningless infliction. It had a specific divine purpose, namely, to counteract any temptation to spiritual pride that such experiences might have awakened in him. But the "thorn" also meant suffering. Suffering, then, whether inflicted by men or by God was an essential proof of apostolic authority, and in this respect Paul gloried that he surpassed those whom he ironically called "the very chiefest," the most supereminent and inflated, of the false apostles at Corinth.

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON III.—PAUL AT THESSALONICA AND BEREÆ—JULY 18.

(Acts xvii. 1-12.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily."—Acts. xvii. 11.

TIME AND PLACE—About A.D. 51, 52. Thessalonica, modern Saloniki; Berea, modern Verria; both cities of Macedonia.

INTRODUCTION—When the magistrates, who had committed Paul and Silas to prison, the next morning sent to release them, probably because they knew that there had been no adequate ground for their action, they found themselves confronted with what might have proved a very serious accusation against themselves, viz., that they had, without trial, scourged and cast into prison Roman citizens. Under the Roman law they were guilty of a grave crime, and they hastened to the prison and besought them to depart. Luke seems to have remained at Philippi, but Paul, with Silas and Timothy, proceeded westward, as related in our present lesson.

VERSE BY VERSE—V. 1. "They."—Paul and his company. "Amphipolis."—A city of Macedonia, an important Roman military station. "Apollonia."—A city of Macedonia on the route from Philippi to Thessalonica. "Thessalonica."—An important city of Macedonia, and capital of the province, one hundred miles west of Philippi.

V. 2. "Went in."—To their public meeting on the Sabbath day. "Out of the Scriptures."—The Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament.

V. 3. "Opening."—Explaining, unfolding the meaning. "Christ."—The Messiah promised in the Scriptures. "Must needs."—That is, in order that the prophecies which the Jews believed might be fulfilled.

V. 4. "Some of them."—Of the Jews. "Unsorted."—Became companions and friends. "Devout Greeks."—Greeks who had forsaken idols and worshipped the one God. "Chief women."—Women of noble rank.

V. 5. "Assaulted the house of Jason."—From verse 7 it appears that Paul and his company were entertained there.

V. 6. "Found them not."—That is, they did not find Paul and Silas, who probably had been warned and were concealed elsewhere. "Drew."—Dragged, implying violence. "Certain brethren."—Christian brethren. "Turned the world upside down."—By exciting the people, a testimony to the effect of Gospel preaching.

V. 7. "Cæsar."—The title of the Roman emperor. "Saying there is another king."—This was true so far as that the disciples claimed Jesus as their King; it was false in that they regarded Him as a spiritual king, and in no sense opposed to Cæsar.

V. 8. "Troubled the people and the ruler."—Lest these disturbances reported to the Roman authorities should cause their privileges to be taken away.

V. 9. "Taken security."—A bond that they would not disturb the peace.

V. 10. "Immediately sent away."—Lest they should suffer violence at the hands of the mob. "By night."—As the safest time. "Berea."—This was a walled town sixty miles west of Thessalonica.

V. 11. "These."—The Jews of Berea. "More noble."—Less prejudiced and more fair. "Received the word."—The Gospel as preached by Paul. "Readiness of mind."—Their minds were open to the truth, and ready to give it fair consideration. "Searched the Scriptures."—As in Thessalonica, so in Berea, Paul based his teachings upon the Scriptures, and so his hearers searched (studied) the Scriptures. "Whether these things were so."—Whether Paul's interpretation of these Scriptures was right.

V. 12. "Honorable women."—Women of noble rank.

THE POINTS.—The guiding hand of God may lead us about, but it never leads wrong. Paul and his companions journeyed one hundred miles to reach Thessalonica. Instead of a few women, as they found in Philippi, there were at that city some thirty thousand Jews. In place of a humble "place of prayer," near the river, as the women had in Philippi, they had a synagogue, all fitted for the worship of God. To them Paul carried the precious truth of the Gospel. He carried no new text-book of new doctrines and ceremonies unto them. He opened the sacred Scriptures, which every loyal Jew accepted as his Bible. He did not command silence while he presented his views, but with them he made a review, a study, a search of their Scriptures. He testified that the son of Mary, Jesus of Nazareth, answered the whole demand of their Scriptures, and was the Messiah. By personal experience he had proved the living power of Jesus, and in His name offered salvation by faith unto the Jews. He showed unto them the one step needful to put them in possession of the salvation of Jesus. For three weeks he tarried for the purpose of instructing his people in the affairs which concerned their eternal welfare.

The gathered fruit was small in comparison with that at Philippi, yet it was precious enough to engage the apostles three Sabbath-days. There were a few among the vast number who believed. Among the Jews were a large number of Gentile proselytes. These were gathered into the ark of safety. Though the Jewish church had received them as converts from idolatry, they could not retain their membership when they saw, a step higher, a salvation from sin as presented by the apostles.

The reflex action, which came as the result of rejected light, came upon the apostles in hot persecution. The unbelieving Jews were ready to defend the interests of a nation, a government they hated, rather than let the preachers of truth go uninjured, or continue to multiply their converts from their synagogue. Candid investigation would have cleared the apostles, and brought disgrace upon them, had they proceeded justly. They therefore resorted to the disgraceful measures of co-operating with a mob, made up from a company of vagabonds, men whose business it was to stir up confusion and create a panic. They made actual disorder and uproar, in their effort to prove the reality of what was merely imagined trouble. They brought greater condemnation upon themselves and drove from their midst their truest friends. The apostles were not commissioned to compel men to accept Christ, and their duty was done, and their way open to go to another field.

The contrast between the Jews of Thessalonica and those of Berea was marked. Only a few miles divided these two congregations, but their attitude toward the apostles was widely different. The same custom was observed in Berea as in other places. The synagogue was the first place where Paul presented Christ. The people were as sincere as they professed to be. They searched their Scriptures, to know if surely the apostles were God's true servants, unfolding the meaning of His Word. In the search they were enlightened. Paul counted their honesty a mark of nobility. The same might be said to-day, for it is not the truly good or wise-hearted people who make light of the Scriptures. The results were equally different. A large number believed, in Berea, among the Jews, and with them Gentile proselytes, which were Greeks. Each successive journey to new fields proved to Paul the truth of what the Lord had declared at the time of his conversion, for surely he found how great things he must suffer for Christ's sake. How marvelous the grace that kept him steadfast in every new conflict.

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

This department is conducted by a member of the General Assembly's Committee on Young People's Societies. Correspondence is invited from all Young People's Societies, and Presbyterial and Synodical Committee. Address: "Our Young People," PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, Drawer 2465, Toronto, Ont.

WHAT ANY ONE CAN DO.

Deep down in Lillian Fargo's heart there was a longing to do something to make some one happy.

"I only knew what I could do," she said softly to herself, one early spring morning, as she stood before a little bed of woodland violets, which occupied a sheltered corner of the flower-garden.

A little old woman came down the quiet village street and paused at the gate for a little chat with Miss Fargo.

"It's too bad about Dick Willard," she remarked. "You know he's been sick so long, an' he was took worse last night, an' the doctor says he can't last much longer. I'm jist goin' down to see if I can do anything."

"Wait just one minute, please," said Lillian, as she plucked a little bunch of the blue violets, the dew still sparkling on their