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SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXIV.

JUNE 17, 1883. END OF THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. (Acts 14: 19-23.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—Matt. 28: 19.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Foreign missions are a blessing to the whole Church.

CONNECTION.—The story continued from last lesson.

I. PAUL STONED.—Ver. 19.—Certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium: the apostles had been at Lystra no doubt a considerable number of days, and the Jews came to know it; and followed after them to destroy the work. Some of them had come even from Antioch in Pisidia, more than 100 miles back. Persuaded the people: the people had seen a great miracle; the men who did it disclaimed being gods. Who were they then? Magicians? Sorcerers? There would be a regulation of feeling: and then these Jews came, and would accuse them of working by the power of the devil—just as they did in Christ's days. Stoned Paul: he was out of the protection of Roman law now; and the Jews would probably begin the stoning.

This was the time Paul speaks of. (2 Cor. 11: 25.) Did he remember Stephen? And was he content to follow his example?

Ver. 20.—The disciples stood around: there would be a large party in favour of Paul; and a number of Christian converts. He rose up: We are not told that the Lord restored him by a miracle. He would be fearfully bruised and stunned; not actually and totally deprived of life. They left him for dead. When he said he "bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6: 17) he referred probably to wounds, disfigurements or broken bones received at Lystra. Timothy was a young disciple at Lystra; perhaps Paul was assisted to his mother's house. Next day he departed: this shows the danger his life was in. He should have been in his bed, with careful nursing, for two or three weeks. His enemies thought he was dead, the brethren would hide him for the night, and send him forward in disguise next day to Derbe, twenty miles distant.

Ver. 21.—Preached the Gospel: they had good news to tell everywhere. Had taught many: there was no persecution at Derbe; and great success attended their labours. Many received the glad news of sin forgiven through a Divine Redeemer. Returned again: the excitement had in a great degree died away; and they went back through the same cities again. But this visit was to strengthen the believers, and to perfect the organization of churches among them. No public preaching mentioned. Their presence kept secret.

II. REVISITING THE CHURCHES.—Ver. 22.—Confirming: exhorting: they confirmed them, not by some ceremony so called, but by instruction and exhortation. "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Prov. 27: 17.) Through much tribulation: through many trials and sorrows they would at last arrive at peace and rest. Mark, "through" these: there was no need of sinking under them. We get through them all at last!

Ver. 23.—Ordained them elders: appointed them, as the apostles appointed deacons in Acts 6: 3, 6. And no doubt after being chosen by the brethren, as in the case of the deacons. In every church: each church its own local officers. Prayed with fasting: every important religious transaction in the Scriptures is attended with prayer. "And fasting served to intensify prayer."—Plumptre. Commended them to the Lord: even as Paul and Barnabas themselves were "recommended to the grace of God" by the church at Antioch. We cannot now set church-officers of our choice "before the apostles" personally and physically; but we have the authority—the presence as it were—of the apostles among us in their inspired writings; and we submit the officers of our choice to the test of these: and thus, in the only way possible to us, "set them before the apostles." (Acts 6: 6.)

Ver. 24.—Pamphylia: a province of mixed nationalities ("all-tribe" men; *pan, philo*) lying along the coast. They had landed there from Cyprus.

Ver. 25.—Perga: for some reason (perhaps the migration of a large part of the population to the hill-country during the heats of summer) they had not spent any time in Perga when they first landed. Now, they preached there. Went down to Attalia: they did not find a ship in Perga: but found one at Attalia, sixteen miles distant, at the mouth of another river. Apparently they spent no time in Attalia. It is now a considerable place of 8,000 inhabitants.

Ver. 26.—Sailed to Antioch: the great city of Syria: their starting-place. A couple of hundred miles coasting eastward.

Ver. 27.—They released all: gathered the church together, and told them all that God had wrought by them. Every church that puts out a hand to help others, gets a wondrous blessing to itself. Opened the door of faith: it was now perfectly plain, whatever some of the narrower Christian Jews might say, that God was anxious to have the Gospel preached to the Gentiles.

Ver. 28.—Abode long time; Antioch was preparing to take the place of Jerusalem (which it did as soon as Jerusalem was destroyed) as a sort of "mother" Church. What a time of refreshing they would have, with all these "workers" with them!

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. The Scotch proverb says, "The devil's a busy bishop in his ain diocese." How active was he, through his agents, in trying to keep the Gospel out of these provinces, so long under his sway! (Ver. 19.)

2. Paul stoned Stephen; the people stoned Paul. Stephen died, and others told of his stoning. Paul lived, and told of his own stoning. The one's work was done: the other had still work to do.

3. Christians may be confirmed (strengthened) by the prayers, advice and example of other Christians. (Ver. 22.)

4. Christian co-operation in Church fellowship is the only way most effectually to carry on the "Holy War" in the world. To leave the converts unorganized, would be to lose most of their work in those regions. (Ver. 23.)

PAUL'S FIRST MISSION TOUR.

OUTWARD: HOMeward:

FROM ANTIOCH	FROM DERBE
TO SELEUCIA,	TO LYSTRA,
TO SALAMIS,	TO ICONIUM,
TO PAPHOS,	TO ANTIOCH,
TO PERGA,	TO PERGA,
TO ANTIOCH,	TO ATTALIA,
TO ICONIUM,	TO SELEUCIA,
TO LYSTRA,	TO ANTIOCH.
TO DERBE.	

DR. RENTOU, of Galvagh, Ireland, is now the oldest minister in the Assembly having sole charge of a congregation. He is in the eighty-third year of his age, and fifty-seventh of his ministry.