



LESSON,—SUNDAY, MAY 2, 1909.

Paul's First Missionary Journey.—Cyprus.

Acts xiii., 1-12. Memory verses 2, 3.

Golden Text.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark xvi., 15.

Home Readings.

- Monday, April 26.—Acts xiii., 1-12.
Tuesday, April 27.—Isa. vi., 1-8.
Wednesday, April 28.—Isa. xl., 1-11.
Thursday, April 29.—Rom. x., 6-17.
Friday, April 30.—Luke x., 1-11.
Saturday, May 1.—Deut. xviii., 9-14.
Sunday, May 2.—I. Cor. i., 12-24.

FOR THE JUNIOR CLASSES.

Last Sunday we were speaking about how the little dandelion seeds got blown away by the winds, and we said that was like the way in which the Christians were driven out of Jerusalem by persecution. And we saw that the Christians were not angry about this terrible wind but just set to work to live for Jesus wherever they went. But is there any other kind of way by which seeds get scattered than just by a wind coming along and blowing them? Of course there is. Any one who has been on a farm has seen the farmer sowing the seed either by hand or by the machine that has been made for just that purpose. Now can Christians be scattered into the world like that, or do they have to wait for a wind of persecution to come and blow them every time? Certainly we should not wait for anything like a great wind, nor do we. Does anyone know what 'a missionary' means? It means 'one who has been sent out for some purpose, and Christian churches all over the world now have their missionaries sent out to preach the good news about Jesus in all the heathen countries. You remember how we said that Jesus said His followers are like good seed that He scatters in the world to grow for Him, and He has given His followers (all those who say they believe and trust in Him) a great command, that we have in our golden text for to-day. Let us all say it over together—'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.' 'Go ye', that means all of us; 'into all the world', that doesn't leave a single country out; 'to every creature', that means that God wants every man and woman, every little boy and girl, in the world to hear about Him. Now to-day we are to see how and when the great missionary, Paul, set out on his first missionary journey.

FOR THE SENIORS.

Look at the history of the first century of Christian endeavor: can it be doubted that had the church continued in the spirit then expressed there would not now have been before her the terrible problem of the heathen world of to-day? However, there is no need for dismay or trepidation. The same mighty weapons are still in God's armory for the use of the church to-day, and when Christians are ready for the work God is ready with the reward. It is notable that the modern objection, 'We have heathen at home; let us see to them first,' did not trouble the church that was earnestly waiting upon God in prayer. No church, however, could have better advanced such a seemingly logical objection, than this church in Antioch. For the city was a centre of some of the vilest of heathen practices, a large city of which the church could have, by now, obtained but the slightest hold, humanly speaking. Nor was that other cry raised, that cry which is a mockery to mere humanity, 'The heathen are

well enough off, and if they never hear they will never have the sin of rejecting.' No, this early church was near enough to the Master to remember His command, earnest enough to seek His will in prayer, and generous enough to give of their best, for they sent Barnabas and Saul when the call for workers came. To-day's is the first of three lesson studies on this first missionary journey of St. Paul, and it would be well to have a simple map plainly marked by which to follow him on the way. The first point of attack was the old home of Barnabas (Acts iv., 36), and the home, also, of some of those who had first founded the church in Antioch (Acts xi., 20). It is an island of some 150 miles in length by 60 miles in breadth, and the two missionaries with their attendant did not leave it until they had gone thoroughly over the grounds (verse 6), news of their sayings and doings even procuring them an interview with the pro-consul.

(SELECTIONS FROM TARBELL'S 'GUIDE.')

Verse 3. When they had fasted and prayed. The source of the spiritual vitality and power of any Christian movement is prayer. Our hope and confidence in this enterprise of world-wide missions are chiefly placed, not in the extent and strength of the missionary organization; not in the number and power of the missionary force; not in the fulness of the treasury and in well-appointed material equipment; not in the achievements of the past, even those of a spiritual character; not in the experience acquired by centuries of Christian missions; not in the methods and agencies which have been devised; not in the brilliancy and popularity of the leaders of the missionary movement at home and abroad; not in statesmanlike and far-sighted policies and plans; not in enthusiastic forward movements and inspiring watchwords; on none of these considerations do we rely principally, for it is 'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' The source of the power of any spiritual movement is God, and the energies of God are released in answer to prayer.—John R. Mott, in 'The Pastor and Modern Missions.'

Delaying the Carrying out of the Command. Our belief that we are commissioned to give the gospel to the whole world is not yet a dominant motive in our life. We have believed it enough to give a little money, and send a few men and women to foreign lands. But we have not yet comprehended that the Church's primarily a missionary agency, and that we have been delaying instead of completing the charge of our Church's Lord for nineteen hundred years. What the Church is for is not chiefly to be a safe and comfortable nursery for believers in Jesus. It is to be a mighty army for the conquest of the world. Its richly provided home in lands already Christianized is to be the base of supply for an active and ceaseless campaign, in which the banner of the cross is to be carried everywhere over the wide world. The wealth with which the Church is endowed is not its own, but put into its stewardship, to be used for the Lord who bestowed it.—The Presbyterian.

Paying back a Debt. Our own ancestors were at once not much better than the heathen for whom our missionaries are now working. Caesar has described them, and has told how the women helped the men in battle. Our genealogical tree has been traced far back for us by a Brahmin. The high-caste Brahmins, you know, form the highest class of Hindu society, and regard themselves as superior to all other men. One of them, Narayan Sheshadri, in 1843 embraced the Christian faith and became a missionary among his own people. He visited this country, and at a church in West Philadelphia was introduced to the audience as an evidence that must satisfy every one of the value of Christian missions. In the 'Sunday-School Times' Dr. H. Clay Trumbull recalled the meeting and said: 'Narayan Sheshadri, in his imposing presence and dress, stepped forward, and, perhaps touched in his pride as a lordly Brahmin by the reference to his rescue and uplifting, said, as he looked down into the bright faces upturned to his:

'My friends, if I had ever had any doubt as to the value of Christian missions that doubt would be removed as I stand here and look into your bright and intelligent faces, and consider the facts in the case. When my

ancestors were among the lordliest persons on earth, considering themselves, and being considered by others, as one with the gods, worthy of divine honors, your ancestors were among the most degraded of human beings, looked down on and despised by those of my race. Yet by Christian missionaries your fathers were sought out and won to Christ, and in consequence you now sit here, clothed and in your right mind, as a living proof of the value of Christian missions, concerning the interests of which we are to consult together this afternoon.'

That was a truth we do not always consider as we should. I recalled that when the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VII, visited India with Dean Stanley, it was said that the India officials sent into the jungle and lassoed a few specimens of the ancient race from which the English people are supposed to have sprung, and brought them in for the young Prince of Wales to look at. And it is owing to Christian missions and Christian missionaries that we are, under God, now above the level, or the low depths, of our ancestors. All the civilization and the refinement, and the Christianity, that we enjoy, and on which we, in a sense, pride ourselves, we, as a people,—with the exception of the Hebrew race—owe to this glorious agency. Since I heard that telling rejoinder by the Christian Brahmin, I am more ready than before to consider not only what is my duty to the cause of Christian missions, but what gratitude I should have to Christian missions in view of what they have done for me and mine.'

God does not want you in China if you can not witness in London: He has no use in India for one who is dumb in His own house.—G. Campbell Morgan.

If a man has any religion he must either give it away or give it up.—Archbishop Whately.

Junior C. E. Topic.

Sunday, May 2.—Topic—Daily Bible-reading. Acts xvii., 11. (Consecration meeting.)

C. E. Topic.

Monday, April 26.—The service. Isa. xlii., 1-7.

Tuesday, April 27.—The sacrifice of the servant. Isa. liii.

Wednesday, April 28.—My hope. Isa. ii., 1-5.

Thursday, April 29.—My King and his reign. Isa. xi., 1-9.

Friday, April 30.—My song of salvation. Isa. xii., 1-6.

Saturday, May 1.—My desert place. Isa. xxxv., 1-10.

Sunday, May 2.—Topic—Life lessons for me from the book of Isaiah. Isa. vi., 1-9. (Consecration meeting.)

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