

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1877.

SUNDAY, October 7th, 1877.—Paul at Caesarea.—Acts xxi. 8-15.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 10-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."—Acts xx. 24.

DAILY READINGS.—Monday, Acts xxi. 19. Tuesday, vs. 3; Ezekiel xxvi. 1-21. Wednesday, vs. 8; Acts viii. 26-40. Thursday, vs. 8; Acts x. 1-24. Friday, vs. 9; Joel ii. 18-32. Saturday, vs. 11; Jeremiah xiii. 1-11. Sunday, vs. 12; Matthew x. 16-39.

ANALYSIS.—I. In Caesarea with Philip. Vs. 8, 9. II. Trials again foretold. Vs. 10, 11. III. Protest of affection. Vs. 12. IV. Affection overcome by duty. Vs. 13, 14. V. Paul on the way to Jerusalem. Vs. 15.

QUESTIONS.—After leaving Miletus, to what island forty miles south did Paul sail? Then where? What one of the "seven wonders of the world" was at Rhodes? Name the other places Paul visited on his way to Caesarea?

Vs. 8. Who were some of Paul's travelling companions to Caesarea? Where do we first meet with Philip? Did any one precede him in preaching the gospel to the Gentiles?

Vs. 9. What are the two significations of the word "prophecy" in the New Testament?

Vs. 10. How had Agabus been of service to Paul before? Acts xi. 28.

Vs. 11. How does Agabus point out in symbol the treatment Paul is to receive in Jerusalem? What was his direct prophecy? Were the words of Agabus fulfilled? See v. 33 and Chap. xxiv.

Vs. 12. What does Jesus say about this? Matt. x. 37. How many parties begged Paul not to go?

Vs. 13. How far did the feelings of his friends rule Paul's conduct? Where did Paul weep?

Vs. 14. How did Paul's firm purpose change the feelings of his friends? What is to be learned from their conduct?

HISTORICAL CONNECTION.—First to Caesarea, thence to Rhodes. Here stood "The Colossus of Rhodes," at the entrance to the harbor. It was twelve years in being erected (B. C. 292-280), in height one hundred and fifty-five feet, and cost "three hundred talents" (in gold, \$8,000,000). It was in bronze. It was reckoned among the Seven Wonders of the World, but was overthrown by an earthquake, B. C. 224. Paul sailed thence to Patara, in Lycia. Here he took a ship bound for Phoenicia, and sighting Cyprus on the left hand, arrived at Tyre, an ancient city, Josh. xix. 29; 2 Sam. v. 11; xxiv. 7, distant from Joppa, less than seventy-four geographical miles; and Jerusalem, not more than one hundred and six geographical miles. The Saracens took it from the Christians (A. D. 1291), and it never recovered from the blow. Ezek. xxvi. 1-5. Then Paul sailed to Ptolemais. Thence Paul proceeded, apparently by land, to Caesarea, on the coast, a few miles south of Carmel, seventy miles from Jerusalem. Acts xx. 22, 23.

EXPOSITION.—We have here the prediction of Paul's persecution if he should go on to Jerusalem; the earnest endeavor to dissuade him from going; Paul's remonstrance against the dissuasion, and the final acquiescence of all in his decision.

I. The Prediction. Verses 8-11.—On this see xx. 22, 23, and xxi. 4, from which it appears that from the day of his start from Corinth this prediction in substance had been before Paul's mind.

The place where it was now made was Caesarea. Paul was here stopping at the home of Philip, one of "the seven" (vi. 5), commonly known as "deacons," though not so called in Scripture. We have had a glance of his work as evangelist in vii. 5, 26, 40. This last verse is specially noteworthy in connection with the present lesson. More than twenty years had passed, and doubtless been filled up with like work from Caesarea as a centre.

The prophet making the prediction, Agabus (vs. 10), has once before appeared (xi. 27-30) eighteen years before, and on a like mission. The office of prophet, or inspired announcer of

divine revelations, was common in apostolic times (xiii. 1; Eph. iv. 11, etc.), and the prediction of future events was one part of their work. Even in the family of Philip were four who, though women, held the office. See ii. 17; Joel ii. 28, 29. This does not imply that they were public speakers and preachers contrary to 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35; 1 Tim. ii. 11. The mention of these at least suggests that they too may have added their predictions to that of Agabus, either in confirming, or even independently.

The manner of making the prediction was first by symbolism. The girdle so often mentioned in Scripture, was worn by both men and women, over the loose outer garments and was made of leather (Matt. iii. 4), or other material. Dan. x. 5. The prophet's act in placing it upon his own hands and feet successively was doubtless performed in the presence of the assembled Christians, and was far more eloquent and touching than words, because it represented the prisoner as bound. This prophetic acting was not uncommon in the earlier times. 1 Kings xxii. 11; Isa. xx. 1; Ezek. iv. 1, etc. The verbal explanation gave definiteness and fulness to the prediction.

The substance of the prediction is thus brought out. It stops short with the binding merely, and so hardly adds to Paul's previous knowledge. xx. 22, 23. But it was calculated to convey the idea of the greatness of the event in the very fact and manner of its expression.

II. The Dissuasion. Verse 12.—The persons making it were Paul's traveling companions; namely, Luke, who is the author of the narrative, Trophimus, (vs. 29), Aristarchus (xx. 4; xxvii. 2), and perhaps others not named, while the Christians of Caesarea also joined in with them. In fact Christians, in other places, had done the same (vs. 4) even those inspired to foretell the danger.

The reason of their entreaty was partly regard for Paul's personal safety, arising from their deep, strong, tender love, and partly a profound sense of the great value of his ministry to the cause. It seemed even to the prophets of vs. 4 indispensable.

III. The Remonstrance. Verse 13.—Paul decides for himself. The counsel and wishes of brethren he did not disregard, did he acted upon the doctrine so strongly enforced in his writings that every man is responsible to God for himself, and for himself alone must give account. Rom. xiv. 12. To his own spirit there seems to have been a special revelation from God's Spirit as to his duty in this matter, and no man's voice could weigh with him against God's. Fruitless their tearful pleadings as to his purpose, but all too fruitful in their influence upon his feelings, even "breaking his heart," a phrase not half as strong as the original, which carries the idea of an utter crushing together so as almost to annihilate. Of course this is the language of feeling, but it was feeling that the language was to express. The word translated "weeping" means rather a loud lament.

The hearty adoption of the Divine will had its ground; namely, "For the name of the Lord Jesus;" that is, for his cause. He would not throw his life away, but not count it a worthless brute life—quite the contrary—but it was Christ's, having worth and purpose only in him and for him, and hence whatever use the Lord could make of it was just the use to which Paul would put it.

IV. The Acquiescence. Verses 14, 15.—His persistence in refusal, especially his strong remonstrance silenced them. They were brought to feel, what before they had not, that God's will was really that he should go on. Hence the prayer, "The will of the Lord [that is, Christ,] be done." No true prayer can ask for that which is made known as against a decision of divine will.

So they let Paul go, and his companions went on with him to Jerusalem. "Carriages" is always used in the Bible in the old English sense of things carried; that is, "burdens." Hence the sense here is, that they "packed up their baggage," ready for the journey.—Abridged from the Baptist Teacher.

SUNDAY, October 14th, 1877.—Paul at Jerusalem.—Acts xxi. 27-39.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—John xv. 20.

The Story of the Lesson.

FOR THE PRIMARY CLASS.

Paul and his friends left the ship at Ptolemais. Then they traveled all day, by land, to get to Caesarea. There they found a home with Philip the deacon, who lived here with his four daughters, who were not married. When Paul had been at Philip's house several days, a prophet named Agabus came from Jerusalem. Paul knew him; for fifteen years before, when he first preached at Antioch, Agabus had said there would be a great famine in Jerusalem, and the church at Antioch had sent Paul there with money. Now he told of a very sad thing which was also to happen at Jerusalem. He took off Paul's girdle or belt, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." They had heard this before, in every city they passed through. Now, Luke and Philip's family, and all Paul's friends, begged him not to go to Jerusalem. But he felt that God wished him to go, and he said, "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." Then his friends did not urge him any more, but said, "The will of the Lord be done."

Select Serial.

From The Day of Rest.

DORA'S BOY.

BY MRS. ELLEN ROSS.

CHAP. XL.—A TEMPTATION.

Matthew was learning many a lesson of simple trust in God now; for things were not going smoothly and evenly with him as they once did. His sun of prosperity was clouded; yet was he trying to keep his heart singing in the gloom,—taking a lesson from his little birds, whose songs rang out even more cheerily on grey days than golden ones. His shop was but the ghost of what it once was. For as his stock was slowly disposed of, he made no attempt to replenish it to any extent: the consequence was that empty cages were now more numerous than full ones, and the once prosperous business was slowly, but surely, declining. Hugh found that he had more time than he wanted for his designing,—for as yet, although eight or nine months had elapsed since Josiah Hartlebury's earnest face had appeared at the door, he had not returned to fulfil his promise. Consequently Hugh's heart had grown somewhat sick with hope deferred; and he did not add to his portfolio of designs with the zeal with which he had worked at first.

The incomings each week were very small; yet they had to live, a heavy doctor's bill had to be discharged, and rent, taxes, and rates had to be paid, the money for which was always forthcoming directly it was due. But Hugh did not know that Matthew's savings of thirty years were being drawn upon to satisfy these demands; and that Matthew's fits of abstraction, and the anxious expression of his face sometimes, were the result of his having to do so. Yet at the same time, Matthew's faith grew, so that being 'rich in faith' he was after all the gainer in losing his money; for faith bears a man up above circumstances of sorrow and loss, and even above the flood of death, while money can do nothing to cheer and satisfy the soul in troublous times, least of all when death is at hand.

One day—a day which Hugh ever after vividly remembered—Matthew was unusually abstracted and dull. The day was not inspiring: it was a cold grey March day, with a blustering north-east wind blowing clouds of dust and scraps of refuge wildly along the streets. The shop-door was closely shut, and Matthew and Hugh were both busy in overhauling their stock, and re-arranging it. The parrot was still there, and that day was unusually irate, being a bird apparently with a love of order, which prevented his being comfortable in such a stir and confusion as prevailed.

A large fire was blazing in the kitchen grate, to which Matthew had just repaired to warm himself, when the shop-door opened and in stepped Mr. Barnett,

nearly stumbling over the heaps of empty bird-cages that strewed the floor. Hugh hastened to clear things out of his way, while Matthew came into the shop with his face expressing the utmost astonishment, and regret too, that such a customer should have dropped in just as they were in such an unwonted muddle.

'Well, I'm blest, sir!' he exclaimed. 'Don't this cap everything now,—to think o' you droppin' in on a day as is scarce fit to turn a dog out, comin' all the way from yer snug fireside to these parts, to find us up to our eyes in such a upset as one don't have more'n a dozen times in a lifetime! But that's how things alays happens: if the place was trim and spanky as a fresh-don't-up garden, ne'er a one 'ud come in to see us at our best. But as soon as we get into muddle enough, we bags such a rare un as yer honour straight off!'

Mr. Barnett laughed and said, 'Don't be concerned about me. I rather like a muddle; and indeed I've left a bigger one behind me than I find here.'

Matthew seemed a little consoled by this cheerful response.

'I've been turning out my precious cabinets this morning,' continued Mr. Barnett; 'and before I could go on with my arranging, I must needs come to you for a specimen or two which I think you may have by you. As for the boisterous day, that just suits me: I like an east wind, I assure you.'

Matthew looked incredulous; and then in reference to the specimens sought for, he shook his head, saying, 'I'm feared, sir, there ain't a insect in my shop at this present as 'll suit yer honour in any way. Look round and see what a scrap of a stock I've got.'

'Are you giving up business, then, Matthew Pedder?'

'No, sir; but the bisnis is givin' up me,' answered Matthew, sadly. 'Things is altered with us since I lost my arm; and now my lad here is lookin' about for somethin' as 'll be a more profitable concern than a bird bisnis in a decline.' 'And so now is the time for me to hold out my hand to him,' said Mr. Barnett, with kindly eagerness. 'And it so happens that I've called just at the nick of time both for you and myself. The manager of one of my concerns was telling me only yesterday that he wanted a bright youth as assistant barman, and if Hugh Haldane gets into that he may feel assured that he will one day become manager of the house at a salary that is 'not to be despised, I can tell you.'

Hugh's face flushed, but not with pleasure and gratitude, as Mr. Barnett blindly imagined. Matthew was looking hard at him, waiting nervously for his response, which he thought was almost unduly delayed. Just for one brief moment Hugh felt the offer a temptation: how much Matthew had done for him! thought he, and how little he had done in return! He had never actually earned one shilling to bring to his benefactor; and now he felt that it was becoming urgent that he should earn money. Here was the offer of a certain weekly sum which he would be able to carry home to Matthew to relieve his anxiety, and to show him how eager he was to attempt to repay him for his goodness. When would another lucrative chance arise if he rejected this one? Josiah Hartlebury had not come forward to advise him how to dispose of his drawings, and possibly he would never see any more of him. Then what could he do but be an errand-boy, tramping expensive boots off his feet for scanty remuneration, which would bring but meagre help to Matthew.

In a moment these considerations rushed through his mind; and then followed the vision of Lisa as she was in the days of her hungry, blighted childhood, and the remembrance of her burning words of condemnation of the unholy traffic which had desolated her young life, and the lives of myriads of unhappy children besides. Drawing himself up, his eyes darkening with the intensity of his feeling, Hugh looked into Mr. Barnett's face, and said, 'I'm much obliged to you, sir, for your kindness in wishing to do me a good turn. But you will excuse my saying, that rather than I'd earn money in a public-house, I'd be a scavenger, or do the meanest work to be got. And much as I long to help Mr. Pedder and repay him for his great goodness to me, I'd not do it through a public-house, if I don't do it at

all! Much as I love him, I'd rather see him begging his bread than I'd buy him a loaf with money got through drink!'

Mr. Barnett's face flushed with astonishment, and perhaps with a little displeasure too, though he heartily admired the boy's courageous outspokenness.

'Ah, I forgot!' he exclaimed, quite in good humour. 'You are a teetotaler, Matthew Pedder, and of course you have instilled your notions into this boy. Ah, well, if you err at all, it is on the safe side, I suppose; and though I ought not to be expected to make such an admission, I do think it would be better if there were more like you. You have expressed yourself very strongly, my lad,' he continued, looking at Hugh; 'but perhaps you have good reason for feeling strongly on this subject, and of course I take no offence at that. Only I am sorry that you see fit to decline what I imagined would be a good offer for you.'

'I guess he looks at it with Lisa Maurice's eyes, sir,' remarked Matthew. 'That's a little girl as suffered dreadful for years through havin' a drunken father; and we got to know all about her sad case, sir, and it have made the lad feel bitter like against the trade, sir, you see.'

'But I think that is scarcely reasonable,' replied Mr. Barnett pleasantly. 'Because a man becomes a drunkard and a great affliction to his relatives, is that any reason why a trade should be condemned which is so necessary and useful to moderate people?'

'In this matter, yer see, sir, we and you differs out and out,' said Matthew. 'We don't allow that it's "necessary and useful;" but we do say that it's such a evil in itself that it can't be anything but evil to those as take it whether they be moderates or drunkards.'

'Ah, well, that's your opinion Matthew Pedder; but I'm not prepared to say that. Drunkenness is an evil: everybody with eyes open can see that; but I have not thought over and studied the matter sufficiently to say whether drink is an evil or not. I know none of my houses encourage drunkenness: I am strict on that point.'

'They can't help it, sir, however strict you may be. There isn't a public-house on the face of the earth that don't encourage drunkenness, ay, and create it, too!' said Matthew with energy.

'Simply because there are always people ready to run to excess,' responded Mr. Barnett.

'Then for the sake of such people, sir, I should wish that my little chap didn't mess his hands in such a bisnis. Yet I'm sure I thank ye all the same, sir; for I can see with half a eye that nothin' but the kindness of yer heart have led ye to make him this offer, sir.'

'All right, Matthew!' exclaimed Mr. Barnett, perceiving that there was no ungraciousness in their outspokenness and rejection of his offer. 'I shall think none the less of you and your boy for this; and I hope he may soon meet with something congenial to him.'

And then he proceeded to transact his business with Matthew, and presently took his leave.

When he returned home he told his wife of his little episode.

'Hateful little fellow!' she exclaimed angrily about Hugh. 'He has a spirit most unbecoming to poor people. Fancy a pauper like him disdainin' us and our profession! I hope he will have nothing but humble pie to live on for some years to come!'

(To be continued.)

Miss Rachel's Bonnet.

'I wonder if Miss Rachel means to wear that old bonnet again this winter?' said one youthful teacher to another, as a lady, plainly attired, walked in and took her seat before the Bible-class.

'She is really growing miserly!' said her friend. 'With her ample means, to appear as she does is absurd; that old satin dress has been in use as long as I can remember, and as for the bonnet, it has been altered and trimmed half a dozen times. I really would like to know what she does with her money.'

Just then a little hand pulled the teacher's shawl, and a little face all aflame with earnestness and reproof looked into those of the young ladies:

'Please don't speak so about Miss Rachel, teacher. She sent us a ton of coal this week, and she bought my sick