

The Sunday-School.

FIRST QUARTER.
LESSON XI.—March 15.

THE RIOT AT EPHEBUS.

Acts 19: 29-40.

GOLDEN TEXT.—The Lord preserveth the faithful.—Psa. 31: 23.

HISTORICAL SETTING. Time.—A. D. 56 or 57, near the close of Paul's work at Ephesus. Place.—The city of Ephesus. Place in History.—Near the close of the third missionary journey. Paul's Companions in Ephesus were Timothy, Titus (2 Cor. 7: 14), Stephanas, Fortunatus, Apollos (1 Cor. 16: 12), Aquila, Priscilla, Chloe (1 Cor. 1: 11), Gaius, Aristarchus, and Achaicus.

PAUL'S PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.—Vs. 21, 22. The time was approaching when Paul should carry on his work in other fields. 1. He planned to revisit the churches at Macedonia, Philippi, Berea, Thessalonica, and Greece, chiefly Corinth.

2. He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus through Macedonia to Corinth to prepare that church for his approaching visit.

3. He planned to go again to Jerusalem, to carry the collection for the poor, and to bind the two elements, Gentile and Jewish, in the church more closely together. It was several years since he had spent any length of time with the Jerusalem church.

4. He planned to go on his next tour to Rome, the political capital of the world, and the great center of power and influence.

Paul succeeded in all his plans, but the last two were accomplished in a very different manner from his expectations, though in the best possible way.

THE GOSPEL INTERFERES WITH CERTAIN BUSINESS INTERESTS.—Vs. 23-27. No small stir, commotion. A certain man named Demetrius. Probably the head of the shrine makers. Which made silver shrines. These shrines were small models of the temple of Diana. They were made of terra-cotta or marble for the use of the poorer classes, of bronze and silver for the rich. These shrines were of different sizes, some so small that they could be carried about on the person. The shrines were often set up in their homes as objects of worship. Diana. The Ephesian goddess was represented as standing idol, symbolizing the universal mother of all life. Brought no small gain. These shrines were sold to the people of Ephesus, to the many travelers. The traffic was large and lucrative. Called together. First the artisans in silver shrines, then the workmen of like occupation. Those who made shrines of marble and terra-cotta.

Paul hath . . . turned away much people. Showing how great progress the gospel had made. Our craft is in danger. Demetrius had doubtless lost money. There was no regard for the lives made better, but only for their own gains. But also that the temple . . . be despised. This was the motive to be presented to the mob. Temple of the great goddess Diana. The crowning glory of Ephesus was the great temple of Artemis or Diana, one of the seven great wonders of the world, and whose magnificence has been a marvel ever since. Made of the purest marble, it was four hundred and twenty-five feet long and two hundred and twenty broad, its columns of Parian marble

were sixty feet high, and thirty-six of them were magnificently carved. The hall was adorned with the most wonderful statuary and paintings. Whom all Asia (the Roman province) and the world. The inhabited world.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. 1. The modern world contains many of the descendants of the Ephesian silversmiths, opposing every reform that interferes with trade and money-making.

2. The saloon makes the same argument against temperance and prohibitory laws as the craftsmen of Ephesus against Christianity.

THE MOB AND THE RIOT.—Vs. 28-34. They were full of wrath. Anger grew as they listened. Great is Diana of the Ephesians. Just as the English say, "Long live the King." The whole city was filled with (the) confusion. The illiterate artisans, soured by reduced wages or want of employment, were roused into a frenzy, and sallied forth into the streets to wreak vengeance on the object of their fury. Having caught Gaius and Aristarchus. The mob of Ephesus made for the house of Aquila, with whom Paul was lodging. They missed their prey; but seized Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's associates. Rushed with one accord into the theatre. The Colosseum, capable of holding fifty thousand people. When Paul would have entered. Paul was unwilling to allow his friends to suffer in his stead. Certain of the chief of Asia. A board of ten commissioners entitled "Asiarchs" was elected annually by the cities of Asia to defray the expense of the public games. They were wealthy men, honoured by the populace, and exerting great influence over them. Which were his friends. Either Christians or open-minded men, such as Paul more than once attracted to himself. Therefore, resuming the narrative, some . . . cried one thing, etc. A picture of a mob taken from life. And they drew Alexander. It has been conjectured by many that this is the Alexander the copper-smith of whom Paul writes that he did him much harm. The Jews putting him forward. In order that he might disclaim all sympathy with Paul, lest the Jews should be confounded with the Christians. Alexander beckoned with the hand. To quiet the mob so that he might speak. When they knew (recognized) that he was a Jew. This shows the feeling of the mob against the Jew. About the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana. The whole scene is again painted vividly.

THE RIOT QUELLED.—Vs. 35-41. And when the town clerk. He was the most influential person in Ephesus, and acted as a medium of communication between the imperial and municipal government. The city of Ephesians is a worshipper. Temple-keeper. The title is found on the inscriptions as belonging to Ephesus. The image which fell down from Jupiter. It was believed to have fallen down from the sky. Seeing then, etc. It is useless to be excited about that which no attacks can harm.

His second argument is that Paul and his companions have not done that with which they have been charged. Are neither robbers of churches (temples). Nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. They have done nothing by actions or by words which should arouse your indignation. His third argument was that a better and legal way of re-

dress was open to Demetrius and the craftsmen, provided they had any grievance. The law is open. Rather the law courts, and there are deputies, assesses and judges. Let them implead, bring a charge. If ye enquire any thing concerning other matters. That is, if the public welfare, not private interests, are threatened, so that it cannot be left to a lawsuit. It shall be determined in a lawful assembly. Which this was not. It was neither regularly called, nor legally organized, and was incompetent for the legal transaction of business. For we are in danger to be called in question. To be accused by the Roman government. There being no cause. No sufficient reason. Give an account of this concourse of disorderly persons. After the mob was quieted, Paul left Ephesus and went across the Aegan Sea to Macedonia.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.—1. Mob violence is the worst means of advancing a good cause or of righting wrongs. It is like putting out a fire by heaping on more fuel.

2. There are times when it is wise to leave the scene of contention and opposition as Paul did at Ephesus and elsewhere, and as Christ commanded his disciples, "when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." (Mat. 10: 23). It is better at times to leave the heaven to work silently.

THE BEST FORTUNE.

Many parents are toiling, toiling, toiling, to make and save a fortune to leave their children. Some are doing this without a thought for the eternal salvation of their girls and boys. Fatal mistake! Wealth is almost sure to be more of a curse than a blessing. Your own common-sense and observation tell you that this is so.

You must soon leave your children. Your shoulders are not so strong as they were. They will soon have to carry their own burden. Your eyesight is not clear as once. They will soon have to pick their own way. Your arm is not so mighty as once. They will soon have to fight their own battles. Oh, let it not be told on judgment day that you let your family start without the only safeguard—the religion of Christ. Give yourself no rest until your children are the sons and daughters of the Lord, Your son does just as you do. He tries to walk like you, and to talk like you. The daughter imitates the mother. If father and mother miss Heaven, the children will. What an awful wreck! A whole family going down in one terrific rush—into a sunless eternity!

Oh, let Jesus come into your house! Do not bolt the hall door or the parlor door, or the kitchen door, or the bedroom door against Him. Above all do not bolt your heart!

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