

The Sunday-School.

SECOND QUARTER,
LESSON XI.—June 14.

PAUL AT ROME.

ACTS 28: 16-24, 30, 31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.*—Rom. 1: 16.

THE LESSON includes Acts 28.

LEARN BY HEART.—Vs. 30, 31;
2 Tim. 4: 6-8.HISTORICAL SETTING.—*Time.*—A. D. 59 (Ramsay) or 60 (Lewin). The wreck, November; the stay in Malta, November to February (60 or 61); the journey to Rome, February; Paul a prisoner in Rome, Spring, A. D. 60-62, or 61-63.*Place.*—Rome. Paul in his own hired house.*Rulers.*—Nero, emperor of Rome.

PAUL IN MALTA.—Vs. 1-10. Helping his shipwrecked fellow-sufferers. All aboard the ship safely reached the shore. The rain continued. It was late autumn. They would feel the cold more on account of fatigue and exposure. The people of Malta were kind to them. A fire was kindled, and those able and willing gathered sticks and brushwood. Paul was foremost.

The Viper. Among the fagots a viper awaked from its dormant state, and fastened on Paul's hand. The natives inferred that Paul was a murderer, whom divine vengeance had followed. Paul shook off the venomous serpent. The natives then looked upon Paul as a god.

Paul and the Sick. The governor of the island, Publius, courteously received Paul and his companions. Paul cured the father of Publius of a fever and dysentery, by prayer and laying on of hands, and many others who were sick.

THE JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO ROME.—Vs. 11-15. *By sea to Puteoli.* Three months the company remained in Malta till navigation opened, and then they embarked in an Alexandrian ship called *The Twin Brothers*. They sailed till they came to Puteoli, the principal port in Italy south of Rome. Here they found Christian brethren.

By Land to Rome. From Puteoli they went on by land one hundred and forty miles to Rome. At Appii Forum and The Three Taverns, Paul and companions were met and welcomed by delegations of Christians from Rome. His heart was lifted out of its depression. (1) He entered Rome, not so much a criminal as an apostle with hosts of friends. (2) Human sympathy warmed his heart. (3) He found the church for which he had longed and prayed safe and prosperous. (4) He had attained the end for which he had long been seeking.

PAUL AT ROME.—Vs. 16-24. *A Prisoner at Rome.* And when we came to Rome the centurion (Julius) delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard. This officer, the perfect of the Pretorium was Burrus, one of the few good statesmen of this corrupt age and city. Paul was suffered (permitted) to dwell by himself. A great privilege. With a soldier that kept him. He was coupled by a slight chain round the right wrist to the left of a soldier, and thus

shackled was allowed to be at large within the palace, or to hire a lodging for himself without the walls. After three days spent in getting settled in his lodgings, Paul called the chief of the Jews together, especially the officers of the synagogues of which there were seven in Rome. Nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers. For everywhere had he shown himself desirous that his own people should hear the message of the gospel first.

Who (Felix, Festus, Agrippa) . . . had examined me, as described in Acts 24-26. Would have let me go at liberty. When the Jews spoke against it. But he had to show why he was constrained to appeal unto Caesar. For this cause have I called for you. Intreat you to see and to speak with me. Because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. The consummation of the nation, the blossom and fruit, could be gained only through Jesus, the Messiah. We neither received letters out of Judea, etc. It is not said that they had never heard anything about Paul, but nothing of the events which led to his being a prisoner. But we desire to hear, and they arranged a time when they would come and hear what he had to say. This sect . . . everywhere . . . spoken against. These slanders arose from Paul's seeming opposition to the Jewish ritual. To whom he expounded the gospel of Jesus and its relations to the Jewish beliefs and Scriptures. And testified. Testifying from his own experience of conversion, the revelations God had made to him, the comfort and help he had received. Out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets. Paul placed the prophecies of the kingdom of God, and of the Messiah to come, side by side with the life, death and teachings of Jesus, and showed the Jews how the latter were the fulfillment of the former. And some believed, and some believed not. The testimony of the apostles was 'a savor of life unto life,' or of 'death unto death.'

THE LAST YEARS OF PAUL'S LIFE.—Vs. 30, 31. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house. Not necessarily a whole house, but an apartment.

Paul's Expenses.—Living in his own hired house, Paul must meet his own expenses. This may have been done by his friends in Rome, or by means of his own patrimony.

Paul's Companions.—Rom. 16: 3-15 contains the salutations of Christians in Rome, sent to them thirteen years before. There are mentioned twenty men and eight women.

Paul's Work.—He received all that came in unto him. They must come to him, because he could not go to them. Paul in prison was doing some of the most important work of his life, work that has rendered him immortal in his usefulness.

1. *Preaching . . . teaching.* Paul's personal work was continued during these two years, with all confidence, implying that he had freedom of speech, and was hopeful of results.

2. His work among the soldiers. The guard to whom he was chained was changed every few hours, so that a large number of soldiers must have

come under the influence of the gospel he preached.

3. Four Epistles were written by Paul during these two years,—to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and to Philemon of Colossæ.

The Release.—The opinion is very strong that Paul was released at the close of two years. It is supposed that, on being liberated, he visited again parts of Asia Minor and Greece; went to Crete and founded, or more probably strengthened, the churches there; made his long contemplated journey to Spain; wrote his first Epistle to Timothy and his Epistle to Titus.

Paul's Second Imprisonment and Death.—After several years of effective labor, Paul was brought a second time a prisoner to Rome. During this imprisonment 2 Timothy was probably written. Paul was tried and condemned to death. His Roman citizenship exempted him from the ignominy of crucifixion, and hence, according to the universal tradition, he was beheaded by the axe of the lictor.



THE HEART OF A CHILD.

"Just see, papa! I made all this today," said a tiny girl, holding up an awkward bit of work.

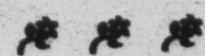
"Well, I don't care anything about that, child," said the father.

I expected to see the child burst into tears, but she went away quite tranquilly. She was so used to such treatment that it did not surprise or hurt her any more.

That father prided himself on his kindness to his children. It was his boast that he never struck one of the whole five. What would he have said if he had been told that his words injured that child as much as a beating would? Although he never scolded or said rough things, he was continually manifesting a lack of sympathy with the little ones. The blows were falling directly on loving childish hearts.

He often wondered why the older children never took him into their plans. He loved his children dearly; he would have enjoyed being a companion of the big boys and girls, but he had turned them away again and again when they were tiny children, and he might have obtained the key to their hearts.

Oh, fathers and mothers, come into the lives of your children, when you can sympathize with the little men and women. Take time to be interested in their affairs, and then you will be spared the bitter pain of being shut out of their confidence, and feeling that they have grown away from you, when they most need you.—*Christian Standard.*



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