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Sabbath School. BIBLE LESSONS.

FROM PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES.

Second Quarter.

Lesson 1.-April 6. Acts 18: 23-28; 19: 1-7.

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them.-Acts 19: 6.

23. After he had spent some time (the summer of A. D. 54) there. At Antioch, the capital of Syria, where was the church which sent him out as a missionary. He departed.-On his third great missionary journey, about 54 A. D. He probably went first to Tarsus, then in a north-west direction through Galatia; and then, turning south-west, journeyed through Phrygia and so to Ephesus, where for a long period he had his abode. From this time Silas left Paul and went with Peter. But Timothy was still Paul's companion. Galatia and Phrygia (see Lesson 5, 1st quarter). Strengthening all the disciples.-Every church should use all means possible in training and confirming its young converts.

24, 25. And a certain Jew named Apollos.-Of whom nothing is known besides the information here given, except the facts that his eloquence attracted many at Corinth, who would fain have made him the leader of a Christian sect in the Church (1 Cor. 3: 6, 12), that he would not permit it. He was learned, and could use his learning with effect. Mighty in the scriptures.-That is, of the Old Testament. He was profoundly acquainted with their contents, and skilful in drawing out their prophetic meaning. Knowing only the baptism of John.-That is, knowing no other baptism. He knew, probably, that the Christians were baptized, but knew nothing of any difference between their baptism and that which John employed.

26. Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard.-Many of the best manuscripts put Priscilla's name first, as in ver. 18. The fact mentioned is interesting as showing (1) that Aquila and his wife continued to attend the services of the synagogue, and (2) that Apollos appeared there, as Paul had done, in the character of a Rabbi who had a message to deliver, and was therefore allowed, or it may be requested (as in chap. 13: 15), to address the people. The prominence given to Priscilla, in this introduction, implies that she was a woman of more than ordinary culture and power. The way of God is the Gospel as preached by Paul.

27. Achaia, i. e., the province equivalent to modern Greece, of which Corinth was the capital. It was Corinth that he intended to go. Comp. Acts 19: 1; 1 Cor. 1: 12; 3: 4. Doubtless he had heard from Priscilla and Aquila, who were at Corinth with Paul, about the founding of the church there, the need of help, and the hopefulness of the field. The brethren wrote.-Sent letters of recommendation. Believed through grace The next verse explains the remark.

28. Convinced the Jews * * publicly.-His special training in Alexandria, coupled with his great knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, eminently fitted the eloquent convert for the peculiar controversy which the Jewish frequenters of the synagogue delighted in. It is by the Scriptures of the Old Testament that even to us comes the complete proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and the full understanding of His nature.

Ch. III. 1. While Apollos was at Corinth.-This notice apprises us that Paul did not arrive at Ephesus till after the departure of Apollos. Paul having passed through the upper coasts, rather districts, not the sea-coasts at all. This implies a route passing from Galatia and Phrygia (18: 23) through the interior, and coming thence to Ephesus.

2. Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?-The more accurate rendering is far more emphatic and clear, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" We have not so much as heard whether there be any

Holy Ghost.-Again here the more accurate translation of the original Greek guides us to the true interpretation of the answer of these followers of the Baptist, "On the contrary, we did not (at the time of our baptism) so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given." Dean Alford renders, "We did not so much as hear Him mentioned." The words as rendered in the English version are certainly likely to mislead. No Jew -and the majority, though perhaps not all, of John's disciples, would have been Jews-but had heard of the Holy Spirit (see, for instance, such well-known passages as 2 Sam. 23: 2, 3, where the "Spirit of the Lord" and the "God of Israel" are interchangeable terms; compare, too, Isa. 63: 10, 11, 14, and 61: 1, and a vast number of similar passages). No Israelite could possibly have been unfamiliar with the name of the Holy Spirit.

3. Unto (or into) John's baptism, or the profession and the purpose John used in baptizing. It was a confession of repentance, a hope of a Messiah, an effort to lead a new life, but without the aid of a present Christ, and the special gifts of the Spirit.

4. That they should believe on him which should come.-John's baptism was a preparation for the Messiah, just as now repentance is an essential condition of being a Christian; but there is a vastly higher and nobler life than merely hating sin and leaving it off, and striving for a better life, as summer with its new impulses of life, its joy in living and growing is vastly more than an escape from the cold and deadness of the winter.

5. When they heard, i. e., these twelve disciples of John. They were baptized.-This state of things shows that baptism is important, but not of itself the means of salvation. In (or into) the name of the Lord Jesus.-It does not follow from this that the full form of Matt. 28: 19 was not used.

6. The Holy Ghost came on them.-Manifested by its effects in the forms mentioned. They spake with tongues, and prophesied.-Better, "They were speaking with tongues and prophesying," the verbs implying continuous action. It was as on the day of Pentecost. Every man received a consciousness of a new and mighty power, each one felt as man had never felt before-the presence and love of God. The ecstatic utterance of praise which followed was merely an outward sign of the grace and power which at once followed the descent of the Holy Ghost on these favoured men.

7. And all the men, etc. The expression in the original is somewhat unusual, and may be designed to prevent the notion that the Ephesian believers were, as a rule, in this condition of ignorance. So far was this from being universal, that the men concerned in this transaction, on the highest computation, were not more than twelve.

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