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BIBLE LESSONS.

FROM PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES.

First Quarter.

Lesson 6.—Feb. 10. Acts 16: 11-24.

THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.—Acts 16: 14.

11. *Therefore.* Because of the vision in our last lesson. *Troas.* The seaport of Asia where Paul had seen the vision. *Samothracia.* An island in the Ægean Sea, 38 miles from the coast of Thrace, and about midway between Troas and Neapolis. *The next day. Neapolis* or New Town, now Cavallo. A maritime city, at which they probably made no stay, then belonging to Thrace, but afterward joined to the province of Macedonia.

12. *Thence to Philippi*, about ten miles from Neapolis. *Chief city.* Either the first they came to, or *a chief city*, one of the chief cities.

13. *Went out of the city*, or as in the revision, "without the gate." *By a river side.* The Gangas, a small stream close to the city, especially chosen because it served for the ablutions connected with Jewish worship. *Where prayer was wont to be made*, or "where there was wont to be a place of prayer." *Spake unto the women.* The fact that there were only women shows the almost entire absence of a Jewish population.

14. *A certain woman.* That she was a Jewish proselyte is indicated by the language, "which worshipped God." *Lydia.* Lydia only is mentioned by name, and it has been surmised that she was a widow, and that her "whole house" consisted of her children and domestics. *Thyatira.* Her native place, while Philippi was her present home. *Worshipped God, i. e.*, had become a proselyte of the Jewish faith. *Whose heart the Lord opened, i. e.*, in conformity with other passages (Matt. 11: 25, sq.; Luke 24: 45; 1 Cor. 3: 6, 7), enlightened, impressed by His Spirit, and so prepared to receive the truth. *She attended.* She gave such heed as to be convinced of their truth. *Spoken of Paul.* It was a quiet personal conversation rather than a sermon.

15. *And when she was baptized.* As soon as she believed, she made a public profession of her faith in the appointed way,—by baptism. *If ye have judged.* The words contain a modest, almost a pathetic, appeal to the fact that the preachers had recognized her faith by admitting her to baptism. *Come into my house.* Lydia's urgent invitation induced Paul to deviate from his practice of refusing help, even from his most intimate friends (Acts 20: 33, 34). *She constrained us.* By much entreaty.

16. *We went to prayer*, rather the place of prayer. *A certain damsel.* The history plainly implies that she was possessed with a devil—she was a demoniac. *Soothsaying* (pretending to foretell the future). Great numbers of people came to consult her, and paid for her pretended prophecies and advice.

17. *Followed Paul.* This may have been a supernatural recognition of the power of God in the apostles; see the analogous cases in Matt. 8: 29; Mark 3: 11; Luke 4: 41; 8: 28; and this is the view of most commentators; or it may have been a cry of sarcasm and derision, the possessed following Paul with this outcry, somewhat as a crowd of boys might do. *Way of salvation*, or "the way of safety;" in this more general sense the words would be understood by the heathen population.

18. *Many days.* Why did Paul wait many days before helping the poor girl? She was not in a condition at first to receive help—it is more than probable that during the "many days," some of the solemn, beautiful words of Christ uttered or explained by Paul penetrated the poor darkened soul of this unhappy one, and awoke in her some sense of her lost and degraded condition. Then she perhaps cried for help, and received it. *Being grieved.* The word involves the idea both of grief and indignation; grief for the unfortunate condition of the slave, indignation at the evil spirit by whom she was possessed. *In the name of Jesus Christ.* Christ performed miracles in his own name, the apostles did so in the name of Christ. The one was the Son, the others were the servants of the household.

19. *The hope of their gains was gone.* The Gospels destroys the unjust gains of bad men who get rich at the expense of the injury of others. But it always favors true and lasting prosperity. *They caught Paul and Silas.* The idea of violence is conveyed in the original. *Market-place.* The market-place, or *Agora*, was in all Greek cities the centre of social life. *Unto the rulers*, called in the next verse governors.

20 22. *Being Jews.* They say this at the outset, in order to give more effect to the subsequent accusation No people were regarded by the Romans with such contempt and hatred as the Jews. *Exceedingly trouble our city.* The kind of trouble is indicated in 17: 6. "These that have turned the world upside down" is their description. *The multitude rose up.* The original cause of offence, the damage done to the productive property of the slave-owners, was quite lost sight of in the supposed *public* offence committed by the Eastern strangers. *Rent off the clothes* of Paul and Silas, *Commanded to beat them.* The custom was with the Romans to inflict blows with rods upon the naked body.

23. *Many stripes.* The words imply a punishment of more than usual severity, such as would leave their backs lacerated and bleeding, So in 1 Thess. 2: 2. *Cast them into prison.* The magistrates themselves seem to have gone to the prison, either to satisfy the mob, or in reality to secure the safety of the prisoners from the violence of the mob.

Thrust them into the inner prison. In a Roman prison there were usually three distinct parts; (1) the communiora, where the prisoners had light and fresh air; (2) the interiora, shut off by strong iron gates with bars and locks; (3) the tullianum, or dungeon. The third was a place rather of execution, or for one condemned to die. The prison in which Paul and Silas lay that eventful night at Philippi was probably a damp, cold cell, from which light was excluded. *Stocks.* An instrument of torture as well as of confinement, consisting of a heavy piece of wood with holes, into which the feet were placed in such a manner that they were stretched widely apart, so as to cause the sufferer great pain. Frequently the stocks had five holes, two for the feet, two for the hands, and one for the neck.

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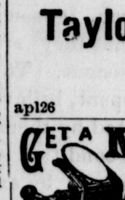
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