

Corner For Religious News

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. H. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of the Evening School, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
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Lesson for December 13

PAUL IN MELITA AND ROME

LESSON TEXT—Acts 28:1-31.

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."—Rom. 1:16.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Paul the Helper.

JUNIOR TOPIC—Paul in the World's Capital.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—A Prisoner Preaching.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Power of the Gospel.

1. The Shipwreck on Melita (vv. 1-10).

Through the storm they lost their bearings, and when they were safe on land they learned that the island was called Melita. Their experiences here may be noted as follows:

1. The Hospitable Reception of the Natives (v. 2).

They built a fire and made the shipwrecked people as comfortable as possible in the cold and rain.

2. Paul Gathering Sticks for a Fire (v. 3).

The world's greatest preacher and missionary, yet he was not above picking up sticks for a fire. All along the journey Paul busied himself in doing all that he could to help some one. Any service rendered in the right spirit is holy work.

3. Paul Bitten by a Venomous Serpent (v. 3).

Among the sticks that Paul gathered was a serpent. Perhaps it had already coiled itself up for its winter's sleep, but aroused by the warmth of the fire, it darted at Paul and fixed its fangs upon his hand. This was a serious thing. The natives expected to see him fall down dead, yet he shook it off, unharmed. At first the natives concluded that he was an escaped murderer, and that retributive justice was being meted out to him. When they saw he was unharmed they concluded that he was a god. In the popular mind a man soon passes from a murderer to a god, or more frequently the reverse is true.

4. Paul Heals Publius' Father (vv. 7-10).

These people now received some return for their kindness. When this man of note was healed, others came and were healed also.

II. Paul's Arrival At Rome (vv. 11-16).

When Paul reached Rome Christ's charge to the disciples was fulfilled. After three months' stay at Melita Paul departed for Rome in the ship of Alexandria, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. At Syracuse they were delayed three days, perhaps for favorable winds. At Puteoli he found brethren at whose request he tarried seven days, after which he again set his face towards Rome. At Appii Forum and at Three Taverns brethren from Rome met him. From Puteoli the news went before of Paul's coming, and so interested were the brethren that they came for more than forty miles to meet him. This greatly encouraged him and he gave God thanks. He greatly craved the fellowship of other Christians and was much helped thereby. This was the first city in all his missionary life that thus welcomed him. It was typical of the welcome that was given to the gospel by the Gentile world. He was treated with great leniency at Rome for he was allowed to hire a house and live apart, except that his guard was constantly with him. Being chained to a soldier was rather irksome, yet it gave him a chance to preach to the soldiers, which he could not have had in any other way.

III. Paul's Ministry In Rome (vv. 17-31).

1. His Conference With the Leading Jews (vv. 17-22).

He did not as usual, wait for the Sabbath day to speak to the Jews. He allowed only one day for rest, his object being to have a fair understanding with them. When they came he endeavored to conciliate them. He told them that though he came as a prisoner, he was not a criminal. Though his own countrymen had sought his life he did not come with accusations against them. The result of this interview was that the Jews cautiously took neutral ground, but expressed a desire to hear what Paul could say in defense of a sect which was everywhere spoken against.

2. Paul Expounding the Kingdom of God and Persuading Concerning Jesus (vv. 23-31).

He pointed out a real kingdom—the Messianic kingdom with the historic Jesus as the king. The kingdom to Paul meant a definite reign of a definite person, not simply an improved state of society. This he showed from the Scriptures.

Small Things; Great Things

You are waiting to do some great thing; you are waiting to pull down some great evil. Perform the small things that are unseen, and they will bring other and greater things for you to perform.—John Bright.

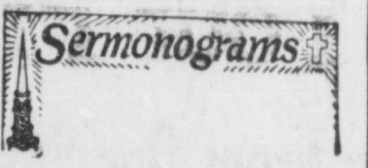
WHY GO TO CHURCH?

The Church is the generally recognized institution that furnishes the means for perpetuating that life which continues after death. It may sometimes happen that individuals cultivate that spiritual life quite satisfactorily outside the church; admitting that this is true, in some instances—the majority making any progress in attaining a life higher than the physical use the church as a means.

A man who is sick may possibly find relief in some remedy not prescribed by a registered physician but the majority who feel the need of attention for physical life call on a reputed physician because he has at his disposal tried and proven ways and means for full restoration to health.

There may be other means than the church whereby a soul may be brought into living relations with God. There may be something in nature, or in conscience, or in literature that makes for spiritual life. But it is taking a long and desperate chance. If you are seeking God, go where his presence and power are revealed.

WHY NOT GO TO CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY?



Selfishness is self-love out of place.

—Crafts.

People get nowhere because they do not aim for somewhere.

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A cheap, trashy book is too expensive for you to read.

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Dig deep, put in good foundations, and build a strong character.

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Give not from the top of your purse, but from the bottom of your heart.

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If you can't see God in a pebble you can't see Him in a mountain.

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"Stewardship is not primarily to lighten the giving, but to deepen the living."

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There is seeming success which may be more disastrous than failure.

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The resources of God are promised only to those who undertake the program of God.

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It is as necessary to have good books for the mind as it is to have pure food for the body.

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The man who turns his back to God refuses the only aid that will avail in time of need.

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Nothing makes one so happy as making others happy, or so unhappy as making others unhappy.

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Respect yourself, not by demanding respect from others, but by requiring high character from yourself.

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To live in the presence of great truths and eternal laws—that is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him.—Balzac.

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Our friends see the best in us, and by that very fact call forth the best from us.—Black.

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Aggressive fighting for the right is the greatest sport the world knows.—Theodore Roosevelt.

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Reputation is what men and women think of us; character is what God and the angels know of us.—Thomas Paine.

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The test of your Christian character should be that you are a joy-bearing agent to the world.—Beecher.

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RELIGIOUS NEWS GATHERED ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Sixty-two churches were erected in Los Angeles, Calif., during 1924.

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In the past year more than 41,000 women joined the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

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Bible study for credit was authorized in Virginia High Schools by the State Board of Education, eight years ago. During the first year 37 pupils enrolled. Last year 933 enrolled.

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A new church feast to hasten the attainment of universal peace is to be proclaimed by the pope at a mass

To Deum at St. Peter's closing Holy Year, on New Year's Eve.

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"Facing the Facts—Facing the Future," will be the theme of the annual meeting of the Home Missions Council and Council of Women for Home Missions, which will be held in St. Louis, Mo., January 21-25, 1926.

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When completed, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, in New York City, will be the third largest cathedral in the world. Its tower, which is higher than that of any other cathedral, will rise to a height of five hundred feet.

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The historic restaurant in Seoul, Chosen, where the thirty-one signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence met when the proclamation was promulgated in March, 1918, has been acquired by missionaries of co-operating evangelical denominations for use as part of a city mission center.

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China, with approximately 40,000,000 people, has fewer physicians than the city of Philadelphia, with only 2,000,000 people. Medical missionaries who on all fronts are pushing back the lines of death are serving their Lord with heroism unsurpassed in history.

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WEEKLY STORY OF EARLY EDUCATION IN THE HOMES

The Secret of a Happy Married Life.

In a letter to his son, by Irving Bacheller, published recently in the Delineator, he tells of learning the secret of a happy marriage.

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It was when he and his young wife were visiting his aged mother, one twilight summer evening; the young wife had said something displeasing to her husband who responded with a thoughtless and impatient remark. Both being sensitive, both were hurt.

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The mother broke the silence by telling of the gentle art of keeping step, of bearing and forbearing, and of the danger of hasty words. The gist of mother's advice was, "Every day at least once, I want you to think this: 'What can I do this day to show her that I really love her? What can I do to make him love me more? If you are ever angry with each other, don't speak, I beg you, until the anger has passed away.'"

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This advice holds the secret of a happy married life.

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THE QUESTION BOX

(Send problems in question form to Church editor; answers will appear in later issue.)

1. Just what do you mean by Woman's Day which is observed in several schools today?

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The observance of Woman's Day on the first Sunday in December has been recognized for many years as one of the important occasions in the calendar of special days. The president of your missionary society should preside, perhaps. It affords an opportunity for presenting the work of the church done by the women. One or two short addresses, or many short talks might be given on "The Fields," "The Workers"—High Points in Missions—or a pageant might be given. "The Strong Tower" is fine. The day is rich in opportunities.

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2. What do you think of writing Christmas—"Xmas"?

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We think it is "jazzing" it. We should bar the contraction. John H. A. Kelly, a newspaperman, explains that although the "X" is borrowed from the Greek as a symbol for the name of the Savior, Christians "will prefer to keep Christmas known by its right name, so that none of its significance be lost."

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COMMENTS ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

SCHOOL LESSON

Paul in Melita and Rome—Acts 28: 1-24, 30-31 for Sunday, Dec. 13.

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While in Ephesus Paul had formed a purpose to visit Rome—the metropolis of the world bearing the proud name of the Eternal City. All the world had been taxed to enrich this city. But Paul arrives as a prisoner bound in chains. Yet, as Mr. Snowden says, "he was incomparably the greatest man in that city beside whom Nero shrank into insignificance and worthlessness." The preacher was bound but the prisoner was free. The Word of God cannot be bound anywhere, and whatever is our condition, we can always live and speak the gospel. Dr. Jewett said "The prisoner eclipsed the prison. His courage was more obtrusive than his chains. His fellowship with the Lord was more manifest than his bondage to a Roman soldier. His light shone

in the darkness, and the darkness

was unable to quench it. And many

of the brethren of the Lord, coming

into this bright, inspiring atmosphere, felt the quickening of the apostle's triumph, and were much

more bold to speak the word without

fear. O the contagion of a healthy

soul."

V 16—"But Paul was suffered to

dwell by himself with a soldier that

kept him." There are no ties like

those of Christian fellowship. What

punishment more grievous to the

sensitive soul than lack of privacy.

V 17—"After three days Paul is

ready for work, and called the

chief of the Jews together" and said

"Men and brethren, I have committed nothing against the people." A

good man doesn't want to rest under

unjust suspicions.

Vs 16-19—"The world crucifies and

burns its 'heretics'—then it raises

statues and builds cathedrals to their

memory.

V 20—"For this cause therefore,

have I called you, because that for

the hope of Israel I am bound with

this chain." It doesn't matter if a

man's hands are shackled if his soul

is free.

Vs 21-22—"But we desire to hear

of thee what thou thinkest, for as

concerning this sect, we know that

everywhere it is spoken against."

It was a 'sect' of the Jews. Christians were declared to be the enemies

of mankind. "Everywhere spoken

against." Has any great man or

movement escaped such a fate? Was

not Christ himself spoken against the

last expiring cry on the cross? And

shall the disciple be above the

Master?

V 23—"And when they had appoint-

him a day—" Paul preached an all-

day sermon. He persuades the Jews

"concerning Jesus, both out of the

law of Moses, and out of the prophets." Again Paul takes the Jews

on their own ground and proves the Messiahship of Christ out of their own Scripture.

V 24—"And some believed—and some believed not." An honest record. There will ever follow two results from preaching the Word. Some will accept and some will oppose.

"The same sun melts the wax and hardens the clay." What a man believes lifts or lowers the conduct; it is the making or marring of happiness.

Vs 30-31—"Paul received all that came in unto him." Prison walls are open doors to the God-fearing, humanity-serving. If he had been forbidden, he would likely have gone on preaching "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" just the same. Under the greatest disadvantages the true worker continues his work. ero is dead, but Paul lives. "God buries his workmen, but carries on his work."

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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Paul in Melita and Rome—Acts 28: 16-24, 30-31 for Sunday, Dec. 13.

1. How did Rome become such a great city? Why is the gospel always planted in large cities?

2. What was the gospel Paul preached? Why does the gospel message have power?

3. Why do some believe the gospel while others do not?

4. What letters were written by Paul during his stay at Rome?

5. What was the real secret of Paul during his stay at Rome?

LESSON PRAYER

We thank thee, our Father, that thou dost give to us also opportunities to serve thee in hard places. Make us, like Paul, fruitful and joyous in that service. Amen.

BOOK REVIEW

BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE, by Henry Hugh Proctor, Pilgrim

Press, 14 Beacon Street, Boston. The author is one of the outstanding

leaders of the colored people who have risen from obscurity making all obstacles the stepping stone to success. This book is the story of his remarkable career. A stirring, dramatic narrative fairly interpreting the race problem.

THE JUST WEIGHT, by Bishop

Francis J. McConnell, The Abingdon

Press \$1.00, contains addresses delivered before college audiences. The discourses are short, pithy, practical, and deal in a stimulating fashion with many phases of life that are of the deepest interest to college students and to people generally.

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