

Sunday School Lesson

A LETTER ON CHRISTIAN LIVING

International Sunday School Lesson for December 1, 1946

Golden Text: "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might"—Ephesians 6:10.

Lesson Text: Acts 19:23-30, 35-41; Ephesians 6:13-18

Our last lesson concerned Paul's visit to Corinth while on his second missionary journey. He departed from this Grecian city in peace and quite unlike his departure from some other cities. From Corinth Paul went to Ephesus, where he stayed for a brief period, and left Aquila and Priscilla there, while he proceeded to Jerusalem.

For some reason, either while at Corinth, or shortly thereafter, Paul had undertaken a vow, to keep which he desired to spend the Passover in Jerusalem. This is why he did not tarry at Ephesus very long. After spending a little while in Jerusalem, Paul went to Antioch in Syria, where lived the group of Christians from which he and Barnabas had drawn to embark upon their missionary enterprise. Then at Jerusalem and at Antioch Paul reported the wonderful success

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which had come to his labors. It was not very long, however, before Paul set out from Antioch on his third missionary tour. By way of the Cilician gates and Tarsus he revisited the churches established in Galatia and Phrygia on his first tour, thus keeping in touch with his converts and friends in these regions. Then he headed westward to Ephesus, making in this city his longest stay, for he continued there a space of three years.

Ephesus was a great commercial center at the time and a city of importance. Here was located the Temple of Diana, recognized as one of the seven wonder of the ancient world. It was constructed of white marble, measuring 342 by 163 feet, and having one hundred columns over fifty-five feet high, each, the gift of a king. Ephesus became renowned in early Christian circles and according to tradition was the burial place of the apostle John, the author Luke and Timothy.

Paul began his work in Ephesus, as in other cities, with an effort to carry his message to the people of his own race. For three months, Paul preached in the synagogue of Ephesus concerning the Kingdom of God, contrasting the purity reason and holiness of this ideal state with the licentiousness, superstition and wrong of heathen beliefs and practices.

He made progress in winning souls but became of opposition from some of the Jews finally abandoned the synagogue and went with his disciples to the

school of Tyrannus where he taught two years. During this period, Paul probably made frequent excursions into the outlying territory for we are told that all that dwelt in Asia Minor heard the word and various churches were established, seven of which are mentioned in Revelations.

Paul's ministry was blessed by various manifestations of divine approval, rewarding the lives of those who believed. These occurrences led sorcerers and magicians to connect their art with the name of Jesus. We have an account of the discomfiture of two such magicians. Under the influence of Paul's work many of those who practiced the secret arts realized their insufficiency and inadequacy and staged a great bonfire of valuable books about the magic art.

Later, while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he wrote a letter to the Christians at Ephesus, exhorting them to live a life worthy of a Christian. The first three chapters of the letter are doctrinal, dealing with Christian truth while the last three chapters are practical, dealing with the Christian life, wherein the virtues of purity and holiness are emphasized.

Probably one of the best known portions of this letter is the reference given for our consideration—a description of the Christian's armor.

"First, the girdle of truth, There is no safety in a lie. Second the breastplate of righteousness.

The right life is the only safe life.

Third, the sandals of peace. Peace has more victories than war.

Fourth, the shield of faith. 'I will trust and not be afraid'

Fifth, the helmet of salvation. The Christian life is the fear-

less life.

Sixth, the sword of the Spirit. The true sword is the Word of God.

Seventh, the habit of prayer. Prayer will always kill sin."

Urge Liquor Referendum

Asheville.—The North Carolina Baptist State Convention this morning called for a State referendum on the question of intoxicating beverages and a special study of the divorce problem.

In the closing session of the three-day convocation, the delegates moved to complete action on deferred business related to the admission of Gardner-Webb Junior college at Boiling Springs to the educational system of the convention; the appointment of a committee to confer with the trustees of Wake Forest college and representatives of the Southern Baptist Convention on utilization of Wake Forest property; and a proposal that the churches of the convention raise within three years the sum of \$1,500,000 toward the erection of a new plant for Wake Forest at Winston-Salem. Election of officers will conclude the business of the session.

Of unanimous accord on the liquor question, the 1,500 messengers differed in opinion as to the most feasible method of presenting the request to the State General Assembly.

Following debate, it was voted that all district units join with the general convention in petitioning legislators, either orally in conference or by written resolution, to seek a referendum next year on the question of legal liquor.

A resolution calling for a study of the divorce problem asked that the convention appoint a special committee or authorize its committee on social service and civic righteousness to make a thorough study of the problem of marriage and divorce and to report to the convention at its next regular session. The resolution made specific mention of seven points.

The Convention yesterday cleared the way for a \$400,000 contribution by the body toward erection of a 140-bed addition to Baptist hospital at Winston-Salem at an estimated cost of \$1,000,000. Hospital trustees are charged with raising the remaining \$600,000. Authorization of the \$400,000

convention contribution passed venue. It was provided also that yesterday which provided also any unpaid balance of such borrow that the general board should rowing at the end of the fiscal have authority to borrow money year should be taken care of in in anticipation of current re- the budget of the subsequent

fiscal year. Approximately 1,400 messengers have attended the session, which opened Tuesday.



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