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THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson III.—Third Quarter, For
July 18, 1909.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Acts xvii, 1-15.
Memory Verse, 11—Golden Text, Pa.
cxix, 11—Commentary Prepared by
Rev. D. M. Starns.

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Passing through the two places men-
tioned, they sojourn for a time at
Thessalonica, where Sabbath after
Sabbath they proved from the Scrip-
tures that Jesus of Nazareth is the
Christ, the promised Messiah of Isra-
el, and that, according to the Scriptures,
it was necessary for Him to suffer and
to rise again from the dead. The Lord
Jesus Himself after He rose from the
dead pursued this very plan and from
Moses and all the prophets expounded
in all the Scriptures the things concern-
ing Himself, showing that all the
things which are written therein concern-
ing Him must needs be fulfilled (Luke
xxiv, 27, 44-46). The good
news concerning Jesus Christ took
hold of them in the power of the Spirit,
for they received the message as it is,
indeed, the word of God and not of
man, and from them it sounded out
through all Macedonia and Achaia and
elsewhere (1 Thess. 1, 5, 8; 11, 13). How
simple and yet how full the statement
concerning them, "Ye turned to God
from idols to serve the living and true
God and to wait for His Son from
heaven, whom He raised from the
dead, even Jesus, who delivered us
from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1, 9,
10). Here we have the threefold sal-
vation most clearly stated, saved by
His sacrifice when we come to God by
Him, then in all the daily life living
unto Him, serving Him, and all the
time waiting for and expecting the re-
turn of Christ from heaven (1 Thess.
iv, 16-18).

There were many who believed and
continued to give heed to the teaching
of Paul and Silas, but there were
Jews who believed not and, being
filled with envy and instigated by the
great adversary, set all the city in an
uproar, accusing these men of turning
the world upside down by proclaiming
as king one Jesus. The world is in-
deed upside down and all wrong, and
notwithstanding the boasted progress
of the day the whole world still lieth
in the wicked one (1 John v, 19, R. V.),
and God has said, "I will overturn,
overturn, overturn, until He come
whose right it is, and I will give it
Him" (Ezek. xxi, 27). There is only
one who is capable of making all wrong
things right on this long sin-cursed
earth, and He is the King who shall
reign in righteousness and shall bring
peace and quietness on the whole
earth, for He shall be King of kings
and Lord of lords, and all kings and
all nations shall serve Him (Isa. xxxiii,
1, 17; Rev. xix, 16; Pa. lxxii, 11). Ac-
cording to our Lord's command,
"When they persecute you in this city,
flee ye to another" (Matt. x, 23), Paul
and Silas passed on to Berea and there
pursued the same course, opening to
them the same Scriptures concerning
the same Jesus. Here also many men
and women believed and received the
word readily and thus brought joy to
themselves, the joy and peace which
come by believing (Rom. xv, 13), but
they also were a comfort to the Lord
Himself, for when on earth in His
humiliation He said to His Father in
Heaven, "I have given unto them the
words which Thou gavest me, and they
have received them" (John xvii, 8).
Let us remember that whenever
we receive His word meekly and as
the very word of God we please Him.

There was at least one point in
which the Bereans excelled, and that
was in their searching the Scriptures
daily, that they might see for them-
selves the things which Paul taught
and believe them, not because Paul
taught them, but because God Him-
self had told them in His word. The
only way to be established is to be-
lieve God, believe what He says to us
in His word, accepting it as if He had
spoken it to us directly by a voice
from heaven. Then when we can say,
as did the people of Samaria, "We
have heard Him ourselves," we shall
not be tossed about by every wind of
doctrine (John iv, 42; 11 Chron. xx, 20;
Isa. vii, 9). The majority of church-
goers are too prone to believe what
the preacher says instead of doing as
the Bereans did, and therefore so few
seem to be established. They also ask,
"How do we know what to believe
when different teachers teach so dif-
ferently?" The answer is in Isa. viii,
20, R. V., "To the law and to the testi-
mony, if they speak not according to
this work it is because there is no
morning for them."

The Scriptures are the only infallible
guide, and our Lord said that when
people err it is because they know not
the Scriptures nor the power of God.
The professed messengers of God will,
if they are true messengers, carry only
the Lord's message; otherwise they
are prophets of the deceit of their own
hearts, and the Lord never sent them
(Jer. xxiii, 21-29). The devil does cer-
tainly hate the word of God, and so he
stirred his followers at Thessalonica
to go to Berea and oppose the servants
of the Lord there. This resulted in
Paul going on to Athens, while Silas
and Timothy abode for a time at Berea
until Paul sent for them to come
to him with all speed. The devil's
hated of God and His word is very
manifest from Gen. ii, 2, 4, onward,
and I have no hesitation in saying that
all opposition to and destructive criti-
cism of the word of God today are
wholly of the devil. Contrast Isa. lxvii,
1, 2.

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