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**D. R. F. YARBOROUGH**  
PHYSICIAN and SURGEON  
Louisburg, N. C.  
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**W. HAYWOOD RUFFIN**  
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**Jno W King & Son**

**THE SUNDAY SCHOOL,**

Lesson VIII.—Third Quarter,  
For Aug. 22, 1909.

**THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.**

Text of the Lesson, Acts xiv, 23-44.  
Memory Verses, 28—Golden Text, II Cor. xii, 9—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

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It was Paul's thought, if it should prove to be the will of God, to visit the places in Europe where he had been on his previous tour and then return to Jerusalem, hoping at some time to see Rome also. Meantime he sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his ministers, into Macedonia, while he tarried in Asia for a season (verses 21, 22). Remembering what we wrote in the last lesson of the little that is said of some disciples, we might easily forget that Timothy was one of the company were it not for an occasional reference to him. This is our first introduction to Erastus, of whom we read elsewhere in Rom. xvi, 23; II Tim. iv, 20. It may not seem like saying much for them to say that they ministered unto Paul, but for some years it was all that could be said of Elisha with regard to Elijah, "He ministered unto him" (I Kings xix, 21), and in doing this they as truly ministered to the Lord as those who ministered to Him personally when He was here on earth (Matt. x, 42). It is impossible to minister to the Lord sincerely without exciting the enmity of him who even dared to ask the Lord Jesus to worship him (Matt. iv, 9). He is the god of this world and may also be called the religious leader, for the vast majority of religious people worship him, perhaps unconsciously. No one can draw near to or worship the one only living and true God except by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and by virtue of His atonement for sin, His great vicarious sacrifice.

That which is not the worship of God is the worship of the devil (I Cor. x, 20), whether it be the worship of Diana or Jupiter or Buddha or Mohammed or the professed worship of a God who saves people because they try to do right and to follow a Jesus who is not God and never suffered as a sacrifice for our sins. Like the men in chapter xvi who caused the persecution of Paul and Silas because their demon possessed slave was healed, and thus further hope of gain through her was gone, Demetrius and his craftsmen caused a riot at Ephesus because the sale of silver shrines for Diana was falling off through the preaching of the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Their cry that, not alone at Ephesus, but almost through all Asia, Paul had turned away much people from the worship of Diana was splendid testimony to the work of the Spirit through Paul, but that was not the aim of Demetrius. The testimony was like that of the Jewish rulers in Acts v, 28, "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." Where is there such zeal today, such spirit filled men?

The cry of the opposition was: "Our craft is in danger. . . . By this craft we have our wealth" (verses 25, 27). What is the difference between that and the cry of the unrighteous rulers in many cities today who by oppression and theft have their wealth and yet have power enough somehow to cover up their misdeeds and to escape punishment, but who are ready to raise a great outcry against any who would attempt to put their iniquitous craft in danger? As to the condition of a multitude of churches, with their new theology dishonoring God and Christ and His word and filling the church with all manner of worldliness, what can we say but "How long, O Lord, how long," canst Thou suffer it? When teachers in our Sunday schools and even some preachers enjoy the Sunday newspapers, light reading of any kind, the theater, and such like, and consider those who renounce these things as only babes and undeveloped, and the cry from all sides is "Great is our Diana, whom all the world worshipeth" can those who would be out and out for Christ lay to heart the advice of the town clerk of the city of Ephesus and "be quiet and do nothing rashly" (Verse 36). Yes, truly, for, though the heathen in heathendom and Christendom rage as they please and shout themselves hoarse in honor of their gods, we may well be quiet, knowing that "our Jehovah is above all gods and whatsoever He pleases He will do" (Ps. cxxxv, 5, 6). Jesus of Nazareth shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the kingdoms of this world shall become wholly His. Let us not be afraid, but speak boldly His word, for He is well able to take care of it and of all that concerns His kingdom.

Ephesus was filled with confusion, and the assembly was confused, and some cried one thing and some another, and the greater number knew not why they were come together (verses 23, 32). What a picture of the world lying in the wicked one! "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (I Cor. xiv, 33). "Where envying and strife are there are confusion and every evil work, but that wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. iii, 15, 16). In verse 29 we are introduced to two more of Paul's companions with whom we can talk more fully and freely in the kingdom of all the events of that day if it shall then seem worth while, but all suffering here for His sake shall seem so small then that many things we now feel like desiring to know more about will not then seem worth a thought.

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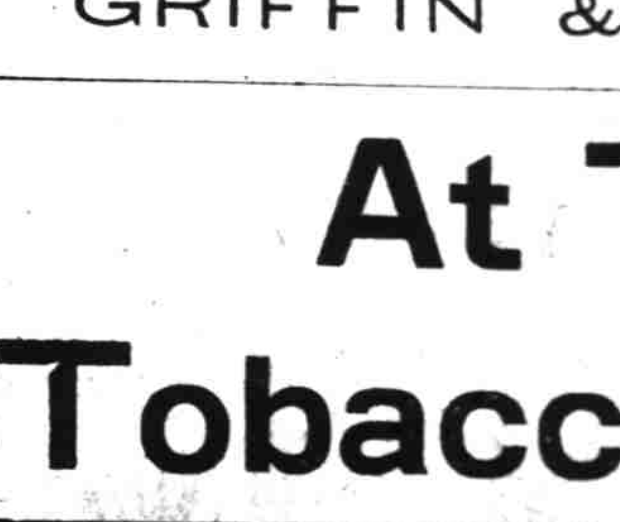
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