

For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.—Psalm cxix. 89.

Our Mission Union,

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OUR COLUMN FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

NUGGETS OF GOLD FROM THE S. S. LESSONS.

By REV. JOHN MCEWEN, Secretary S.S. Association of Canada.

[March 8.] Paul before Felix. [Acts 24: 10-27.]

Paul has had, through the good hand of God upon him, a safe escape out of the hands of his enemies, and is now at Caesarea,—so far on his way to Rome,—and in a few days he is brought before Felix, to be tried according to the Roman law, being a Roman citizen.

1. PAUL'S ACCUSERS,

Represented by the High Priest Ananias, who had so unjustly commanded Paul to be smitten in the Jewish Court, and Tertullus, the paid advocate.

The charges preferred—SEDITION, or disturbing the peace of the people. v. 5. HERESY, or as a ringleader of the Nazarenes. v. 6. SACRILEGE, or wantonly trampling on the laws regulating the Temple.

2. PAUL'S DEFENCE.

His first defence was before a mob. Read chapter 22.

His second defence was before the Jewish people. Read chapter 23.

His third defence, as here, before a Roman magistrate.

His introduction. vs. 10, 11. His denial of the first and third of the charges. His confession of the second. vs. 14, 15.

Paul's faith in the God of the Hebrews—also in the Scriptures of the Hebrews—and in the Hope of the Hebrews. He confessed firmly and fully to hold no new faith, but the same old faith as seen and experienced in the light of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

This defence is strengthened by the life he had led and was still leading. v. 16.

3. PAUL'S JUDGE.

He was kindly disposed toward him. v. 23. He was impressible and aroused. v. 25. He was fickle, covetous and time-serving. He trembled under conscience, yet trilled with the message and the messenger, "Go," &c.

Paul was faithful to the Truth, in his defence. He was faithful to the judge, in his opportunities with him; to the Scriptures and the Divine law; to Jesus Christ, who had so recently cheered him.

[March 15.] Paul before Agrippa. [Acts 26: 1-18.]

Felix, willing to gratify the Jews, left Paul bound at Caesarea. For two years he languished in prison, but in the Lord's hands he could wait. The Jews still thirsted for his blood. They tried to get a trial at Jerusalem, that they might kill Paul on the way thither; but Paul appeals to Caesar,—and so he must go to Rome. And thus under God his opportunities for preaching Christ are widened.

PAUL'S ADDRESS BEFORE AGRIPPA.

Three points to be faithfully put into the memory—made clear to the understanding—and pray the Holy Spirit to flash them before the conscience and persuade the heart:—

1. A LAUDABLE REFERENCE TO HIS YOUTH and manner of life. A clean record is of unspeakable value in the days of trial, and when the strife of tongues assail you. v. 4. A public challenge to his nation and his accusers, "I was a thorough-going Pharisee and persecutor."

2. PAUL HIDES HIMSELF BEHIND the acknowledged teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures,—the Hope of the Twelve Tribes,—Jesus Christ and His saving power. vs. 13-15.

3. THE MANIFEST MISSION TO WHICH PAUL WAS CALLED. vs. 16-18. A minister and apostle to the Gentiles. A witness for the risen Christ, and to the unbelieving people. To proclaim to men,—Enlightenment, Liberation, Forgiveness, Holiness, Inheritance.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

THERE are now in active operation 84 Foreign Missionary Societies, expending yearly over \$8,000,000, and having large numbers of communicants in connection with the different Protestant Churches.

DURING the last eight years, the British and Foreign Bible Society has issued over 92,000,000 of copies of the Scripture in nearly 300 different languages, and is every year adding to the translations and to the numbers. 109 volumes of the Bible are in embossed type for the blind. Other societies (the American, Scottish, Irish and Continental,) have issued an immense number of copies.

THERE are in the United States 98,303 Sunday-schools; 7,668,833 scholars; 1,043,718 teachers—total, 8,712,551 Sunday-school pupils and teachers in a population of 50,155,783. In Canada there are 4965 Sunday-schools, with 370,154 scholars, 43,730 teachers, making a total of 413,884 pupils and teachers in a population of 3,634,018. In Newfoundland there are 240 Sunday-schools, 17,572 pupils, and 1749 teachers, or 19,321 persons in the Sunday schools of that province out of a population of 161,374. Labrador has eight Sunday-schools, 240 pupils, and 30 teachers. The Sunday-school army of the whole world counts 15,775,093 scholars, and 1,883,431 teachers, making a grand total of 17,658,524.