

of Christ his scholars must feel it. If he goes to his class every Sabbath fresh from the secret place with a new touch of Christ upon him, he cannot but powerfully influence them. His whole personality will then be at its best.

Toronto Bible Training School

PAUL BEFORE HIS JUDGES

By *Rev. E. A. Henry, B.A.*

No other Christian preacher has ever had the wideness of opportunity that fell to Paul for presenting the truths of the gospel. Three times, in particular, we see him facing men, who stand as types of nearly every opposing force the Christian faith has had to meet.

The first was Felix, the first-century representative of fleshliness. It was the meeting between Christ and the lusts of the flesh. Felix was tyrannical, unclean, a time-server, and a taker of bribes. Personal gratification was his measure of right and wrong. Nothing higher than pleasure could appeal to such a character. For pleasure he lived.

This explains the shallowness of his appreciation of the responsibility of his position, for he who has no self-mastery is unfitted for any other rulership or influence. It explains his procrastination, for the lover of pleasure does not care to leave his gratifications long enough to discuss life's serious and solemn import. It explains his fearful tremblings before the preacher of righteousness, for the conscience of a sinner is still alive, and when the keen thrust of spiritual investigation pierces through his mask, laying bare to himself the hideousness of his life and the certainty of judgment, he cowers. The blatant, self-satisfied Epicurean is at heart a coward, and shivers when the search-light of God's eternal laws flash upon him.

Festus, before whom, so soon after, Paul appeared, stands for the good-natured type of indifferentism, dealing out a sort of easy going impartiality, without going too deeply into questions that excite enthusiasm, that may develop into burning zeal, or that make necessary too profound personal investigation. What is the use, anyhow, of getting too much excited over religious problems? And if

you do, you are branded crank, stigmatized as mad, a fanatic. But religion, that is different. A zealous merchant is a man of splendid commercial enthusiasm; an ardent politician has a most commendable zeal; but an enthusiastic Christian is a kind of monstrosity. It is not wise or good to take that too seriously.

This is the attitude of Festus and it is essentially the outcome of a superficial scepticism regarding the reality of profounder and spiritual things. It makes a man weak. It creates an unworthy fear of higher duty. And it is one of the greatest modern obstacles to the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

Agrippa, invited by Festus to listen to this famous preacher of the new cult, the type of worldly ambition. A renegade Jew, from a stock whose supreme attitude was recognition of the pride of life as its ruling principle, to him convictions were not so important as the realization of his plans, and the keeping the name of Herod prominent in the eyes of the world. His easy faith was of insignificant value. He could combine Jewish belief and Grecian culture in order to keep in the upper stratum. He could sarcastically wave aside the pleadings of the great apostle, because Paul was only like a fly on the wheel. He had no depth of concern regarding anything except to keep on good terms with the powers that could influence his worldly position. And so he listens and smiles, and tramples on his higher knowledge, and patronizingly talks his shallow nothings to Festus and goes out, leaving Christianity to its fate, and swelling with the conscious pride of a Herod that at least he has listened, but has not hurt his Herodian prestige.

And alas, Agrippas are not yet dead. For the pride of wealth and of culture, the longing for worldly position and a place among the upper ten, the desire to realize personal ends and ambitions at any cost, still lead to the waving of the hand against Christ.

And there stands Paul before these fleshly, worldly rulers, brave, noble, self-reliant, fearless, devoted to truth, to plain speech, to the declaration of heaven's realities—a magnificent sight and a grand object lesson. Can we do less than follow his example, and face