

7. Neither nationally nor personally will God always be gracious to men, ver. 21.

8. If God could be just and yet pardon such an offender as Paul, surely he can pardon you.

9. There are some places where it is not worth while to preach the Gospel, and some men who are utterly unmoved by its power, ver. 18.

Lesson VIII. Paul Before the Council. Acts 23. 1-11.

1. The supreme practical business of the council was to persecute those whose religious convictions were unlike its own. Matt. 26, 57, 59; 5, 22; Luke 22, 66; Mark 14, 55; 15, 1; John 11, 47; Acts 4, 1-22; 7, 54, 60; 22, 30; 24, 20.

2. We may justly study to find an explanation of the splendor of Paul's conscientiousness on this trying occasion, ver. 1. Heb. 9, 14; 10, 2-10, 22; 13, 18; Job 27, 6; Rom. 3, 19; 10, 2; 9, 1; 14, 22; 13, 5; 1 Pet. 2, 19; 3, 16, 21; 2 Cor. 1, 12; 4, 2, 5, 11.

3. Let us examine some information concerning the high-priesthood in general, ver. 2. Deut. 17, 8-12; 19, 17; 21, 1; 33, 8, 10; Ezek. 44, 24; Lev. 16, 2; 21, 13, 17-22; Num. 18, 28; Heb. 9, 11-26.

4. Paul under the extreme provocation here detailed did not lose his temper; but he did join God's prophets, and spake as they did, ver. 3. Ezek. 2, 6; 1 Sam. 15; 2 Sam. 12; 2 Chron. 33, 18; James 5, 10; Isa. 44, 26; 2 King. 17, 13; 2 Chron. 24, 19; Jer. 25, 4, 5.

5. Paul was too wise and too practical to press a just but illegal and utterly impracticable issue, and hence he apologized, ver. 5. Rom. 13, 1, 2; 1 Pet. 2, 13-17; Exod. 22, 28; Jude 8; Eccles. 10, 20; 2 Pet. 2, 10; Job 34, 18; Prov. 19, 12; 20, 2.

6. Characteristics of the two classes into which Paul's accusers were divided theologically, ver. 6. Matt. 22, 23; 16, 1; Mark 12, 18; Luke 20, 27; 1 Cor. 15; Luke 18, 10; 11, 37; 16, 14; Matt. 5, 20; 9, 34; 19, 3.

7. The views of the Sadducees on the subject of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body are immaterial. What does God's word say? Job 19, 26; Isa. 26, 19; Heb. 6, 1, 2; 11, 35; Mark 12, 24; John 12, 24; 1 Cor. 15, 35-44; 13, 12-20.

8. May we not regard this great dissension as a special benevolent providence to rescue Paul, ver. 10. Neh. 9, 6; Matt. 10, 29, 30; Gen. 45, 5-7; 50, 20; Phil. 1, 12; Exod. 15, 9-11; 2 Sam. 17, 14, 15; Psa. 33, 10.

9. Other apparently unlooked-for and purely personal and private revelations made by God to men, ver. 11. Job 33, 14, 15; Acts 9, 5; 7, 55, 56; 10, 10-16; 2 Sam. 7, 4, 5; Gal. 1, 12; 2 Cor. 12, 1, 7; Gen. 20, 3-7.

10. God is still out with his people to afford them his idea of care in all times of personal and national peril. Matt. 6, 23, 34; Deut. 4, 37; Rom. 8, 28; Amos 3, 6; Isa. 10, 5-12; 27, 3; 44, 7; Psa. 16, 8; 139, 1-5.

Lessons:

1. We are at liberty, if indeed we are not in duty bound, to report publicly our triumphant conscientiousness.

2. Under corresponding provocation was the great apostle unagitated like his Lord and Saviour, and example, ver. 3.

3. In the providence of any administration loyal Christians should cheerfully acquiesce.

4. Instantly and reverently Paul yielded to God's wise, but exacting, word, ver. 5.

5. The most far-seeing shrewdness may be innocently employed to extricate one from personal danger, ver. 6.

6. Suddenly, and without anticipation, the agencies of God's providence are employed, ver. 7.

7. In fact, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a first principle of the Gospel, Heb. 6, 1, 2.

8. How contemptuously those Roman infidels must have regarded this acrimonious sectarian contention, ver. 8.

9. In the glory of supreme conscientiousness, or in immediate personal appearing, God has more than once "stood by" us, his children, in danger and in bereavement, ver. 11.

At Home.

... From the Rev. J. M. Avann, of Manchester, N. H., we have received a Church manual, an elaborate, systematic, and every-way admirable hand-book. We notice that of the fifty-three probationers received in that Church as the result of an evangelist's labors, and just at the change of a pastor, only three have been lost; that there has been a continual revival during the year with absolutely no shrinkage in the probationers received; that the provisions of the Discipline concerning instruction of children have been carried out, in children's classes, pastor's class, Sunday-school, Church Lyceum, "C. L. S. C." etc., and that the parish directory is very complete, the children's names being given. Such "manuals" do us good.

... The Baptists of Massachusetts, always awake, have recently shown their wisdom by two measures. They have organized a denominational State Sunday-School Association, having for its object to promote more efficient teaching in Baptist schools, by heading institutes, and training teachers. And they have secured as their secretary and institute conductor our able and genial friend, Prof. W. F. Sherwin, a thorough Baptist, and a catholic Christian, who will make the institutes both attractive in their exercises, and valuable to all who attend them. We are informed that Prof. Sherwin still retains his connection with the New England Conservatory of Music, and will give a part of his time to that institution.

... For all that may be said by some about the trashy quality of the Sunday-school music of to-day, we doubt if two singing-books of better character were ever published in the past, than the two compilations which have just been issued by Biglow and Main. One is "Select Songs for the Sunday-school," by the editor of the widely-used "Select Notes," Rev. F. N. Peloubet. The other is "Hymns of Praise," edited by Geo. A. Bell and Hubert P. Main. Both are far more tastefully printed and bound than Sunday-school singing-books were wont to be in the good old times; both contain the very cream of hymns and tunes, from all writers, and especially from the late William B. Bradbury, whose compositions are again coming into favor with a new generation of young people. It is hard to choose between them, but perhaps the "Select Songs" is the better book for use in the prayer-meeting and the Sunday-school; while "Hymns of Praise" might be preferred by those who desire a singing-book for the Sunday school only.