



## LESSON V.—FEBRUARY. 1.

## Paul at Athens

Acts xvii., 22-34.

## Golden Text.

Because he preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection.—Acts xvii., 18.

## Home Readings.

Monday, Jan. 26.—Acts xvii., 13-21.  
 Tuesday, Jan. 27.—Acts xvii., 22-34.  
 Wednesday, Jan. 28.—Is., xl., 18-31.  
 Thursday, Jan. 29.—Jer., x., 1-13.  
 Friday, Jan. 30.—John iv., 19-26.  
 Saturday, Jan. 31.—Is. xlv., 1-11.  
 Sunday, Feb. 1.—1 Cor. i., 20-31.

## ABOUT IDOLS.

Travellers say that one who goes to foreign lands always finds what he looks for—he sees what his mind is fitted to see. An artist has an eye for pictures; a man who cares for fine buildings sees all the cathedrals and grand houses; another, who is always watching for green fields and lakes and waterfalls, comes home with a bookful of pencil-sketches. Paul, who longed to save men from idolatry, saw in Athens a city full of idols. In all the beauty there was the blot! They did not love his God—the true God—in that great city. Every gateway and porch, every street and square, had its god or its temple. The houses were full of images; one splendid gold and ivory image of the goddess Athena made the Parthenon a kind of world's wonder, and the other, nearly twice as tall, standing in the open air, was all of bronze, a glorious landmark for sailors as the point of its spear and the crest of its helmet were seen by approaching ships. The heathen called one god the god of the sea, and another the god of the woods, and there were gods of the hills and gods of the valleys. Paul longed to tell the people about the one God, whose power had made everything, even the worshippers of these foolish idols.

Did you ever read the story of Joseph Neesima, the Japanese boy, who would not worship the idols of his family, because he saw that they were only whittled figures? See if it isn't in your Sunday-school library, and get it and read it, and see how a bright boy learned better than to worship idols.

Mars' Hill.—Better known by the name of the Areopagus. A rocky height in Athens opposite the western end of the Acropolis. The ancient Athenian court held here was called the Council of Areopagus.

A-re-op'a-gite.—A member of the council or court of Areopagus.

Verse 22. Too superstitious: Very religious.

Verse 26. Determined: Settled. Bounds of their habitation: Places where they were to live.

Verse 30. Winked at: Overlooked.

Verse 31. Appointed a day: Set a day; the day of judgment. That man: The man Christ Jesus.

## Lesson Text

Where was Paul when he made this speech? What can you tell about the way he came to be there? Why did the people want to hear him? (Read the first part of the chapter.)

What were Paul's first words? What had he noticed in his walks around the city? What did he say of the inscription on one of the altars? Whom did he declare to them as the unknown, true God who had made the world and everything in it? What else did he tell them about him? Whose children did he say they all

were? What did he say God's children ought not to think? Why must they repent of such thoughts and worship the true God? What great day did he say was coming? By whom is the world to be judged? What else did Paul tell them about Jesus?

When he spoke of the resurrection, what did his hearers do? Did any of them believe?

## C. E. Topic.

Sunday, Feb. 1.—Topic—Decide to-day. Heb. iii., 7-13. (Christian Endeavor Day.)

## Junior C. E. Topic

## DECIDE TO-DAY.

Monday, Jan. 26.—To give up all. Luke xiv., 33.

Tuesday, Jan. 27.—To take up the cross. Luke ix., 23.

Wednesday, Jan. 28.—To begin testifying. Luke viii., 38, 39.

Thursday, Jan. 29.—To work for Jesus. Mark i., 17.

Friday, Jan. 30.—To obey him. John xiv., 15.

Saturday, Jan. 31.—To imitate him. 1 Pet. ii., 21.

## Childhood Without God.

(The Christian.)

The 'Sunday School Chronicle' has a timely article under this heading upon the need of teaching children a definite religious faith. Stern facts are driving leaders of religious thought to examine the present methods of dealing with the young, and it is well that we are all called upon to face the situation. We would emphasize the word 'definite,' for therein lies the crux of the matter. We do not regard as 'definite' teaching the vague statements so often conveyed to the young that there is a God, that he is good and kind, and that we must be good. Children very early demand the reason for all things submitted to them, and, 'as they are able to bear it,' the great, distinctive truths of the Gospel should be put before them. But if this teaching is to leave this impression deeply upon the mind, it must be undertaken at home as well as at Sunday-school. Of the 168 hours in each week, the child is at Sunday-school, at most, two hours. It is clear then that if the teaching and example given during the 166 hours counterbalance what is accomplished in the two hours, the latter has but little chance. Do even professedly Christian parents sufficiently realize their great responsibility to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

## A Cure of Souls.

(Rev. James Mursell.)

Wordsworth begins his sonnet to Haydon, the well-known artist, with the words, 'High is our calling, friend.' When I look into the face of a devoted Christian worker among boys and girls, I always feel inclined to quote the poet's words. The Sunday school teacher has a high calling. It is his so to touch and influence the plastic life of youth that Christ shall be formed in them, and His indwelling presence shall mould their natures into the grace of His own purpose in their lives. That is a vocation the height of which it is almost impossible to exaggerate. It requires a delicacy of instinct, a clearness of insight, and a tenderness of tact that can only be learnt at Jesus' feet. To the difficult, beautiful work of winning his scholars for Christ, the teacher must bring a spirit that has been, and is being, taught of God.

How, then, can the work be done? Of course, a great deal depends on what takes place on Sundays in the class; but not a little also hinges on what takes place outside the school during the week. No teacher who has the highest interests of his scholars at heart can rest quite content with teaching them on Sunday. He will feel that his class is a ministry which cannot be fulfilled in any such hebdomadal fashion. To win the young for Christ.

there must be personal influence; and personal influence is gained only by personal care and personal love, and these involve time and trouble beyond the limits of the hour for which the class is put into the teacher's charge on Sunday afternoon. What takes place then and there is vitally important; but that, again, depends on what takes place not then, not there. Obviously, therefore, when a teacher accepts a class in the Sunday school, he accepts a cure of souls as real and as responsible, though smaller in its scope, as the vicar in his parish, or the minister in his congregation.

## The True Teacher's Aim.

(Dr. Worden, in 'Presbyterian Banner.')

The teacher is a representative of Christ; but Christ's aim, as stated by himself, was 'to seek and to save that which was lost.'

Christ's commission to the Church and to every teacher is, 'Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.' We are first to disciple them, i. e., to lead them to Christ. Then when they are Christ's disciples they are to be taught all things which Christ commanded. This was the aim of all Christ's apostles.

When Paul is narrating what Christ said to him at his conversion, he tells us that the Saviour informed him of the end of his calling, 'to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.' Nor was Paul disobedient to the heavenly vision, but with all that within him lay, he toiled and suffered, having in view the one aim, 'that I might by all means save some.' So all the apostles.

No other aim meets the case of our scholars or is adapted to their needs. Without Christ they are already lost. Christ alone can save. He can. He will. Without a new heart they cannot enter heaven. This God's Spirit alone can give. He can. He will. The Christians in your class need Christ every hour, every moment. He alone can keep them from falling. He can. He will.

All the successful winners of souls have constantly aimed at this. For this Augustine prayed and toiled. So Luther, Calvin and Knox and Baxter and Whitefield and the Wesleys. Jonathan Edwards, McCheyne. So Spurgeon and Moody. So all truly successful superintendents and teachers unwaveringly concentrate their prayers and efforts on 'this one thing.'

## Watch and Wait.

(The Rev. James Mursell.)

But should I never speak to my scholars personally about decision for Christ? Certainly you should. But you must watch and wait and pray for the opportunity. You need to remember that in dealing with children you are dealing with very delicate flowers, and that it is perilous work to stir the depths of a child's religious life into emotion. Still, through the interstices of the happy comradeship, which is the teacher's main work with his scholars out of school, opportunities will gleam on eyes that are quick to see and hearts that are sensitive to understand the ways of God. Sorrow comes even into children's lives; now one of the class goes off to boarding-school, and another's father is removing from the neighborhood; sometimes a boy or girl is overtaken in a fault; at intervals special services are held. At such times faithful words may be spoken, and loving questions asked which prove the turning point of life; while best of all, perhaps, to teachers who by personal effort and persistent prayer wait on their teaching, days will come when a boy will speak to him of his own accord, and shyly say, 'I do so want to be a Christian.'

## Sample Copies.

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