

not. They have read that Book which says: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

Now, I judge that a book which raises the price of humanity in that way is worth keeping for the good it has done. "Progress" has not raised the value of humanity. They have had eighteen hundred years to progress in, and, from Rome, at ninety dollars, have come down in Fiji to seven dollars. What has changed things in Fiji was not "progress"; it was salvation. It was not improvement, it was regeneration. It was not the gradual changing of apes into infidels, but it was the sudden changing of sinners into saints. There are men to-day preaching the Gospel of Christ, who, fifty years ago, sat at cannibal feasts. They have been changed, and all the "progress" of ten million ages would not work such a change as that. It is done by the Gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—*From a Lecture on "The World Without the Bible."*

FATHER.

"Abba" is a Syriac form of the Hebrew word "father." It is really Aramaic. Then we have given to us the Greek equivalent, which is rendered "Father." This word "Abba" deserves very careful study. No slave, though born in the house, was allowed to use it toward his master. All he could call his father was "Adon," "Lord." To use the word "Abba," the little one must be a child—a legitimate child. It was a choice word, reserved only for their lips. It is a remarkable thing that all the way through the Old Testament you never find the saints of God addressing Jehovah as "Father." And this is in spite of the fact that He represented Himself to them as their Father. He called Israel His "first-born." He encouraged them, moreover, to call Him "Father." Through the lips of Jeremiah He said: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, My Father?" But though God allowed them to call Him Father, and encouraged them, we have no record that the Old Testament saints ever employed the word. It was not until the coming of the Lord Jesus that this filial spirit was known. You may read all the way through the Psalms, marvelous as they are for their deep devotion. High though David soared, he never touched the word "Father." He got nearest to it in Psalm ciii, when He said: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." But he only declares the fact, he never addresses God as "Father." And all the way through the Old Testament, although you have the word over and over again, and the fact declared, you never find any Hebrew looking up to God and saying "Father."

HOW WESLEY SPOILED HIS SERMON.

There is a capital story about a farmer who once went to hear John Wesley preach. He was a man who cared little about religion; yet, on the other hand, he was not what we call a bad man. His attention was soon excited and riveted. The preacher said he would take up three topics of thought; he was talking chiefly about money.

His first head was, "Get all you can." The farmer nudged his neighbor, and said, "This is a strange preaching. I never heard the like before; this is very good. That man has got something in him; it is admirable preaching."

Wesley discoursed on industry, activity, living to a purpose, and reached his second division, "Take all you can." The farmer became quite excited. "Was there ever anything like this?" he said.

The preacher denounced thriftlessness and waste; he satirized the willful wickedness which revelled in luxury, and the farmer rubbed his hands as he thought, "All this has I been taught from my youth up." And what with getting and hoarding, it seemed to him that "salvation" had come to his house.

But Wesley advanced to his third head, which was, "Give all you can." "O dear! O dear!" said the farmer, "he has gone and spoiled it all."

There are many people to-day who are standing exactly where that poor farmer stood. They assent to religion until it begins to pull at their purse-strings, and then they have no more use for it.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

PAUL'S SUCCESS IN EPHESUS.

(For June 6th.—Acts xviii. 23—xix. 41.)

BY PHILIP A. NORDELL, D.D.

The hearty welcome given by the wealthy and influential Jews of Ephesus to Paul, "the wandering Rabbi," drew from him the promise of a speedy return. Having made his fourth visit to Jerusalem, and reported to the church in Antioch in Syria, where he seems to have been detained some time, he set out on the third missionary journey. Passing again through Tarsus and the Cilician gates in the Taurus range he made a third, and apparently final, visit to the churches in the Galatian cities. The latter which had preceded him seems to have been thoroughly effective in destroying the influence of the Judaizers, and in restoring these churches to their loyalty to Paul and to the Gospel as preached by him. From Pisidian Antioch he journeyed westward by the great trade route, passing through the cities of Colosse and Laodicea, sites of future churches; but he did not tarry there, as he was anxious to reach Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia Minor. Its immense population, its easy communications in all directions by sea or land, its wealth and commerce, its constant influx of strangers from every part of the empire, and its prominence in the worship of Diana, made it one of the most important centres for the propagation of the Gospel. Into the surrounding cities and towns he could either go himself, or, as seems to have been the case at Colosse, send his disciples to carry on evangelistic work and found churches. The churches addressed by John in the book of Revelation seem to have originated in this kind of work done at this time.

PAUL'S WORK IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

As soon as Paul arrived in Ephesus he fell in with a number of disciples of John the Baptist. These men seem to have left Palestine before the close of John's ministry, and to have been unacquainted with his later testimony to Jesus. Receiving gladly the further light which Paul imparted they were baptized into the name of Jesus. Availing himself of the favorable reception accorded him by the Jewish residents Paul now began his work among them, and for the space of three months endeavored by persuasion and debate to win them to a recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. Deeply anxious months they must have been to him as he witnessed the increasing hostility of his countrymen not only to the "ruth" which he proclaimed, but toward himself as the Apostle of the crucified Nazarene. It is possible that here he endured one of those five beatings received of the Jews, (2 Cor. xi. 24.) When further work among them became impossible, and when their hatred and jealousy threatened to put a barrier between himself and the Gentiles also, Paul was forced to withdraw from the synagogue, and confine his work almost exclusively to the heathen who, notwithstanding their superstition and moral corruption, formed a far more accessible class.

PAUL'S WORK AMONG THE GENTILES.

Ephesus was a centre not only for the worship of Diana but for every kind of religious jugglery and fraud. The arts of magic flourished here as almost nowhere else. Possibly as an antidote to these false miracles wrought on every side for pecuniary gain, it pleased the Lord to work through Paul a multitude of real miracles. Not only was the work of the Apostle efficacious in healing the sick, but the people even attributed miraculous power to aprons and handkerchiefs that had come in contact with the person of Paul, and to such notions the Lord condescended, however little they might in themselves be approved. Here also evil spirits were exorcised in such manner that Paul's fame was greatly increased. The disaster that overtook certain Jewish impostors who undertook to conjure with the names of Jesus and of Paul produced a startling impression and momentous consequences. For it led to the exposure of heathen practices that had still been retained among many of those who had embraced Christianity. There followed a general revulsion against magical incantations, and against all the instruments and books by which these delusions were fostered. The converts gave the best possible evidence of their eager desire to purge themselves of all connection with this evil by making a public bonfire of books relating to magic, aggregating in value about ten thousand dollars.

In this way the work went on achieving splendid successes, but at the same time encountering fierce opposition. Whether Paul's expression about fighting with beasts at Ephesus be taken in a literal or figurative sense, it points to great perils and sufferings endured while he ministered in this place. It was only a short time after his departure from Ephesus that he enumerated those extraordinary hardships endured by him for the sake of the Gospel.

*An Exposition of Lesson 23 in *The Bible Study Union Sunday School Lessons* on "The Three Great Apostles."