

For Dominion Presbyterian.

**Saul of Tarsus.**

BY GEO. W. ARMSTRONG.

Saul is introduced to the world in anything but an enviable way. It was immediately after the defence of Stephen which had such a marvellous effect that his audience "were cut to the heart and gnashed upon him with their teeth, and cried with a loud voice and stopped their ears and ran upon him with one consent and cast him out of the city and stoned him."

Such was the force of Stephen's eloquence and such the answer which prejudice made to it. Prejudice then, as now, hated the truth. The gospel has a wonderful power and produces exactly opposite effects upon those who hear it. It is either a savor of life unto life, or death unto death.

In this instance it had a hardening effect upon Saul, for we are told Stephen's murderers laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul, and Saul was consenting unto his death. It has been said that Saul must have had a somewhat blood thirsty disposition. I would rather think not. He was a Pharisee; intensely so, a Pharisee of the Pharisees and he thought he was doing God's service. Saul's nature was intense; he did nothing by halves, everything was done with all his might. Mistaken he might be but he was sincere.

Saul had had educational advantages; he had been brought up at the feet of Professor Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect law of the fathers,—not the law of God, for traditions had got interwoven; but as Christ said, had made it of none effect. Saul learned much from Gamaliel, but he had not taken in his tolerant spirit. Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among his people; showed his wisdom and discretion by his toleration, he said to the council:

"Refrain from these men, let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

Remarkable words for a Pharisee to utter? How different Saul; intolerant and persecuting—breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.

Saul's conversion was remarkable, sudden and complete.

He left Jerusalem for Damascus, breathing out threatenings and cursings, but when he got to Damascus his cursing had turned into praying.

He left Jerusalem morally and spiritually blind and on the way he became physically blind; but in Damascus the scales fell off the eyes of his body, mind and soul and illuminated by the Spirit of God he was enabled to see as he had never seen before.

He left Jerusalem a representative of the Moasic law—with its ritual and sacrifice, but when he got to Damascus, he was an apostle of Christ, a representative of the Lamb slain—the all atoning sacrifices once offered for the sins of the world.

He left Jerusalem, a blind, bigoted, pharasaical persecutor, he arrived at his

destination, a broad minded Christian, a consecrated preacher.

He left Jerusalem a nationalist in the narrow sense; he arrived at Damascus an internationalist—a citizen of the world, an apostle to the Gentiles of the grace of God.

He left Jerusalem with a commission from the high priest—"that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women he might bring them bound to Jerusalem"—when he terminated his journey he had a very different commission, one from the Great High Priest who is passed into the heavens—to preach deliverance to the captives and the opening of prison doors to them that are bound.

These are marvellous changes in a man's life and conduct, but how were they brought about?

"As he journeyed, he came near to Damascus and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth and heard a voice."

A light and a voice from heaven. The light and the voice are one; effects from the same cause—Jesus the Christ.

Christ said when He was upon the earth; "I am the light of the world," and we are told in the Book of Revelations that Christ is also the light of heaven—"The Lamb is the light thereof."

When Christ reveals himself to erring men they become enveloped in light—for where Christ is there can be no darkness at all. When light breaks in, darkness flies away whether physical, mental or spiritual. Whilst the light from heaven blinded the physical vision by reason of its glory, the voice was a mental and spiritual revelation. Christ acknowledges Saul's sincerity of purpose—"It is hard for thee." Thy motive may be to serve God but thy plan is wrong. Thy desire may be good but thy procedure is contrary to my will. When truly great minds have their error revealed to them no wonder they tremble and are astonished—Saul with his deep-learning supposed he had right and truth but the voice taught him there was no truth apart from Christ. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The greater the mind the more acute the astonishment when error—which was supposed to be Truth—is revealed. And now turning from the service of the Jewish high priest he seeks active employment in the service of the Great High Priest—Jesus Christ. "Lord what wilt thou have me to do!"

(To be continued.)

**A Prayer.**

We acknowledge with sorrow and humiliation that, though we are sure that thou wilt not forget us, we are afraid that we may forget thee. Our hearts are inconstant. Our strong purposes are soon broken. We resolve to keep thy commandments, and yet are easily tempted to sin. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness. Strengthen our weakness that we may not grieve thee by our wrong-doing. Shelter us from temptation. Reveal to us thy majesty and thy glory, that we may fear to break thy laws; reveal to us thy laws, that we may long to obey them. Who knoweth the blessedness of abiding in thy love? Lord, help us to abide in it.—*The American Friend.*

**The Devil's Handcuffs.**

I have read in the memoirs of a detective that once, having discovered his man he joined himself to him as a boon companion, went with him to his haunts, secured his confidence, until at length when all suspicion had been allayed, he got him, as a mere jest, to try on a pair of handcuffs, and then, snapping the spring that locked them, he took him, all helpless as he was, an easy prey.

So sin does with its victim. It first ministers to his enjoyment, then drowns his vigilance, and then leads him away in helpless bondage to utter ruin. O ye who are setting out of this awful course, allured by glowing promises, let me beseech you to pause and ponder what shall be "at the last," "at the last." "at the last," Oh, think of that, and leave it off before it be meddled with!—Dr. W. M. Taylor.

**The New Principal of Manitoba College.**

"Dr. as Cromarty," writing in the Christian Leader, says: "Dr. Patrick goes to his great field of labour with everyone's good wishes" . . . again. "Dr. Patrick possesses the national quality in one of its south-country forms, a Teutonic form chiefly, which gives him his business-like, platform, manner, his straight delivery of what he has to say on any occasion, his capacity for "active service." A severe physical disability is as completely hidden as a Mauser wound through the breast. It is there; he knows about it; but you would never guess. Let us hope that he will not take on too much work—he is sure to do enough!—and that Canadian air will prove not unsuitable and that he and his colleagues—Dr. Kilpatrick of Aberdeen, and the rest—will have the honour of sowing broadcast the seed of a sound and frank and manly theology in their vast new home.

Of the late Principal the same writer goes on to remark: "Dr. Patrick succeeds to a man of the old Scottish order who has had almost no memorial in his native country though he was more worthy than many. Principal King, once the United Presbyterian minister in Earlston ought not to be so easily forgotten. The old love of literature shared in his nature the decision to walk, theologically, on proved and settled paths. He would not wander, but he would enquire and know—and did, with the firm animation of the men who made Scotland a generation ago what it was and what it will never be again. Dr. King could write well and clearly. I wish I could have met him and heard him speak. I know the caution that was in him was touched with something keener. May it be that from his work and that of the men who now follow there will arise, beyond the sea, a new and powerful Presbyterianism, the heritage of a new and robust race! The growth of Canada, especially of Scottish Canada, will be one of the most interesting developments of the next century, and fraught with as much import to this country as anything in the world. To be called to take part in it is an onerous honour, but a very real one and a peculiarly good reason for offering one's congratulations."