

offense of being in communication with the enemy. The charge could not well be preferred at a more dangerous time. Only a few weeks had elapsed since the execution of Major Andre, and the indignation of the British, exasperated almost to madness by the event, had not yet cooled down. There was, however, no direct proof against the Highlander. He had been seen in the gray of the twilight stealing out from a clump of underwood that bordered on one of the huge forests which at that period covered by much the greater part of the United Provinces, and which, in the immediate neighborhood of the British, swarmed with the troops of Washington. All the rest was mere inference and conjecture. The poor man's defense was summed up in a few words. He had stolen away from his fellows, he said, to spend an hour in private prayer.

"Have you been in the habit of spending hours in private prayer?" sternly asked the officer, himself a Scotchman and a Presbyterian.

The Highlander replied in the affirmative.

"Then," said the other, drawing out his watch, "never in all your life had you more need of prayer than now; kneel down, sir, and pray aloud, that we may all hear you."

The Highlander, in the expectation of instant death, knelt down. His prayer was that of one long acquainted with the appropriate language in which the Christian addresses his God. It breathed of imminent peril, and earnestly implored the Divine interposition in the threatened danger,—the help of Him who, in times of extremity, is strong to deliver. It exhibited, in short, a man who, thoroughly conversant with the scheme of redemption, and fully impressed with the necessity of a personal interest in the advantages which it secures, had made the business of salvation the work of many a solitary hour, and had, in consequence, acquired much fluency in expressing all his various wants as they occurred, and his thoughts and wishes as they arose.

"You may go, sir," said the officer, as he concluded, "you have, I dare say, not been in correspondence with the enemy to-night."

"His statement," he continued, addressing himself to the others officers, "is, I doubt not, perfectly correct. No one could have prayed so without a long apprenticeship; fellows who have never attended drill always get on ill at review."

THE BIBLE CLASS.

THE LIVING HOPE.

(For Nov. 14th.—Selections from 1 Peter, Chapter 1.

BY PHILIP A. NORDELL, D.D.,

Of the life and labors of Peter little is known with certainty after his miraculous release from Herod's prison. That he absented himself from Jerusalem for a time is certain, but as the death of Herod occurred soon after, and the persecution instigated by him naturally ceased, we might believe that Peter was soon found at the head of the Jerusalem church, but for the fact that when the council was held there some years later, though Peter was present, yet James appears at the head of the church. This suggests a prolonged absence, which is also confirmed by the fact that Peter's Epistle is addressed to the "Dispersion" in the various provinces of Asia Minor, implying extensive labors in that region. That he eventually suffered martyrdom in Rome, shortly after the death of Paul, is reported by fairly trustworthy traditions, but of a twenty-five years' bishopric there, and a transmission of his apostolic authority and primacy to the later bishops and popes of Rome there is not a shadow of evidence. In fact, whatever hints can be gathered from the New Testament in respect to his later life and labors are distinctly against this theory, so pleasing to hierarchical pride and essential to ecclesiastical pretensions.

PETER'S FIRST EPISTLE.

Of the genuineness of this Epistle there can be no reasonable doubt. It is marked by Peter's sanguine and impulsive temperament, chastened and refined by many years of severe discipline. The persecutions alluded to in the Epistle, and for which he strengthened his readers, were not systematic, as when Christianity, in the reign of Trajan came under the ban of the empire, but seem to have consisted of such outbreaks of hatred and calumny as might have been expected in the distant provinces after the Neronian persecution in A.D. 64. The fact that the Epistle is addressed, in part at least, to churches in Asia Minor which Paul had founded, and the further fact that it betrays an intimate knowledge of

Paul's Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians, the latter of which certainly was a circular letter known to many of these churches, have led some to infer that it was written for the purpose of showing that he and Paul preached the same truths with a slightly varying emphasis.

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIVING HOPE.

The primary object of the Epistle, however, was to comfort and strengthen believers in view of the misrepresentations to which they were exposed, and "the fiery trial" which was impending. And here it will be noticed that Peter's early character comes plainly to the front. Just as when he asked the Master, "What then shall we have?" as a reward for following Him, so now he is looking toward the future, but from a higher and more spiritual plane. As faith gives the key-note of the Pauline Epistles, so here hope is presented as the central thought. The Christian's hope of a heavenly inheritance is the basis of Peter's exhortations to steadfastness and holy living.

Very significant is the term by which the Apostle describes the nature of the believer's hope. In contrast with the world's dead hope it is "living," it has the potency of life. Unbelievers may cherish a vague anticipation of a blessed future, but it is merely as an escape from the dreaded penalties and pains of sin. It leads to no reformation of life, produces no hatred of sin, no love of God, no anticipation of heaven as a holy place where fellowship with Christ is the chief joy. Hence it is a hope that is destined to perish and to end in disappointment. The Christian's hope is in every respect the reverse of this. It is fixed on a heavenly inheritance to which the believer is born, to which he has a right as a child of God, and which is kept in store where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. Not only is the believer assured that his inheritance is safe beyond all peradventure, but he himself is "guarded" by the same divine power that watches over his eternal interests. Farther on (v. 13) this heavenly inheritance is designated by the remarkable term "grace," a word which is commonly applied to the blessings which the believer experiences in this life, while "glory" designates the fuller and inconceivable blessings of the future. Peter, on the contrary, embraces the latter also under the former term, thereby reminding his readers that salvation in its largest sense is all due to the gratuitous, undeserved favor of God. And yet in a sense this salvation is "the end of your faith," in Jesus Christ "whom not having seen ye love." Peter had seen Him, associated with Him, known Him intimately, and as a consequence loved Him devotedly. But the joy and richness of the spiritual life and the certainty of the "living hope" do not depend on such fellowship with the visible Christ, but on the participation in His redemptive work. This work is the central fact of the universe, heralded by prophets, proclaimed by evangelists whom the holy Ghost had inspired, and eagerly contemplated by the angelic host.

THE CULTIVATION OF HOLINESS.

The cherishing of this hope is by no means designed to end in dreamy rapture, ecstatic contemplation of future glory to the neglect of present duty. Its operation instead ought to be intensely practical. Former evil habits must be overcome; the new life must be fashioned into likeness to the pure and holy life of Christ by whose blood the believer has been redeemed. This is to be done through obedience. Christians are "children of obedience," that is, those in whom obedience is the leading characteristic, who shape their desires, actions, affections, in submission to the divine will. This is the more necessary since their lives will presently pass under the scrutiny of the Father, who is also the final Judge. To those whose hope of heaven leads them to cultivate holiness in life such scrutiny will be eagerly awaited, "seeing ye have purified your souls in obedience to the truth." This inward purity brings about another result, love for those who are pure. Hence brotherly love, sincere and fervent should also be one of the immediate fruits in those who are "begotten again, through the word of God," to a living hope and a holy life.

FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

International S. S. Lesson.

LESSON VII.—PAUL'S MINISTRY IN ROME—NOV. 14.

(Acts xxviii. 17-31.)

GOLDEN TEXT—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."—Rom. i. 16.

TIME AND PLACE—Probably A.D. 61-63 Rome.

INTRODUCTION—Our last lesson closed with Paul's arrival in Rome, a prisoner under guard. He was not cast into prison, but was permitted to dwell by himself, with his soldier guard, who was

*An Exposition of Lesson 46 in *The Bible Study Union Sunday School Lessons* on "The Three Great Apostles."