

A CONGESTED CHURCH.

A STUDY OF A CHAPTER OF THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

BY H. F. ADAMS, THEOLOGICAL.

The eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles indicates that a crisis has arrived in the history of the first Baptist church of Jerusalem.

To the five hundred believers who saw the resurrected body of our Lord, three thousand were added on the day of Pentecost.

Our Lord's commission to His disciples was: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Looking at that church with these four strong characteristics, numbers, capacity, opportunity and command, we cannot think that it was an impossible task to carry out the commission.

The divine plan, unfolded by our Lord in His preaching, was that the light was to be committed to men that they might emit it upon others.

The light, then emit the light; this process of reception and radiation to continue until our Lord should have the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

The non-fulfillment of Christ's purpose by His redeemed church at Jerusalem, suggests that a crisis had come in its history that must have been watched with profound interest by the inhabitants of heaven.

The crisis had arrived when there was a choice between two terrible extremes: To let the church die through inactivity, or to permit, possibly, a great persecution against the church, and so scatter the Christians all over the land.

The persecution against the church which was about to befall them was a great trial, but it was a trial which was to befall them as a result of their own inactivity.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS IN INDIA

For Boys and Girls in Canada.

Dear Girls and Boys—They must be heading up barrels of apples in that orchard. Rap! rap! No! We are driving a few stakes. The Telugu call them "nalls" (makalu). Soon under this big apple tree a house is built.

This soft palace, made of canvas, we call our tent. It is pitched in this orchard that we may be protected from the fiery heavens. It is not, however, an apple orchard, but a mango orchard; and our home is under a mango tree, beneath rustling leaves, the scream of the parrot and the cry of the dove.

It is now night fall. That fire under the trees is cooking something for us to eat, and our appetite is good after building a house. Those two other fires are across the Telugu, are cooking for themselves. They are two native preachers—Appalawamy and Thummiiah.

We are six and a half miles north of Bilim. This orchard is in the fork of two roads that branch from the main road, one going north to Visakhapatnam and the other going north-north-east to Chicacole.

Mrs. Morse is here too, to go with us to the nearer villages or study Telugu at the tent with the mullah, and to store up strength in this rustic life for the hot days that are coming.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON. We go out on the Chicacole road and go towards Chicacole a mile. Then we turn off to the right and go through a field of plants that look like mullen leaves without any stock in the centre.

When an invitation came from these churches last year, we thought they were attempting too much, but they have been fully equal to the occasion. Since Thursday morning, concluded its meetings last night, and nearly all the visitors are on their way homeward, some having a five days' walk before them, some longer than that by boat.

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SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

Four men came to our tent to ask questions about the gospel. So we spent the afternoon with them. Two of them say they are ready to be baptized. The native preachers, who have truly repented, but I am not satisfied about their sincerity yet. They say that their youngest brother and the wife of one of them are ready to come also.

MONDAY MORNING. We went toward the west, over the hills, past a village that we had visited before, across a broad river toward a village in distance. On drawing near, we knelt down on the side of the path and prayed for God to bless this village and bless our words. Here were old women sitting on the ground, with their hands on their heads, and their faces were sad. We made our way through the barking dogs and staring people, and sat down on the stone steps of a heathen temple.

Here a large crowd came. Men draw near. Children hide behind them. Women come to the top of the mound. This is "Singanabudm." Leaving this village we went across the meadow, nearly a mile to the north-east, and came upon a small farmers' village, called "Singanabudm."

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THE FEARFUL GROWTH OF GAMBLING.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

The fierce fight which is now being waged over in New Jersey—and which may be concluded before these lines are published—is a striking illustration of the whole nation. Benjamin Franklin used to say that Jersey was a cider-barrel tapped at both ends. It is not tapped, but filled now with something worse than cider at both its New York and Philadelphia ends; for both these huge cities vomit a large share of their surplus depravity into its borders. A pre-arrangement of this conflict over horse-race gambling appears some weeks ago when the "stater" of race-horses on a West-Jersey course was elected Speaker of the House of Assembly. Last fall the gambling fraternity of "Guttenburg" and the other race-tracks managed by means of a money-spend to secure the election of a large number of men to the legislature who were friendly to their schemes. It was the old story; when good men slept, the enemy was busy, sowing seeds, and the crop at Trenton has proved to be rank and reckless. Let us be thankful for one thing, and that is that the audacious wickedness of the bills recently enacted by that corrupt legislature is throwing a fierce light upon the fearful growth of gambling in our country.

The horse-racing that it is proposed to continue through the ice and snow and mud of winter is not for the gratification of a gambler's passion (as in the summer and autumn) it is to decide the bets made in the pool-rooms of New York, Philadelphia and scores of other towns. These pool-rooms have become as widespread as grass-hops or blue-bells, and are full of gamblers and gamblers. Young men are tempted there by thousands; and the money that is gambled away there is estimated to amount to five millions of dollars per day of the country over. The New York Evening Post, when commenting on the new Charities Building soon to be opened in New York, says:

"Two weeks ago a young man of respectable parentage, having a wife and child, was detected in embezzling his employer's property for the purpose of going on it at pavonaburg races. He was sent to Sing Sing for five years, and his wife and infant child are now proper subjects for the care of the societies to which Mr. Kennedy has presented the great building on Fourth Avenue, while the miserable victim of the pool-rooms now in Sing Sing is probably ruined forever. Thus we see two great agencies, the right path and supply of one for the downfall of human life and character, working side by side. Of course, the poor creature now in Sing Sing had a weak moral nature, yet the chances are ten to one that he would have kept in the right path and supplied his family, instead of casting them upon the public charity, had not the devil sounded a trumpet in his ear from a pool-room on the public highway."

The practice of gambling—so fatal to character and often destructive to the soul—commonly begins just as drunkenness begins. At the bottom of the first glass of wine or other intoxicant lies the ruin of the soul, and underneath the first dollar staked on a game of chance, or a horse race, or a ball-match is concealed a serpent. When a young man puts up his first wager at a card table or on any game or race, he puts a coal of fire into his bosom; and such was often the result in confagration which will burn him to the lowest hell! Gambling for a dime is as essentially a sin as gambling for a thousand dollars. There is always a first inch at the top of every precipice. We do not declare that every one who plays a game of whist is a gambler any more than that every one who drinks a glass of wine is a tippler. Yet wine-glasses are dangerous articles, just as cards are dangerous; and such is the path of absolute safety for both of them, when they are used in moderation. All games of chance have a strange fascination. Archdeacon Farrar truly remarks that "there is a gambling element in human nature," and it must be kept under watch in the same way as inborn sensual appetites are watched.

Card-tables and pool-rooms are not the only places where gambling is practiced. Tens of thousands are tempted to take a small risk in mining stocks or some other volatile "speculation," that are playing up and down on "Change." I have known a half-dozen boys—of respectable families—to "pool" their pocket-money in a venture on a share or two of stock! The rage for gambling is increasing frightfully. In the first place there is a growing rage for getting rich quickly and easily. The gambling element is insinuating itself more and more into trade; this is proved by the prevalence of "corners," "options," and "pools" in so many lines of business. Old-fashioned slow and sure methods of making money are snuffed at; and young men are dazzled by the occasional success of daring operators. They do not bear of the wretched catastrophes that overtake the rash and venturesome. It is time that every young man banished that heathen word "luck" out of his vocabulary. Life is never a game of chance; and God never intended this world to be a "pool-room" in which success or failure turns on a throw of the dice. Let us not only aim to put race-tracks and pool-rooms under the ban of prohibitory law, but let us teach our young men that every dollar gained except by honest industry is, in the end, a loss, and will eat into the soul like fire!—Evangelist.

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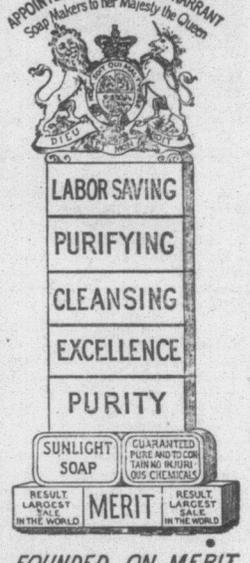
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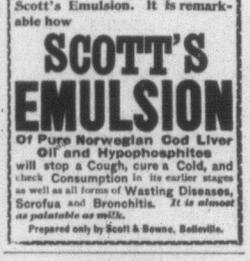
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What a refreshing contrast the fourth verse presents, as we place it beside the monster church of near ten thousand members! "Therefore they are scattered abroad, vent every where preaching the Word."

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BIBLE LESSON

SECOND QUARTER. Lesson II. April 9. Job

AFFLICTIONS SANCTIFY GOLDEN TEXT.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."—Heb. 12: 6.

EXPLANATORY.

THE BOOK OF JOB "is as hardly a dissenting voice as most sublime religious poetry. The ship is entirely unmoored. No where is given as to who wrote it. He is 'the Great Unmoved,' the Holy Spirit of God. The of what has been called the 'mid flow of Hebrew poetry' seems as true as the dawn of centuries, and no certain count yet reached. It is a which even this omniscient content to remain in doubt. More than in most books of the Revised Version will be of account of what Dean Bede 'immeasurable superiority as with the older translation.'"

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