



SABBATH-SCHOOL.

LESSON III.—October 17.

Paul Before the Roman Governor.

Acts xxiv., 10-25. Read Acts xxiii., 10 to xxiv., 27.—Commit verses 22, 23.

GOLDEN TEXT.

'Fear thou not, for I am with thee.'—Isa. xli., 10.

Home Readings.

- M. Acts xxv., 1-12.—Paul's Trial Before Festus.
- T. Acts xxv., 13-27.—Agrippa's Desire to hear Paul.
- W. Acts xxvi., 1-32.—Paul Before King Agrippa.
- Th. II. Cor. v., 1-21.—'We are Ambassadors for Christ.'
- F. I. Cor. ii., 1-16.—Not Man's Wisdom, but God's Power.
- S. Matt., x., 24-42.—The Rewards of Confessing Christ.
- S. Luke ii., 25-33.—'A Light to Lighten the Gentiles.'

Lesson Story.

On the day after his speech on the outer stair of the castle, Paul was brought down to stand before the Sanhedrin. Here he was not permitted to speak long uninterrupted. As soon as he began his defence, saying that his conscience was clear, the high priest gave orders to smite him on the mouth. To this flagrant injustice Paul gave a quick and spirited denunciation, but withdrew it on hearing that it was the high-priest who had spoken. Afterwards seeing that the two parties of Pharisees and Sadducees, corresponding to the orthodox and free-thinkers, he called out that he was a Pharisee and was there on account of his belief in the resurrection of the dead. This brought the Pharisees to his side for the time, and the dispute between the two parties became violent, so the soldiers once more removed Paul to the castle. In the night the Lord told Paul that he would be preserved to witness in Rome. Some of the Jews made a plot to kill Paul, but his nephew told the captain of it, and Paul was sent with a large escort of horsemen, to Caesarea where Felix, the Roman governor, lived. Paul defended himself before Felix when the Jews brought forward their accusations, but Felix refused to give any immediate decision. On a later occasion he called for Paul to explain the then little-known 'faith in Christ.' Paul made the most of his opportunity and preached to Felix and his wife Drusilla about honesty and virtue and the judgment awaiting sinners. Felix, with good reason, was terrified, but closed the interview by saying that it would be more convenient to hear of these things at some other time. The ingrained time-serving of the man of the world is shown by his subsequent treatment of the man who had made him tremble. He gave him opportunities to address him frequently, hoping that Paul would offer money for his release, and when he went out of office he left Paul's case still undecided, and Paul still in chains, in order to gain favor with the Jews.

Lesson Hymn.

Time is earnest, passing by;
Death is earnest, drawing nigh.
Sinners, wilt thou trifling be?
Time and death appeal to thee.

God is earnest; kneel and pray,
Ere the season pass away;
Ere he set his judgment throned;
Ere the day of grace is gone.

Oh, be earnest, do not stay,
Thou may'st perish e'en to-day.
Rise; thou lost one, rise and flee;
Lo! thy Saviour waits for thee.

Lesson Hints.

'Righteousness,'—honest and upright dealing. 'Temperance'—self-control. 'Righteousness'—duty to neighbor. 'Temperance'—duty to self. As righteousness consists in subordinating our ambitions to the law of God, so temperance consists in subordinating our passions. Paul had a strange opportunity to preach the gospel to some who would not otherwise have heard it. The occasion was not one he had chosen, yet he did not fail to improve it. He did not sulk because he was in chains, he saw the good hand of God still opening a door for the gospel through the very circumstances that seemed to check the preacher's activity.

Search Questions.

Give the names of several persons spoken of in the New Testament as members of the Jewish Council or Sanhedrin, and give the reference.

Primary Lesson.

To whom was Paul speaking on the stairs in our last lesson? To a crowd of angry men. In this lesson we find him speaking to a Roman governor called Felix and his wife—very grand people, dressed in fine cloths, but wicked and bad at heart. Paul was not afraid of Felix but told him how God would judge the world by-and-by, and when he spoke about being good Felix got frightened for he had been very bad. But instead of praying for a new heart he told Paul to stop preaching. He said he would listen some other time. If he had listened then and learned to pray, he would have become a good man and would have gone to heaven when he died. When God wants us to listen we must not say 'some other time will do as well,' we must be like Samuel and say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'

SUGGESTED HYMNS.

'In the silent midnight watches,' 'Oh, the clanging bells of time,' 'Behold me standing at the door,' 'Jesus is tenderly calling thee home.'

Practical Points.

BY A. H. CAMERON.
(Acts xxiv., 10-25.)

The apostle recognizes good abilities even in an enemy. Verses 10, 11.

Paul's negative defence disclaims all impure motives or selfish desires. Verses 12, 13.

Paul's positive defence reveals his stalwart faith which always begets a lively hope and a tender conscience. Verses 14-17.

Jesus was hated without a cause. 'It is enough for the disciple to be as his Master.' Verses 18-21.

There may be much kindness where there is no Christian love. Verses 22, 23.

In the case of Felix, procrastination became the thief of a bright eternity. Verses 24, 25.

Tiverton, Ont.

Christian Endeavor Topic.

Oct. 17.—'Whatever he would like to have me do.'—Ex. xix., 1-8. (A meeting to consider the work of the society.)
Suggested, to be led by the president.)

Junior Prayer-Meeting Topic.

Oct. 17.—'Whatever he would like to have me do.'—Ex. xix., 1-8. (A meeting to consider the work of the society.)

Teachers' Meetings.

That there are many Sunday-schools that do not have them, and that those that do have them find it difficult to sustain them, are facts that do not admit of a moment's doubt. It is palpably apparent that the great majority of our Sunday-school teachers do practically repudiate the teachers' meeting; and hence it has come to be seriously questioned whether the men who insist upon them are not impracticable theorists that are either ahead of, or behind the times.

It has been urged with much of force that, in these days when life is throbbing with an intenser pulse than ever before; when business is driven with such tremendous energy;

and social and religious engagements, especially in towns and cities, have been multiplied beyond all precedent—it is well-nigh impossible to find the time to attend a teachers' meeting.

And then it is argued with no little plausibility, that there is not now the same necessity for such a meeting as there was aforetime, seeing how plentifully all our teachers are provided with the choicest helps that the Christian scholarship of the age can furnish. Why spend an evening, it is asked, in listening to the pious platitudes of a possibly incompetent conductor of a teachers' meeting, when, without exposure to wind and wet, to heat or cold, or any loss of time in travel, one might hold communion with the foremost commentators of our time, who have expounded to us the scripture lesson which we are to expound to others?

We frankly concede that there are distinguished advantages which are enjoyed now by the home student beyond any that were ever known before; and yet, who does not see that the argument in this direction is entirely as forceful when applied to meetings for the preaching of the gospel? Who that has a library worthy at all to bear the name, cannot find upon its shelves whole volumes of sermons more massive and masterly than anything he is likely to hear in the pulpit of the little church to which he is accustomed upon Sabbath days to go? And yet, does any decent Christian feel that he can afford to forego the freshness of inspiration that comes to him as he listens to 'the old, old story' from the lips of the living preacher?

There is all the difference in the world, as was lately said, in our hearing, at a teachers' meeting, 'between dried fruit, no matter how well preserved, and the same fruit plucked from the laden bough.'

And besides all this, face answers to face, and iron sharpeneth iron; and in the teachers' meeting, the conductor, unlike the poor preacher, is not obliged to have it all to himself, and so be left to 'perish in the midst of his platitudes.' He is but the leader; and if he be a wise man, he will not desire, and if he be a foolish man he ought not to be allowed to have, a monopoly of the privilege of speech. Let each make a contribution of hopeful suggestion; and in the glow of such general discussion; there will not only be thoughts struck out, but thoughts 'burnt in,' which, though they had come to us from the cold, dead page, would never have come to us with such force, or have got such fixedness in our memories.

And then, besides all this, let it evermore be borne in mind, that teachers' meetings are not and ought not to be merely for the study of the Scripture lesson, but for prayer and conference as to questions the most perplexing and momentous that ever engrossed the thoughts, and pressed upon the hearts of earnest Christian workers. The superintendent ought not to be left to grapple with them, 'solitary and alone.' The teachers constitute his board of counsellors, and every teachers' meeting ought, at least for a little while, at every session, to resolve itself into a 'committee of the whole' for the consideration of ways and means for the promotion of the school's prosperity.

Let practical difficulties be confronted; let papers be submitted or addresses made, upon topics assigned; let questions of management be frankly and fraternally discussed; let prayers be offered for special cases, and reports be made from special departments; and thus, beyond all question, there will presently be developed an esprit-de-corps that will make the school invincible; and the teachers' meeting, instead of 'dragging' its slow length along, like a wounded snake, will be a joy and a power. —Dr. Henson, in 'Baptist Teacher.'

What Punctuality Includes.

Punctuality is something more than being just on time. It would be a sorry state of things with a school of a thousand if every teacher and scholar arrived at the door at exactly the minute designated for beginning school. All would then be late in getting into place, ready for a part in the duties of the hour. It is in view of this truth that punctuality in Sunday-school has been defined as being five minutes ahead of time for opening. But even this is not always enough. Punctuality includes being present early enough to get into place and do everything that needs doing before the school hour so as to have nothing to do at beginning time but to begin.—'Sunday-school Times.'