

side of the despised Christians. He was publicly pledged to be their foe. It is impossible to account for his change on any common motive.

SAUL'S EARLY MINISTRY.

If men were left to choose their own path, Saul of Tarsus would never have been (a) a preacher of Christ, and (b) to the Gentiles. But Divine grace, besides saving him, wrought these two wonders for the proud Pharisee. Here we find him entering on his work at once, v. 19 being a note explanatory of his passage out of a preternatural into an ordinary condition, and introductory to the account of his first efforts as a preacher. He now felt the need of "meat," food; was strengthened by it, and regained his natural energy. He remained for a short time only, "certain days" or "some days," at Damascus, in fitting company, "with the disciples" (or "came to be with"—a new fellowship for him). Like all Christian workers, he has his encouragements and his discouragements. This grouping of the facts of the lesson may aid the memory and be a fitting division.

I. ENCOURAGEMENTS. It was a proof of his earnest sincerity that "straightway he preached Christ (or Jesus, as many read) in the synagogues," where opportunities were given to strangers to speak, and where piously-inclined Gentiles often attended. The tense of the verb for "preached" implies that he was in the habit of doing it while he remained. The one test question was, *Is Jesus Divine, the Messiah or not?* All turned on that point then, and Paul preached Him as "the Son of God."

(V. 21) As might have been expected, great surprise was felt. Paul's course made the best kind of "sensation." We seem to listen to the conversation of the Christians and others at Damascus, and we learn from it: (1) That calling on Christ's name was a description of a believer; (2) That Paul's character and mission as persecutor, were known beforehand; and (3) That they could hardly believe this to be the same man.

(V. 22.) Power and strength are favorite words with Paul (Eph. vi. 10; 1 Tim. i. 12; Heb. xi. 34). He gained force of conviction, expression, and persuasion as he proceeded in his work. His first sermons were not his best. He evidently grew, and became a stronger man in the intellectual and moral sense in which we employ "strong." Work helps the worker. The Jews were bewildered (see Acts vi. 10) as he laid the prophecies of Scripture side by side with the facts of Christ's life and death.

II. HIS DISCOURAGEMENTS (v. 23). The "many days" are not precisely numbered, so that room is left for all the time spent in Damascus, and in that region, if necessary so to reckon. See Gal. i. 17, 18.

Damascus is unhealthy during part of the year, from the extensive irrigation. To escape eye-disease and intermittent fever, the inhabitants who can afford it, go to high and dry ground at the unhealthy seasons. Divine Providence may have so ordered it that in this way Saul should have quiet and retirement for self-study, growth in knowledge, meditation, and that deepened spirituality which it is so hard to acquire in the stir and bustle of common life. His work would be resumed on his return to Damascus, and then came the effort of those who could not meet his arguments to silence him by murder. They counted on his trying to escape them; obtained from the city governor for a time a watch

for the gates, and while they were actually guarding them incessantly, he was enabled to escape either by a *kiosk*, or chamber running from a house over the wall top, which is common enough, or (which is also to be seen in Damascus now) through a window in the wall, meant to give light to a house inside the wall and built against it. See the apostle's account of this in 2 Cor. xi. 32, and which serves to show that an account of an event may be true though not giving *all* the details, and is not put in doubt, but confirmed by other particulars given incidentally in another connection. "By the wall" is the very Greek phrase Paul employs in 2 Cor. xi. 32, and "basket" is the word employed in the Greek translation of Josh. ii. 15.

(V. 26.) A second discouragement met Paul at Jerusalem, in the very natural hesitation of the disciples to receive him. His name as a persecutor was better known, in the absence of means of spreading news such as we have now, than his name as a preacher. This would the more readily occur from a great part of the three years having been spent in retirement. He sought to "unite with the church" immediately on coming to Jerusalem—an example to all Christians. He did not say, "My letter is in Damascus, and I am looking about for a little." Bad reports travel fast and far, the good slowly. Even conversion will not save a man from the inconveniences that follow former follies.

V. 28 shows him to us in close association with the Christian labourers at Jerusalem, where he had been known as a public and relentless foe of the Christians. That he was united with them in labour is set forth in

(V. 29, in Jerusalem, no less than at Damascus, and after some years as truly as in the flush of new born zeal, he preached boldly (same as in v. 21). The "Grecians" were Jews born outside of Palestine. Paul was one of them, and had their ear; they were more inquiring, possibly, than the untravelled Jews of the land. Stephen was in collision with them (Acts vi. 9). They were true to their character, and as they silenced Stephen, so they hoped to silence Saul. They "went about," *i.e.*, laid plans, or undertook to kill him. Again discouragement is met, and again (v. 30) the danger is evaded. Common peril unites men together, and weakness makes them watchful and cautious, and sets them upon concerted action. The "brethren" had once before interposed with effect. They do so again. They brought him down (from Jerusalem) to the seaport Caesarea, whence he was enabled to sail to his native city Tarsus, where for the present he is left, and this chapter of his history closes. He had but fifteen days' visit to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 18).

The following points may be illustrated from this lesson:

1. God our Father brings us to the knowledge of Himself in Christ that we may labour for Him, as He gives opportunity.

2. He also gives the grace and strength we require; to him that hath is given.

3. Difficulties and dangers are no argument against our labouring; they are not to be counted, and in many instances are evidences that we are to labour elsewhere.

4. The main object to be lifted up by Christian ministers is Christ. That aspect of truth regarding Him which the times require is to be presented. Then, his mission as a divine Messiah was questioned by the world and urged by the apostles. Now, many admit His nature but do not receive Him. We must urge them to faith in Him.—*Ex.*

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

STEAMED PUDDING.

Three eggs; one teacup of sweet milk; a pinch of salt; one teaspoonful cream tarter; one-half ditto soda; a little sugar, if preferred; one cup of fruit of any kind, and flour to make a stiff batter. Steam one hour, and eat with cream and sugar. Very nice; try it.

RAILROAD CAKE.

Two eggs. One cup of sugar. One-half cup sweet milk. One-half cup of butter. One teaspoonful cream of tartar. One-half teaspoonful of soda. One and one-half cups of flour. Beat the butter and sugar together first, then add flour, cream of tartar, soda, milk, and eggs. Bake in a quick oven.

CLEAN A CARPET.

Shake and beat it well; lay it on the floor and tack it firmly; then, with a clean flannel, wash it over with one quart of bullock's gall mixed with three quarts of soft cold water, and rub it off with a clean flannel or house cloth. Any particularly dirty spot should be rubbed with pure gall.

OFFENSIVE BREATH.

Take from six to ten drops of the concentrated solution of chloride of soda in a wineglassful of pure spring water. Taken immediately after the ablutions of the morning are completed will sweeten the breath by disinfecting the stomach, which, far from being injured, will be benefited by the medicine. In some cases the odour from carious teeth is combined with that of the stomach. If the mouth is well rinsed with a teaspoonful of the solution of alum in a tumbler of water, the bad odour of the teeth will be removed.

THE EYES.

The eyes of many animals—those of cats, for instance—exhibit a peculiar brilliancy, which is particularly remarkable in the dusk. It was formerly thought that the eyes of such animals emitted light independently, as it was also thought that light could be emitted by the human eye, under the influence of passion. This brilliancy, however, in the eyes of these animals is caused by a carpet of glittering fibres, called the *tapetum*, which lies behind the retina, and is a powerful reflector. In perfect darkness no light is observed in their eyes, a fact which has been established by very careful experiments; but, nevertheless, a very small amount of light is sufficient to produce the luminous appearance in them.—From "Observing the Interior of the Eye," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for October.

ANALYSIS OF THE HUMAN BREATH.

An account published in *Nature* of some experiments, made with a view to determine the organic matter of the human breath in health and disease, presents some facts of a peculiarly interesting nature. The breath of eleven healthy persons and of seventeen affected by disorders was examined, the persons being of different sexes and ages, and the time of day at which the breath was condensed varying. The vapor of the breath was condensed in a large glass flask surrounded by ice and salt, at a temperature of several degrees below zero, the fluid thus collected being then analyzed for free ammonia, urea, and kindred substances, also for organic ammonia. Among the various results of this examination may be mentioned the fact that, in both health and disease, the free ammonia varied considerably; the variation, however, could not be connected with the time of day, the fasting, or the full condition.