

## The Quiet Hour.

### The Plot Against Paul.

S. S. LESSON.—Acts 23: 12-22. MAY 10, 1903

GOLDEN TEXT: Acts 23: 11. The Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer.

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When it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, v. 12. Evil as their plot was, there are two things in the conduct of these conspirators which we ought to imitate—their promptness and their unity. If there is something useful and helpful to be done, it cannot be commenced too soon. Then as travellers in the Alps bind themselves together by strong ropes so that each one helps to guide and protect the whole party, the companionship and sympathy of those who are seeking high and noble ends will strengthen us for every worthy endeavor.

Bound themselves under a curse, v. 12. There are regions in England and Wales where every green thing is blighted by the black smoke, laden with poison, which pours out of factory chimneys. If we engage in any occupation which grows and thrives upon the sufferings and misfortunes of others, or if we are seeking success by unrighteous and dishonorable means, we cannot escape the divine curse.

Neither eat nor drink, v. 12. Silly children in their anger say, "I will never speak to you again," "I will never go to your house any more." And people who would resent being called either children or silly make rash vows as to what they will or will not do, as if the future were all under their control, instead of being, as it is, absolutely in God's hands.

As though ye would enquire, v. 15. The person who hangs back from the act of open wrong-doing, and yet is anxious to eat the fruit that comes from another's evil deed, is guilty both of cowardice and crime: for he shows that he is willing to do the deed, if he were not afraid.

When Paul's sister's son heard, v. 16. What a contrast is here! Forty murderers, backed up by the sympathy and assistance of the great Jewish council, were seeking the life of Paul. His safety depended upon the fidelity and shrewdness of one young lad. But God can make a grain of sand divert the course of a world, and by the feeble hand of a child He can deliver His friends from their most powerful foes.

Went . . . and told Paul, v. 16. A single link is of little use by itself; but without that link the chain may be too short for its purpose. What great importance is given our little lives, and even the smallest acts of those little lives, and even the smallest acts of those little lives by the fact that they are, however obscure and humble, links in the great chain of God's purpose, which stretches from eternity to eternity!

Took him by the hand, v. 19. There are people who win our confidence at once by their kindness of speech and manner. Still more ready should we be to trust the Lord Jesus, whose kindness so far surpasses that of any earthly friend. He has come down and taken us by the hand and would lead us back to our home in heaven.

But do not thou yield, v. 21. The time to be unyielding is when we are tempted for the first time to do wrong. The boy who has uttered his first oath or taken his first glass of strong drink, will listen far more

readily to the temptation to do the same thing again. It is by withstanding the beginning of evil that we shall be safe.

See thou tell no man, v. 22. It is as wrong for us to reveal other people's secrets which have been confided to us, as to steal their money. The reliable man is the one who knows how to seal his hands off what does not belong to him. The loose tongue is to be shunned as well as the light finger.

### Agnosticism. \*

Professor Flint is by general acknowledgment, the soundest and ablest Christian apologist in Europe. His "Theism" and "Antitheistic Theories," have been for twenty years, standard text-books in the Divinity halls of the English speaking world.

Since their issue he has been at work on the subject of agnosticism, and there is reason for gratitude that he has issued this volume. This is the first treatise on the subject and the foundation work has been done so thoroughly that it will not need to be done again. Whatever new phases agnosticism may assume apologetic reply for a long time will build on this foundation.

It combines the essential characteristics of a theological treatise and philosophical enquiry into the grounds of belief and unbelief, viz., strength, penetration, lucidity. The thorough and comprehensive character of the treatment will be seen from the chapter headings. 1. The Nature of Agnosticism. 11. Erroneous Views of Agnosticism. 111. History of Agnosticism. 1v. Agnosticism of Hume and Kant. v. Complete or Absolute Agnosticism. vi. On Mitigated and Partial Agnosticism and their Forms. vii. Partial or Limited Agnosticism as to Ultimate Objects of Knowledge. viii. Agnosticism as to God. ix. Agnosticism as to Religious Belief. x. Agnosticism as to Knowledge of God.

Never before has the doctrine of belief in God been treated with more profound penetration or the relations of faith and reason more satisfactorily stated. A field is here traversed, in which, because of the large number of new, variant or conflicting theories in science and philosophy, there has been the most urgent need of clear definitions and new terms to connote exactly, new ideas and new phases of old ideas. Here the author has given definitions and introduced terms that will be the current coin of expression for a long time.

He has done more, he has established Christian Apologetics upon a more unassailable philosophic basis and thrown the *onus probandi* upon the opponent of Christianity, most effectively. Such a work could be accomplished only by one with adequate philosophical knowledge, a clear view of the whole range of sceptical attack, and power of apologetic construction of high order.

From the closing chapter, we learn that this, with the two books previously mentioned are part of a contemplated series on Natural Theology. In order to obtain leisure for carrying out this purpose, Prof. Flint has resigned his chair in Edinburgh University. It is certain that there will be the keenest interest in forthcoming volumes, and good

\*Agnosticism. By Robert Flint, D. D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. Cloth, 8vo, 664 pages. Price \$2.00. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. Toronto, Upper Canada Tract Society.

hope may now be entertained of the completion of his masterly work on "The History of The Philosophy of History," so long delayed by the preparation of this unique volume.

A most notable event in the progress of Chinese missions has lately occurred in the publishing of Bishop Schereschewsky's translation of the Scriptures, which is regarded as the finest and most idiomatic translation that has ever been given to the Chinese people. We have culled the following facts from the "Christian Work": Bishop Schereschewsky was born a Jew and educated as a Rabbi. Familiar with Hebrew and the Hebrew Scriptures from his youth, he had the first requisite for a successful translator in a thorough knowledge of the spirit of the original text. After his conversion to Christianity and while a theological student he thoroughly mastered the Greek and then offered himself for mission work in China. A prolonged residence at the capital of the Chinese Empire, together with his student habits, made him master not only of the spoken language of China but of the language of the classics of that strange land. Made bishop of the American Episcopal missions, his work of translation was interfered with by other duties, but a fever through which he lost the use of his limbs, compelled his resignation, and the next ten years of his life were spent in unremitting labor, in which he was nobly assisted by his wife, son and daughter. The result of his work, fresh from the presses in Japan, is now given to the world. It is a triumph of devotion over weakness, faith over suffering, and shows what can be done when love is present. God's providence, though seemingly hard, has already worked out a far more exceeding and external weight of glory for his servant who trusted in the midst of what seemed the crushing of his hopes, through the helplessness that came to his body.—Lutheran Observer.

### An Awful Record.

There are one billion heathen in the world.

They are dying at the rate of 100,000 a day.

At every breath we draw, four souls perish, never having heard of Christ.

Christians are giving at the rate of one-tenth of a cent a day.

We give one cent a year for each heathen soul.

Of every dollar given for Christian work, we spend ninety-eight cents on our home work and two cents for the heathen.

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In the foreign field each missionary is responsible for 100,000 souls.

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