

yawned between us and the Church of the New Testament, and yet it could be shown, as it can be shown, that our Baptist churches of to-day, are exactly conformed to "the model" showed us "on the mount," we should rejoice to feel that our churches were founded on the everlasting Rock. We are not concerned so much about historic succession, as conformity with Scripture. We have no great deference for precedents, unless they be proved to be apostolic, nor for decrees of Popes and Councils. We have learned to call no man master on the earth, for one is our Master, even Christ the Lord.

These distinctive denominational principles should be firmly and intelligently held—firmly, because this is the only way to hold anything that is worth holding at all—intelligently, because thus only can they be firmly held, without exposure justly to the charge of bigotry. For bigotry is nothing but blind tenacity of grip without intelligent examination. A man may be an "Altitudinarian," or a "Latitudinarian," or a "Platitudinarian," and still be a bigot. It isn't the thing a man holds, but the spirit in which he holds it, that determines whether or not he deserves to be denominated a bigot. For my own part, believing as I do in the truth of Baptist principles, I make bold to avow my profound anxiety to secure their universal prevalence, but my anxiety is not so much to secure proselytes to Baptist practices, as converts to Baptist principles. I want no man to come in among us, except as the result of conscientious conviction. We want men who know the truth, and who "knowing, dare maintain it."

Hence the paramount importance of the thorough training of our children in our distinctive denominational principles.

We are admonished therewith by the example of other denominations, who are "wiser in their generation than"—I will not say—"the children of light"—but the members of our Baptist churches. To say nothing of Mohammedans, whose children from their earliest years are reared in all the strictness of the Koran's requirements—to say nothing of the Papacy that grapples on to susceptible youth so firmly and fatally that it is next to impossible to wrest a twelve year old from its iron grip; our brethren of other evangelical denominations exhibit in this direction no small amount of practical sagacity and sterling Christian principle. They believe something, with the ardour of an honest conviction; and believing it, they teach it to their children, with all the thoroughness of catechetical drill. And why not? I honor them for their fidelity to principle.

Just so, as a Baptist, proud of my Baptist ancestry, proud of my Baptist history, and glorying in our Baptist principles, I want my son to feel that he need not blush to bear the name, but can stand up as a man among men, and be able with calm courage to give to every man that asketh him a reason for the faith that is in him.

And lastly I would have our principles taught to our children, because the Lord in His word has taught them to us.

The principles involved are of paramount importance, and incalculably far-reaching in their ultimate results. They are, in our belief, the very truths of God. It is at our peril, and the peril of our children, that we fail fully and faithfully to declare them, God

help us in this regard to discharge our solemn duty, and may our united prayer be ever, "Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."—*Report of Convention.*

Sunday School Department.

International Bible Lessons, 1877.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS.

SEPT. 16.—Power of the Word.—Acts xix, 17-28. A.D. 56 or 57.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.—Heb. iv, 12.

The scene of this lesson, like the last, is in Ephesus; and the time, especially of the latter verses, is probably the spring of A.D. 57.

It was about this time that Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and some great Galatians also, though others are of opinion that the latter was penned from Corinth in the autumn of the same year.

In the intervening verses between the last lesson and this, we find specially interesting events, which cannot be dissociated from this lesson. First of all, it is stated in the concluding verses of last lesson, that God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (v. 11), and the character of these is specified in v. 12. Then we have the special dealings of those vagabond Jews, and the special dealings of God with them (v. 13-16).

Key word—SPECIAL.

1. SPECIAL REFORM.—v. 17-20.
V. 17. FEAR.—of tampering with a name which was so powerful.—Acts 8, 43; v. 5, 11; Luke 1, 65. Was magnified, i.e., acquired increasing honour.

V. 18. Showed their deeds—explained their deceptions.

V. 19. Curious arts.—The Ephesians were especially addicted to magical arts. The persons using these "arts" made their livelihood by incantations, astrological calculations, soothsaying, &c.

The words which they employ, i.e., were combinations of meaningless sounds, called *Ephesian letters*, which were supposed to have power over spirits.

Books.—Long strips of parchment with a roller at each end. They no doubt contained the formulae according to which the charms or spells were to be performed. Rev. A. V. Fuchs, our returned missionary from India, recently exhibited to some of the Sabbath schools in Toronto, a medical work, at the end of which were several rather curious formulas for charming away diseases.

Fifty thousand.—The great value cannot now be ascertained; Alford estimates it at what would amount in our money to nearly \$10,000.

2. SPECIAL STR.—v. 23-28.

V. 23. Str.—public excitement. That way—their religion.

V. 24. Shrines.—These were small silver models or metallines, representing the temple and goddess, and were sold in large numbers. Many remain to this day. The time of this riot was almost certainly the month of May, which was sacred to Diana, when great multitudes would be in the city, and any address on behalf of the goddess would be peculiarly effective.—*Fuchs.* These shrines were often worn round the neck as an ornament, and they were supposed to attract the special favour and protection of the goddess. Gain.—

See Acts xvi, 16, 19. Craftsmen—the artists who made the models or shrines above referred to.

V. 26. That they be no gods, etc.—Among the common people of all heathen lands the images of the gods were often regarded as the gods themselves.—Compare Psalm cxv, 4; Isaiah xlv, 10; Acts xix, 15; xvi, 24, 29; Rom. i, 22, 23.

V. 27. But also.—"But that eventually, even the temple itself of the great goddess Diana would be counted for nothing."—*Alford.* Demetrius was plainly actuated by love of gain and by fear that Paul's influence would dry up this source of wealth. Magnificence—majesty. This temple was one of the seven wonders of the world. It was of pure white marble, 425 feet long by 220 broad, and the columns, 127 in number, were 60 feet high, each of them the gift of a king. The temple "was what the Bank of England in the modern world, the larger portion of the wealth of western Asia being stored up in it. It was continually receiving new decorations and additional buildings—statues and pictures by the most celebrated artists; and it kindled unparalleled admiration, enthusiasm and superstition."—*Brown.* And the world worshippeth.—Compare 1 John v, 19; Rev. xiii, 8.

V. 28. Full of wrath.—See Jeremiah x, 1-8.

LESSONS FROM THE LESSON.

- (v. 17). That Divine things are to be handled sacredly.—Compare Exod. iii, 5; xx, 7; Phil. ii, 9, 10; Rev. v, 11-13.
- (v. 18). That conviction of wrong-doing should be followed by open confession.—Ps. li, 4; Luke xix, 4; Matt. iii, 6; Rom. x, 10; Prov. xxviii, 13.
- (v. 19). That the things which have been special causes of sin before conversion are to be abandoned and destroyed.—2 Cor. v, 17; v, 14-15.
- (v. 20). That when professors of religion give up all for Christ, then will the Word of God "grow mightily and prevail" in their own hearts.—Josh. vii, 11-13; John xiv, 14; Matt. xiii, 5, 8; xvii, 20; Heb. xii, 19; iv, 11.

SEPT. 23.—Paul at Miletus.—Acts xx, 17-32. A.D. 58.

GOLDEN TEXT.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.—2 Cor. iv, 5.

There is a considerable interval, both of time and event, between our last lesson and this. Make yourself familiar with the intervening Scripture, from Acts xix, 29 to xx, 16. The exciting scenes, and uproar at Ephesus; Paul's affectionate farewell to the disciples; the journey into Macedonia and Greece; the return to Asia, and the companions in travel; the 'breaking of bread' at Troas on the 'first day of the week'; the 'church sleeper'; and the continuation of the voyage to Miletus, should all be briefly noticed. Note the presence of Luke again—xx, 5.

The address of Paul, contained in our lesson, is *Retrospective and Prospective.*

I. THE RETROSPECT.—v. 18-21, 26, 27.

V. 17. Miletus.—A seaport of pro-consular Asia (Acts xv, 4; xvi, 18), thirty miles south of Ephesus. Elders.—*Presbyters.*—Same word as Acts xiv, 23; Tit. i, 5; 1 Pet. v, 1. In verse 28 of the present lesson a different word is used, but applied to these same persons; thus showing that "elder" and "overseer" or "bishop" are synonymous terms, or nearly so. Ephesus.—See lessons on Acts xix. Asia (v. 18).—A small district at the western end of Asia Minor.—See Miletus, v. 17.

1. Faithful to the Lord.—V. 19. Serving the Lord.—Rom. xii, 11. Humility.—*meekness.*—1 Cor. xv, 9, 10; Eph. iii, 8. Many