

on those that are without. It tempts people to reverse the saying familiar in the first days of the Church's history: "See how these Christians love one another!" It hinders the advancement of the Church and chills the spirit of Christian effort. Strife and contention blight the spiritual life of the Church. The growth of the Christian graces is checked and all that is most lovely and Christ-like languishes and decays. What is worst in human nature is stirred up and the Divine image in the soul is blurred and disfigured. The disturbers of the peace of the spiritual Israel incur grave responsibilities. In the exercise of self-restraint and Christian forbearance, in cherishing a spirit of mutual esteem, in the repression of a love for pre-eminence there is large scope in congregational activity for the best and truest of all culture. If a congregation is blessed with a spirit of earnestness and zeal for the conversion of souls; a spirit of holiness that aspires to be Christ-like, and a spirit of brotherly kindness and charity it is blessed indeed and will become more and more fruitful in every good word and work.

A PAGE OF PIONEER HISTORY.

MR. EDITOR,—I observe in a late issue a notice of the death of Mrs. McKenzie, wife of the Rev. Donald McKenzie, of Ingersoll, late of Embro, in which among other things, it was stated that in 1838, Mr. McKenzie was "the only Presbyterian minister in the western part of Ontario." There was once a celebrated ecclesiastical chart of Upper Canada, emanating from a dignitary of another Church, and representing the spiritual distribution of the country, for want of ministers of a certain name, but it is difficult to understand how the liveliest fancy of the long ago, still surviving, could in the face of the facts give utterance to so broad a statement on behalf of the one Presbyterian minister of the west. I know whereof I affirm when I mention William Proudfoot, of London, and Thomas Christie, of West Flamborough, in 1832; James Skinner, of Port Stanley, and George Murray, of Blenheim, in 1833; Alexander McKenzie and William Fraser, recently arrived from Nova Scotia, and commencing their mission work from London, late in 1834—all in the regular exercise of their ministry before the year mentioned. And if the western part of Ontario be held, as I believe it ought, as including Toronto, and some reasonable distance east of it, we find James Harris, long before, the first Presbyterian minister of York, and Robert H. Thornton and John Cassie, not later than 1833, in the settled charges respectively, of Whitby and Port Hope. In the face of this the very sweeping assertion of your correspondent will not stand examination.

All honour to Mr. McKenzie as one of the pioneers of western Canada, and all sympathy with him in the bereavement with which he has recently been visited; but it is not true that in 1838, he was the only Presbyterian minister in the western part of Ontario, and I cannot believe that he himself would make any such claim. I do not wish to attach more importance to this matter than it deserves, but it is not right that the earlier pioneers should, in this way, be altogether ignored. OMICRON.

LETTER FROM DR. MACKAY.

Through the kindness of Mrs. John Harvie the following has been forwarded for publication:

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE,—Yourself and all the members of the Women's Foreign Mission Society, deserve ten thousand thanks from North Formosa for your willing response to my request. Personally I don't know how to thank you. This one thing I do every day, call on the Lord to bless you all. He is looking down straight at us all, and Jesus is watching every move. Soon all will be over, and we go! on and on through eternity, you will see one and another near you saved by the Girls' School which you are now providing. I am building it already of cut stone same size as Oxford College. It will be a grand building, strong and beautiful. Mrs. MacKay never, never will forget you all. G. L. MACKAY.

Lansui, Formosa, Nov. 5th, 1883.

THERE is less liberty in Turkey for Protestant missions than formerly. The Sultan seems embittered against other nations, and is also placing greater restrictions than formerly upon his subjects who profess the American or Nestorian faith.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON X.

Acts 18: 1-17.

PAUL AT CORINTH.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city."—Acts 18: 10.

TIME.—A. D. 52: following closely the events of the last lesson.

PLACE.—Corinth, situated on the Isthmus between the two parts of Greece known as Helles and Peloponnesus. It was the second city of that name, occupying the same site, with which our lesson has to do. Equally famous for intellectual energy and commercial enterprise, equally wealthy and equally vicious. The existence of the former is almost unknown to-day, because all Christian interest centres on the latter city. This Corinth was founded by Julius Caesar after its predecessor had been in ruins for more than a century. It was the largest city of Greece, and from its commercial character naturally contained a very mixed population; from the same cause it had drawn to itself the vices of many nations, and was notorious for its profligacy: how hard it was for the converts to free themselves entirely from such practices and influences, the epistles of Paul to the church in that city are striking proof. From Corinth Paul wrote his two Epistles to the Thessalonians, the Epistle to the Romans, and probably that to Titus. There he found several who became his helpers in the Gospel, and are honourably mentioned by him, among whom were Crispus, Erastus, Stephanus, Galus, and also Priscilla and Aquila.

Notes and Comments.—Vers. 1, 2.—"Departed from Athens: how long he remained in Athens we cannot tell, but, from the narrative, probably a short time." "Aquila—Priscilla," called "Prisca" in Romans 16: 3. "Pontus:" a province bordering on the Euxine Sea, where the Jews were numerous. They had no doubt resided in Rome, as their presence in Corinth is connected with the expulsion of the Jews from the former city. The names of this man and wife are always mentioned together, and throughout they show a happy example of harmony and sympathy in Christian life and work.

Ver. 3.—The question has been raised and argued on both sides as to whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when Paul met them; it is of little practical moment. Nothing is stated positively by Luke, but the balance of probabilities is that they were not; however, we find them so in v. 26: "and teaching Apollos the way of God." But if not Christians, they were "of the same craft—tent-makers," and so "he abode with them." The Jews were very strict in educating their sons in a trade, no matter what their position or expectations in life. Rabbi Judah said: "He that teacheth not his son a trade, does the same as teach him to be a thief." In like manner the Christian father, Chrysostom, says: "Let none be ashamed who follow a trade, but only let those be ashamed who live to no purpose and are idle." Tent-making was a common trade in Cilicia, Paul's native country, and to this day constitutes an important occupation in Western Asia. From Paul's own writings we learn that he was accustomed to live by the labour of his hands: 1 Cor. 4: 12; 1 Thess. 2: 9; 2 Thess. 3: 8.

Ver. 4.—But though Paul worked to support himself, he did not forget his mission. "In the synagogue every Sabbath:" the synagogue was always the starting-point for the gospel. "Reasoned—persuaded:" discoursed, overcame in argument. "Jews—Greeks:" these latter not necessarily proselytes, but who attended Divine worship.

Ver. 5.—"Silas, Timotheus were come:" the former from Berea, the latter from Thessalonica. "Pressed in the spirit," REV. "constrained by the word:" may, probably do, mean that the presence and influence of his fellow-labourers intensified his earnestness, and he felt, even more than before, that he must speak of, and for, Jesus, and so he testified "that Jesus was Christ"—the whole doctrine of his Messiahship as set forth in their Scriptures.

Ver. 6.—"Opposed:" in an organized and systematic manner. "Blasphemed:" a deeper depth of sin. "Shook his raiment:" as the Jews were wont to shake the dust off their feet, carrying the same idea of complete renunciation. "Your blood:" the inevitable judgment of God rest upon you—a terrible imprecation. "I am clean:" Paul could say this, for he had faithfully borne testimony for Jesus. "To the Gentiles:" that applied to Corinth only, as in other places he preached to the Jews and earnestly sought their conversion.

Vers. 7, 8.—So he left the synagogue and entered into the house of "Titus Justus," so REV. "One that worshipped:" in other words, a proselyte. In the synagogue, however, he had fruit, for "Crispus the chief ruler," believed, and was one of the few baptized by Paul himself, as we find from 1 Cor. 1: 14, "with all his house." The first recorded conversion of an entire Jewish family. "Many of the Corinthians:" the exodus from the synagogue probably drew increased attention to the preaching of Paul, and was followed by numerous conversions; so God overruled the opposition and blasphemy of the Jews.

Vers. 9, 10, 11.—Paul is again vouchsafed one of those encouraging visions which the Master granted to His servant in the great crises of his life. "With thee:" so the promise, Matt. 28: 20, "much people." "The Lord knoweth them that are His:" 2 Tim. 2: 19. This would encourage Paul, and doubtless to it was owing his extraordinary patience in bearing with the Corinthians, with whom he might otherwise have become wearied. (2 Cor. 10.) "A year and six months:" a long stay for Paul under the circumstances, and shows how deeply his heart was drawn out to the brethren there. Beyond that, Corinth being a commercial city, the apostle had opportunities of preaching the gospel to natives

of other cities and countries. It is thought, also, that Corinth served as a base for his wider work, as there were afterwards scattered communities of Christians throughout Achaia.

Vers. 12, 13.—"Gallio" brother of the philosopher Seneca, by whom, and by many of his contemporaries also, he was highly esteemed for his gentleness and refinement. Little did he dream that in the years to come the name of his illustrious brother and of the obscure Jewish preacher now before him, would be brought into connection—still less that Seneca would be honoured by the association. "Proconsul:" the correct style of the governor of Achaia at this time. "The Jews," REV. "rose up against Paul:" possibly thinking that the new governor would be glad to do their wishes and have their friendship. "Judgment-seat:" likely in the market-place, where the Roman governors generally held their courts. "Contrary to the law:" Schaff says: "The law here alluded to was the law of the Empire, and the offence consisted in attempting to promulgate a religion which was not sanctioned by the Imperial government"; others say that it was the Jewish ecclesiastical law.

Ver. 14, 15.—"Open his mouth" to speak in his own defence. "Gallio said:" he put a stop to the trial, not waiting for Paul's defence, as it was no legal offence with which he was charged. "If—wrong:" a matter for civil action. "Wicked lewdness:" demanding criminal prosecution. "Reason would bear:" there is an impatience about this utterance which shows that Gallio understood the Jews, and was irritated by the evident hypocrisy of the charge. If the case had been a fair one he would have heard, although, from his feelings towards the Jews, it would have required an effort, but now it was altogether intolerable. "Words and names:" to a Roman, whether or no Jesus was the Christ, was simply a question of names. "Your law:" not the Roman. "Look ye to it," settle it among yourselves as ye are able. "I am not minded to be a judge:" so REV.

Ver. 16.—"Drive," rather sent: the case was dismissed and the litigors were ordered to clear the court. Perhaps the accusing Jews obstinately kept repeating their accusations, and so force had to be used.

Ver. 17.—"Then all the Greeks," REV. "they all:" the crowd present, composed, in all probability, mostly of Greeks, they would be glad of the opportunity to manifest their constant hatred of the Jews, it may have been with some sympathy for Paul, having a vague idea that he was the advocate of Gentile equality with the Jews. "Sosthenes:" likely the successor of Crispus and chief accuser of Paul. "Beat:" cuffed, buffeted, not scourged. "Gallio cared for none of these things,"—the assault of the Greeks on the Jews—but in this he shared the Roman carelessness as to what persecutions fell upon the Jews. It was not indifference to the Gospel—he had not heard Paul speak.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Our subject is, Paul at Corinth. Let us, instead of the usual "Topical Analysis," briefly glance at what Paul found in that city. (1) *Friends*.—Aquila and Priscilla. Although it might have been that their similar occupation first brought them together, yet it was soon a oneness of faith. They became Christians, and, being Christians, they became (2) *fellow-workers*.—Although we have no record of their work while Paul was at Corinth, yet, in ver. 26 we find them at Ephesus, whither they had likely gone with Paul, and remained, giving Christian instruction to the most eloquent of the early preachers—Apollos. (3) *Opportunity to preach Jesus*.—He found it as usual with him in the synagogue on the Sabbath. No past experience could daunt him; he must preach Jesus, and so every Sabbath he reasoned and persuaded. Glorious perseverance this; would we could all be as constantly loyal to Christ. (4) *Opposition*.—bitter, malignant; such as he always found from his own countrymen. The character and violence of the opposition can be judged by the intensity of his denunciation and the symbolical act which accompanied it. (5) *Converts*.—God set the seal to his ministry. Among these was the ruler of the synagogue, a man chosen to that office because of learning and character, and with him many of the Corinthians, including several who afterwards became eminent helpers of the apostle—brethren beloved. (6) *Comfort from God*.—He was discouraged; there was danger in the temper of the unbelieving Jews, perhaps also from the adherents of the corrupt and polluted worship of the infamous goddess of the place and her thousand priestesses; but not only assurances of safety, but of success, were given: "I have much people in this city." Perhaps Paul, judging by appearances, had thought it a barren field. (7) *Persecution*.—But the promise of God was realized: even if we condemn the indifference of Gallio to the outrage on the Jews, we cannot but feel that, in refusing to be a judge in religious matters, he was right, and was the instrument of God for the deliverance of Paul from the rage of his enemies, and so, unmolested, he was able to remain in Corinth "a good while," and to lay deep the foundations of that remarkable church.

INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

Even to licentious, vicious Corinth, the gospel is sent. The Lord can bring his people together on earth. Is not this a prophecy of the gathering in the Father's house? All honour to the workshop—Christ and Paul have glorified it.

The true Christian will be diligent in worldly work. Weekly labour hand in hand with Sabbath sanctification. God's truest heroes may have their seasons of darkness and depression; but see *Main Lesson*.

There is such a thing as spiritual suicide—how terrible! God's voice to all: "Speak and hold not thy peace."

Sow the seed; the field may be unpromising, but the harvest is in God's hand.

We measure the law of God by our interest and desire.

Main Lesson.—God's providence in protecting and leading his people. *Examples*.—Noah, Gen. 6: 14-18; Abraham, Gen. 12: 1; Joseph, Gen. 39: 2-21; Moses, Ex. 2: 5-10; David, 2 Sam. 8: 14; Hezekiah, 2 Kings 19; Peter, Acts 12: 17, etc., etc.