

Our Young Folks.

Hugh Miller's Early Days.

The name of Hugh Miller is well known. He devoted himself early to a life of hard labor as a quarryman and a mason; and by the steady exercise of the powers which God had given him, rose to a position of much usefulness and honor.

The father of this celebrated man was a master of a sloop belonging to Scotland, which was lost in a fearful tempest. In consequence of this bereavement, the widow had to work late into the night as a seamstress to provide for the family.

He learned the letters of the alphabet by studying the sign posts; he afterwards attended a dame school, and persevered in his lessons till he rose to the highest form and became a member of the Bible class.

He had described, in his "Old Red Sandstone," the feelings with which he began work, and the happiness he found in it. "To be sure my hands were a little sore, and I felt nearly as much fatigued as if I had been climbing among the rocks; but I had wrought and been useful, and had enjoyed the day fully as much as usual.

Various wonders soon disclosed themselves in the rocks; marks of furrows, as of an ebbing tide fretted in the solid stone, fossil shells and fish, and leaves of plants. Almost every day opened new discoveries to his curious eye, and awakened deeper interest.

His first year of labor came to a close, and he found that "the amount of his happiness had not been less than in the last of his boyhood. The additional experience of twenty years," he adds, "has not shown me that there is any necessary connection between a life of toil and a life of wretchedness."

"My advice," says Hugh Miller, "to young working men desirous of bettering their circumstances, and adding to the amount of their enjoyment, is a very simple one. Do not seek happiness in what is misnamed pleasure; seek it rather in what is termed study. Keep your consciences clear, your curiosity fresh, and embrace every opportunity of cultivating your minds.

The White Ants of Siam.

Here they are, all about my lamp, over my table, creeping across my paper and my hands, and going on a journey up my sleeve. They have a little black head, a long round body, four brown wings, and six little legs. I suppose they thought they would get up a "surprise party," and come and visit us to-night, but I'm not a bit glad. But how rejoiced the Siamese are, and they are out with bowls and basins, catching them by the handful.

They do not come on wings very often, and I am thankful for that, because when they do come they take possession of everything; but instead of routing us out of the house, we go to bed and let them have it their own way. Poor foolish things! they flutter about the lamps, but when the light is put out they are lost, and something comes in the dark to eat them up.

The Siamese say that these queer insects are the white ants in one stage of their existence. If so, it is truly a wonderful change from the little ant that builds a great mud house for itself, with long covered passage-ways leading off from it in several directions. They give a great deal of trouble in this country, by taking possession of a post or pillar, or perhaps a beam or rafter, and eating through and through the wood, so that it crumbles away like a honeycomb.

They like to eat pine wood better than any other kind; so if you ever send me a missionary box, you may be almost sure that some day or other it will fall to the white ants, and they will make a grand feast over it, and have a jubilee, until the poor old box can stand it no longer, but fairly splits its sides with indignation.

los, and we should learn of their ways and be wise. I never saw them building their road down. They are always up to some thing, and seeking their highest good. I should not wonder if they had chosen "Onward and Upward" for their motto. That is a good one for everybody.—Mary L. Cort, in "Children's Work for Children."

How to Keep Our Boys at Home.

And now let us talk a little about the boys, whose future is so closely interwoven with our own happiness and well-being. And the first question we must ask is: "What course shall we pursue to interest them in the work of farming?" That is the chief topic to discuss, because, unless we do make it for the interest of the boys to remain with us and to pursue the honorable calling of their fathers and forefathers, they will surely seek for pleasanter places in the large cities.

So let us commence with those chambers first. Give up a few of the comforts of the rarely-occupied guest-chamber, if need be, and cover the bare boards of the floor with some kind of a carpet; or, if that is not obtainable, braid or knit some bright colored rugs to spread beside the bed and in front of the bureau or washstand.

Then, boys should be encouraged to work with a will by presents of a colt, or a calf, or a lamb. Even if they possess these three varieties of stock, it will not be an injury to them, but a decided advantage, because the love of possession is inherent in the human breast, and, if gratified, often increases one's desire to be of use in the family—to do what is to be done with pleasure and as if it were play-work, rather than labor.

Again, it is well to encourage pleasant society for them—to join the farmers' clubs and the agricultural societies, and strive for the prizes the latter offer. Cultivate good manners, as well as good morals; and do not ridicule your sons if they like to look well-dressed when they go into society, but give them the means to do so and tell them how nicely they appear.

Mr. Hill has thought much on the subject, and has had a good deal of practical experience in Bible reading into his own people. He wields a ready and able pen, and with such assistance as he can command, will no doubt be able to bring out a book which will meet the want, and be at once popular and useful.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXV.

PAUL AT CORINTH.

Commit to memory, vs. 6, 9, 10. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—1 Cor. iv. 12; Ezek. xxxiii. 4.

Scripture Readings.—With vs. 1, 2, read Rom. xvi. 3, 4; with v. 3, read 2 Thess. iii. 8; with v. 4, compare Acts xvii. 1-3; with v. 5, read Matt. x. 5, 6; with v. 6, read Matt. x. 14; with v. 7, 8, compare 1 Cor. i. 14; with v. 9, read Acts xxiii. 11; with v. 10, read Jer. i. 19, and with v. 11, read 2 Cor. i. 1.

THE FOLLOWING PERSONS ARE TO BE IDENTIFIED: Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, Claudius, Silas, Timothy, Justus, Crispus. ALSO THE FOLLOWING PLACES: Athens, Corinth, Pontus, Italy, Rome, Macedonia. GOLDEN TEXT.—Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.—Rom. xii. 11.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Lord's ministers are of good courage. For Athens, and Paul's treatment there, see Lesson XXXIV. A different place, in character and tastes, is now to be approached. The gospel is for men of every class and condition, and of every variety of feeling and habit, as we see by the variety of places to which it is sent.

As evidence, Christianity did not hide itself in obscure places, but invited the scrutiny of men in the centres of thought. As instruction. We are to aim at the capture of great cities for the Lord.

As encouragement. The busiest mart of trade are as likely to yield their harvest to God as the quiet university towns. New York as New Haven, Boston as Cambridge, Corinth as Athens, or Liverpool as Oxford. As direction. Various places with their own features, vices, sins, becoming the seats of churches, as Corinth, Colosse, Ephesus, and letters to them forming a part of the New Testament, we are shown how to proceed, and in the true sense be "all things to all men." We need not despair of any city or of any church when we study the history of that at Corinth.

A journey of about forty-five miles by land, or less than two days by water, brought Paul to Corinth (v. 1), the summit of whose lofty rock he could see from Athens. It had at the time a vast commerce, sat as a queen on two seas, and had probably half a million of people, many Jews being among them, attracted by openings for trade.

No congregation called him; no one guaranteed his support, and it was no part of his method to throw himself on charity. A fine, robust feeling among the Jews expressed itself in the saying that he who did not teach his son a trade, taught him to be a thief.

Paul had a trade; it made him independent; secured a home for him; made an opening for usefulness, and enabled him practically to command honest, self-reliant industry. (See Eph. iv. 28; 1 Thess. iv. 11. His associates were (v. 2) Aquila and Priscilla, husband and wife, of Pontus (full Latin name, Pontus Euxinus), in Asia Minor to the north, whose king, Mithridates, was conquered by Pompey, Pontus becoming in time a Roman province. Its Jewish residents are noted in Acts ii. 9, 10, and in Peter i. 1, the only other places where it is mentioned in Scripture.

The expulsion from Rome by Claudius is probably that to which Suetonius refers, naturally blundering concerning "their tumults under a leader Chrestus," ignorantly (as has often been done) confounding Christ, the occasion, with Christ a creator of strife. A certain tent-cloth was made in Cilicia of hair, known as Cilicenne (as called from calicut), which the Cilician, Paul, knew how to make (v. 3). At this Paul labored, rebuking the childish contempt for honest handicraft, and leading the innumerable company of siffling ministers whose extra-professional labors gave them fitting sustenance, while they preached the gospel.

But no need to toil prevented the right Sabbath-keeping. A place so rich as Corinth had no doubt many synagogues, and as he had opportunity, he availed himself of the right to give a word of exhortation at the invitation of the elders or rulers. (See Acts xiii. 14, 15.) No breach between Jews and Christians had yet taken place. His work was that of "persuasion" to receive Christ as the promised Messiah. All discussion, argumentation, reasoning from Old Testament Scripture, had this persuasive element in it, and like all true gospel ministry, it aimed at leading the hearers to Christ. Paul had a twofold difficulty. As a Jew, he was keeping the sacred day in face of Gentile scorn, and as a believer in Jesus he was pleading his Master's cause in face of passion and prejudice.

Ever long he was strengthened in his work by the coming of Silas (Silvanus is the full name, contracted like Apollon to Apollonius, after a common fashion in names passing from land to land). He was likely a Roman citizen (Acts xv. 87), a leading disciple at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 22), and Paul's companion in his second journey (Acts xv. 40; xvii. 40). Timothy we already knew. They came from Macedonia, and brought money to Paul from the grateful believers there. (See 2 Cor. x. 9.) Their presence and perhaps this very money, setting him free from the need to work for his support, urged him to "easier efforts for the people. He was pressed in spirit—the secret of all forcible eloquence. (See Job xxxii. 18.) He must preach the gospel! (The reading is obscure, and may mean that they found him pressed in spirit.)

But the reception is discouraging. They argued against, talked against, abused, reviled and poured contempt on Jesus' name, till all hope of doing good there vanished. He therefore left the synagogue. The right thing would have been for the congregation to have come to worship Jesus, and admit into its services the new spirit. But it would not. It was a necessity, therefore, to open another place, in which all who would receive Christ—Jews and Gentiles—would meet on a common level in Christ,

and have equal rights. This was a part of the breaking off (Rom. xi. 17). It was a justifiable separation, unpleasing in itself, but blessed in its results. He clears himself of responsibility in the most solemn and warrantable fashion, and charges on them their own ruin. What a parting sermon that must have been! (See Acts xiii. 45.)

Another place in which to prosecute the work was found in the house of Justus, not to be mixed up with two other men who had this as a surname (Acts i. 23, and Col. iv. 11.)

But the vision about the mode of which we need not concern ourselves assured him of safety, of the presence of the Lord Christ with him (see Matt. xxviii. 20), urged him to outspoken fidelity, and promised him large results (v. 10). "I have much people," &c. This is the comfort of a true minister. As he walks the streets and sees the throng, like the artist who sees the statue in the block of marble, he sees in them the Lord's "much people," and he is to call them out!

This inspired, he remained six months, and his work swarmed up in our phrase in the common, life-long work, the work till the judgment day, in which true ministers and Sabbath-school teachers are one, "teaching the word of God." If Paul were in Boston, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia or Washington now, what else would he do?

From this we may learn: (1) Not to despise the day of small things. Paul, alone, a stranger, in Corinth, working at a trade, and by and by the Corinthian Church! Do not despise the little you can do individually. You are not Crispus, but may be Aquila or Priscilla. Often the lowly come first. (See 1 Cor. i. 26.)

(2) Do not despise Paul's weapons. His life was honest. He had no self-aggrandizement in view. Thus he taught the truth (v. 4 and v. 11). He had the presence of Christ. He was bold and fearless. This is the kind of ministry the world requires. (3) Do not doubt the power of divine grace. Men who are tinged with the dying-out, unbefitting thought of Germany are said sometimes to be Germanized. Those who copy the loose flippancy of Paris are said to be "Frenchified." So the men of Paul's time had coined a word, "Corinthianize," equivalent to being dissipated and dissolute, so bad was the place. But its people were not proof against the gospel (1 Cor. vi. 11). This is the one radical cure for drunkenness, idleness, fraud, impurity, and all forms of sin and crime.

(4) Do not doubt the true dignity of serving Christ. You may be in a bank as manager or messenger; in a store as owner or porter, but the main thing is that you are serving Christ. This is honor and true immortality.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

Paul at Corinth—where—size—character—population—his fellow-workers—craft—object of working—how the Sabbaths were spent—his skill—how received—the aid sent him—his burden of mind—the result of his preaching in the synagogue—his separation—the blessing—the danger—the comfort—the term of his ministry—the nature of it, and the lessons to us.

LESSON XXXVI.

PAUL AT EPHESUS.

Commit to memory, vs. 8-6. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—John vii. 39; Acts xiii. 48-52.

Scripture Readings.—With v. 1, read 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7; with v. 2, read Acts viii. 16; with v. 3, read Matt. iii. 11; with v. 4, read John i. 26; with v. 5, read Acts ii. 41; with vs. 6, 7, read 1 Cor. xiv. 1; with v. 8, read Acts xxviii. 23; with v. 9, read 1 Tim. vi. 9; with v. 10, compare 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9; with v. 11, compare Mark xvi. 20; with v. 12, read Acts v. 15.

PERSONS TO BE IDENTIFIED, Apollon, Paul, John, Tyrannus.

PLACES: Corinth, Ephesus, Asia. GOLDEN TEXT.—For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.—1 Thess. i. 5.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—The Holy Ghost gives grace and power.

Four churches had now been founded in Europe: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth, and these were so many centres from which the truth might be spread. The apostle, no doubt under divine direction, comes to Ephesus, the great business city of the province of Asia, no doubt teaching, as he had opportunity, on the way. There he spent the years A.D. 65 and 66. The gospel thus came into collision with the worship of Diana, to whom the great temple of Ephesus, two hundred and twenty years in course of erection, was dedicated. As we shall see in the next lesson, Ephesus was wholly given to her worship, and to all sorts of sorcery and divination. (See Recent Discoveries, etc., p. 189.)

Apollon is mentioned in verse 1, in continuation of his history as reported in Acts xviii. 24-28. He was a disciple of John, perhaps baptised by him, and only knowing what John preached, namely, the Messiahship of Jesus. He was not informed of His having actually come and died and ascended. Hence he did not know of the promise of the Holy Ghost, through this ascended Redeemer. Of course he could not teach it, and his disciples did not enjoy the gift. This fact explains the condition of the twelve (v. 7), mentioned in our lesson. He had gone to Corinth.

Paul on coming to Ephesus would naturally find Aquila and Priscilla, who had instructed Apollon (Acts xviii. 26), and hear from them the condition of the Christian cause (v. 1). The "certain disciples" had reached the same stage as Apollon, but possibly were not within the influence of Apollon's kind friends, yet were willing to be taught by Paul. One may be a disciple, i.e., a willing learner, though not fully comprehending or enjoying all truth.

His question to them means, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost?" i.e., in such special and miraculous manner as at that time witnessed for Christ and his cause. (See v. 6, and 1 Cor. xii. 1-6.) They answered they did not know that they had a

right to expect such gifts. The idea is not that they had never heard of God's Spirit, or that they had never been taught by Him (for they had), but that they did not know of this special privilege of that time. It is possible to miss great privileges through ignorance concerning them.

The reason of their ignorance is in v. 3. They had gone no farther than if they had been with John the Baptist, before the beginning of our Lord's ministry, when Jesus was looked for, not seen, as appears from John i. 15, 27, 30.

Paul recognizes their place and standing and John's ministry, with its bearing on Christ (v. 4), who came after him, and no doubt he gave full instructions on the subject, so that their act might be intelligent and with faith. We may see from this how much further than "Aesop's John's ministry" reached with its influence.

They accepted this wondrous teaching, and were baptized (v. 5) in the name of the Lord Jesus, according to the command (Matt. xxviii. 19), thus showing their conversion to the promise not by the Redeemer. We, also, when we receive Christ, obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost in the very form and power which we require.

At this time, when churches are only being formed, when there were no Christian traditions, such as we inherit, when Christianity had no history, when long-established false beliefs had to be put away, when great temptations and influential priest-hoods stood against the truth, and when the New Testament was only being prepared, such powers as are here given (v. 6) were required, and the Lord gives what is good. Hence we read (1 Cor. xii. 28), the laying on of the apostle's hands, as was done in Samaria (Acts viii. 17), was the means of conveying these gifts to these twelve men, who are not further brought to our notice, but no doubt did their work afterwards to God. Their number is given to show that they were exceptions to the general character of Ephesian believers. They may have been able ministers there or elsewhere. The addition of a dozen members to a church is of little account in man's eyes, but how great an event it may be in the Lord's estimate!

II. PAUL'S SUBSEQUENT MINISTRY AT EPHESUS.

The place in the first instance was, as usual, in the synagogue, where the Scriptures were read, and the rulers gave opportunity to a recognized teacher to speak (v. 8). It continued there for three months, during which time he discussed freely the Scripture arguments for the Messiahship of Christ, and presented in a clear and attractive way the truth regarding the kingdom of God, or the dispensation which Christ introduced. This was the truth which Jews needed to hear.

The next place occupied by him was the school, possibly only the building, or perhaps the institution in which Tyrannus, of whom we know nothing, taught, and gave Paul the opportunity to meet with inquirers and give Christian instruction.

The need to remove thither, thus breaking with the Jews, arose from the opposition of hard, unbelieving opposers, who rallied against the truth, "this way" (see Acts ix. 2, and xvi. 17) to the multitude, probably getting a vote for his exclusion from the synagogue. This led to the setting up, as we should say, of a new and separate congregation of Christians as distinguished from the Jews. He complied with their invitation (Acts xviii. 20) as long as it was possible. Then he and his friends seceded and formed a new society. (So in Acts xviii. 6, 7.)

His labors here lasted two years, not including the previous three months (v. 8). He daily gave instructions. The result was a wide diffusion of the truth, for, speaking generally, all the people of (proconular) Asia, came to know in one way or another the Christian doctrine, and probably at this time were founded the "seven churches" of Asia of the Book of Revelation. In addition to his daily teaching, the apostle also wrote during this time the first epistle to the Corinthians and that to the Galatians. (See 1 Cor. xvi. 12, 19.)

The miraculous means of his success are described in vs. 11, 12. No common heathen power had to be dealt with, and uncommon miraculous forces were with Paul. This is God's way. He vanquishes his foes on their own ground, as by Moses and Aaron in Egypt. The garments even of Paul, or of the sufferers, made sufficient communication between him and them for healing. The two kinds named, handkerchiefs or napkins for wiping the face, and aprons, such as workmen tie before them, are mentioned as specimens of the kind of loose garments which constituted the healing of an apostle." So it was in Acts v. 16. Men saw that a divine power was given to these men, and were not only thus led to attend to their words, but inclined to believe that the message borne by men, for whom God thus certified, must be true.

The following points may be emphasized by teachers:

- (1) In addition to winning men to the truth, ministers must build them up in it, and a good minister will always seek and find opportunities for so doing.
- (2) The doctrine of the Holy Ghost as a living, working person is of vital moment. "I believe in the Holy Ghost," not as an influence merely, but a distinct, indwelling, mighty worker in the name and for the purposes of Christ.
- (3) A minister or teacher must adapt his teaching to the wants of those to whom he goes. Some require information, some reasons, some persuasion, some warning.
- (4) And the most faithful minister will be debilitated and opposed by the hardened; when driven out by those who once encouraged, for the separation, which is an evil by itself, he is not responsible.
- (5) God can use any means He will for commending His truth and advancing His kingdom.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

Paul's way to Ephesus—Apollon's place of labor—their instruction—how far it had gone—meaning of the Holy Ghost here—Paul's explanation—their course—the blessings they received—their use at that time—Paul's first place of teaching—his second—for how long—the effects—the special miracles, and the lessons to be learned.