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J. S.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

QUARTER: STUDIES IN EARLY CHURCH HISTORY.

A. D. 60. LESSON IV. PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL; or, Sustained in Suffering. Acts 23, 1-11. October 28.

EXPLANATORY.

THE COUNCIL. The Sanhedrin, which Lysias had called together to make their accusation against Paul. He probably sees many familiar faces, for doubtless twenty-five years before he was one of them. See chap. 7, 58; 8, 1; 9, 1. Men and brethren. Words showing both dignified equality and a forgiving heart. I have lived. This seems to be a continuation of his speech the previous day, to which they doubtless listened. It refers mainly to his life since conversion, of which they found fault, but also to his whole life. See chap. 26, 9.

ANANIAS. Son of Nahedacus. Appointed high-priest by Herod, A. D. 48; sent to Rome under charges of oppression A. D. 52; was acquitted, and probably resumed his office. Them that stood by. Officers in charge. Smite on the mouth. Still practiced in Oriental courts to command silence. A gratuitous indignity, doubtless instantly done. God shall smite thee. Not a curse, or imprecation, but a prophecy, which was literally fulfilled ten years later in the assassination of Ananias. Whited wall. The walls of sepulchers were annually whitewashed. Our Saviour uses the same figure for the hypocritical Pharisees. Matt. 23, 27. Sittest thou to judge. The whole counsel were sitting in judgment, professedly under Mosaic law, but this command was contrary to the very spirit of justice on which the law was based. This indignant outburst was very human, but not Christlike. Christ's example, and not Paul's was given us to follow.

God's HIGH-PRIEST. In reviling the office of high-priest, one reviled God. So now God looks upon indignities offered to his children as if they were offered to him. I wist not. Did not know. This answer has been distorted into a denial of the official character of Ananias, but it simply means that Paul was not aware that he held the office. Many changes had occurred since Paul had met the had on his distinctive robes, or presided. has ever been known. One bottle will R. WOODBURN. Probably Lysias presided, as they were An apology, but not a retraction. A lit- equaled. In Rheumatic or any other pain eral quotation from the Septuagint of the first application does you good. It

SADDUCEES. The Sadducees were the materialists and infidels among the Jews. They did not believe in the immortality of the soul, nor the existence of spirits. They had been the chief persecutors of the apostles, because they taught the resurrection of the dead. See Acts 4, 1; 5, 17; etc. Pharisees. The "orthodox" Jews. Their traditions and "creeds" were considered as binding as the written word. Paul, in claiming to be a Pharisee, the "son of a Pharisee," used no quibble, because, in the great distinguishing features of their belief, he was still a Pharisee, as he always had been. Hope. "The hope of Israel," (chap. 28, 20,) the looked-for fulfillment of the promised Messiah, and the resurrection of Christ, as the foundation of Christianity, are the fundamental themes of all Paul's preaching.

A DISSENSION. The intensely bitter contention of years between these sects was awakened in an instant, showing Paul's tact and wisdom. Matt. 10, 16. So sometimes in the dissension between the sects of Christendom, the truth of God finds opportunity for triumph. Scribes. The doctors of the Jewish No evil in this man. They espoused his cause because they saw that his statements, if true, would be proof of their doctrines. But God caused them thus to testify to Paul's innocence, that the cause might not suffer. Spoken to him. Referring to Paul's account of his conversion. Chap. 27, 7-10. Let us not fight against God. A very sensible conclusion, but wanting in the most important manuscripts. The sentence ends abruptly, as if broken off by the confusion.

PULLED IN PIECES. The Pharisees defending and the Sadducees seizing him in wrath, the deputy might well fear for Paul's safety. How must some of the violent disputes among Christians in these times put the very Gospel in jeopardy, in sight of unbelievers! Go down. Literally true, the castle being above the place of assembly. See chap. 22, 30.

THE LORD STOOD BY HIM. How kindly the Lord cares for his children. Paul might well question in a moment of reaction, if he had not been too headstrong in coming to Jerusalem contrary to advice; (chap. 21, 10-14,) but just then as once before (chap. 18, 9, 10,) and once afterward, (chap. 27, 24,) the Lord himself came to bid him be of good cheer. His testimony

in Jerusalem is acceptable, why need he worry over the result? But more—there is a promise—and a promise that his intense desire to see Rome and witness there shall be gratified. See Rom. 1, 10, 11; 15, 28-25; Acts 19, 21. These words not only held him up now, but in subsequent events this promise must have afforded him much comfort. Have we no promise to cling to for comfort in trial and danger?

GOLDEN TEXT:-And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Acts 6, 10.

DOCTRINE:—The resurrection from the dead. Matt. 22, 31, 32; John 5, 28, 29. The next lesson is Acts 24, 10.25.

BODILY RECOIL.

The curious fact has recently been pointed out by Mr. J. W. Gordon, in the Journal of Anatomy and Physiology, that at every beat of the heart, the whole body is projected a small but perfectly observable distance in a direction from foot to head—that is, so that any pressure exercised by the feet would undergo a diminution, while a pressure exercised by the head would be increased. When the heart contracts, a quanty of blood is propelled down the aorta, while at the same time, the whole body is caused to recoil with a velocity which bears the same ratio to the velocity of the blood as the weight of blood driven out bears to the weight of the

Joy is a prize unbought, and is freest, purest in its flow, when it comes unsought. No getting into heaven as a place will compass it. You must carry it with you else it is not there. You must have it in you as the music of a well-ordered soul, the fire of a holy purpose, the welling-up, out of the central depths, of eternal springs, that hide their waters here .-

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