

The Teachers Monthly

Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, M.A., Editor
Rev. J. M. Duncan, B.D., Associate Editor

Vol. VIII.

April, 1902

No. 4

Whilst the Sabbath School workers in other parts of the church have been discussing how a move in the direction of teacher training may be made, the Presbyterian College, Halifax, has announced the programme of a solid ten days' course—July 8th to 18th. Sabbath School teachers and other Christian workers who attend, will find accommodation in the College buildings, and besides the professors of the College, the programme includes such well-known Canadian names as Professor Walter C. Murray, of Dalhousie University, ex-Principal Calkin, Revs. Dr. T. F. Fotheringham, D. Stiles Fraser and T. C. Jack, and that of Rev. Dr. Richard Morse Hodge, of Union Seminary, New York city.

THE RAW MATERIAL OF AN APOSTLE

In one of his poems, Browning puts into the lips of Stradivari, the famous violin-maker of Cremona, the assertion, that even God could not make one of Stradivari's violins without Stradivari. The poet expressed the truth that God, in carrying out His purposes, uses human instruments, and that He chooses His instruments with a view to their fitness for a particular task. The qualities and powers of each man are the raw material out of which is fashioned the preacher, the poet, the artist, the soldier, the man of business.

The selection of Saul as an apostle was so astonishing, that the church would never have acknowledged his claims without the most convincing proof that they rested on divine authority. In the opinion of the early church, no one could be more unfit for

such a position than the man who had left Jerusalem for Damascus "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against the believers. But there were, nevertheless, elements in the character of Saul, which, under the moulding and directing influences of divine grace, made him a mighty instrument in building up and extending the church of God. In the persecutor the great Artist saw an apostle in the rough.

In the first place, Saul was a man of high moral character. He was brought up in Tarsus amid the temptations that beset a city youth. While yet a mere lad, he went to the richer and more luxurious Jerusalem. It is probable that he had sufficient means to gratify his desires. Many a young man in his circumstances has resolved to have his fling and has found to his sorrow that in choosing his own pleasures he has surrendered to a hard and pitiless master. But Saul kept his record clean. Never were his lips polluted by vile oath or ribald jest. He kept his passions and appetites under the control of reason. The pure life of his youth was an important qualification for the work of his after life. For while it is true that, in some cases, men who have lived in flagrant wickedness have, after conversion, been wonderfully used of God, these cases are the exception. The rule is that God chooses men of unstained lives to do the greatest work for Him.

Then, Saul was thoroughly conscientious. The voice of conscience was supreme in his soul. "Ought" was a great word in his vocabulary. "I verily thought with myself," he said to King Agrippa, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus