

SUNDAY
SCHOOL

The Quiet Hour

YOUNG
PEOPLE

PAUL A PRISONER—THE ARREST.*

By Rev. J. M. Duncan, D.D.

Seven days were almost ended, v. 27. "When you are in Rome, you must do as Rome does." So runs the old proverb and, on one side, it is a good rule. If we have formed one plan for a day's pleasure and our companions wish us to join them in something else, or, if of an evening we would prefer music, while the rest of our family circle would rather spend the hours in quiet conversation or reading, we show our strength best by setting aside our own wishes in favor of the desires of others. But, on another side the proverb is as false and evil as it can well be. If, for example on coming to a strange town or city, one is tempted to begin tippling or to frequent questionable places of amusement, because the majority of his companions do these things, he should be ready to stand alone, if need be, on the side of principle. Where it is a question of our own feelings alone, we should be yielding as water; when it comes to be a question of right or wrong, we should be firm as a rock.

The doors were shut, v. 30. Every Christian church has its Gate Beautiful, like that between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, in the ancient Jewish temple enclosure. But, while on pillars at either side of that old-time gate were engraved commands forbidding, on pain of death, any save Jews to enter the inner Court leading towards the temple itself with its holy place and its holiest of all, the Christian Gate Beautiful is flung wide open to all comers, and the invitation to enter is given to those of every country and class and color. Right through that gate, and on, on, into the very presence of God, all may go, without let or hindrance, since He has given them the right who is the Lord. No one dares to shut the gospel Gate Beautiful in the face of any human being, since it has been thrown open and is held open by the hands that were nailed to Calvary's cross, to remove every barrier between God and man.

They went about to kill him, v. 31. A gentleman in India made a pet of a tiger cub, which was, at first, as playful and harmless as a kitten. One day, however, when it had grown larger and stronger, in licking its master's hands, it drew forth and tasted blood. At once, the tiger nature was roused, and the beast sprang upon his master, who, to save his own life, was obliged to shoot his pet dead with a revolver. From the case of the Jews who were ready to murder Paul, we see how evil passions, allowed to slumber in the heart, when they are roused, may lead to the worst of crimes. Our only sure safety lies in shooting them dead.

A citizen of no mean city, v. 39. A true citizen will always cherish pride in his own district or town. Its good name will be dear to him. He will feel that its honor is in his keeping. What he does will bring credit or disgrace on the old home. It is a great thing, when it can be said of any place, as is the case with regard to many a country neighborhood and town in Canada, that young people from that place can be counted upon for industry and integrity. And such a reputation can only be gained and kept by any locality, as each one going forth from it, lives nobly and worthily.

Suffer me to speak, v. 39. In one of the famous Duke of Marlborough's campaigns, the town of Lille, in France, was being held against a besieging

force under the Prince of Savoy. The garrison came into great straits for powder. To relieve this lack, a body of French horsemen carried powder into the town, each man bearing forty pounds behind him, in spite of a cavalry attack and fierce infantry fire from the besiegers. Half of the men engaged in this daring adventure were blown to pieces, but the garrison was supplied with the powder so greatly needed. So, in all the ages of the church's history, missionaries with the spirit of Paul have willingly and cheerfully risked their very lives, to make known the gospel message of salvation.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London.

Castle—In Nehemiah's time there was a fortress in Jerusalem connected with the temple. Josephus says there was a citadel on the north side of the temple, with square, strong walls, built by the Hasmonaean kings, and called the Tower. When Herod rebuilt the temple, he also greatly extended and strengthened this fortress, and called it Antonia after his friend and patron Mark Antony. It was built along the outside of the northern wall of the temple. The rock at the northwest corner of the sacred enclosure was twenty feet higher than the sacred rock itself, so that the Roman sentinels could see whatever was taking place in the temple courts. The castle had four corner towers and a large inner space with courts, baths, and places for camps, and it could accommodate probably a thousand men. It was connected with the temple by cloisters and stairs, and the permanent Roman garrison was quartered there, so that they could command the temple and quell any riot that rose. When the Jews revolted, they destroyed the communications between Antonia and the temple. The Turkish barracks and the governor's house stand on the site to-day, and from this they keep order among the pilgrims of various creeds, as the Roman soldiers kept order among the inflammable Jews.

THE GREAT SECRET.

Loving God is the secret which reconciles all. This is the secret of being occupied, with interest, in the things of earth, without ceasing to love the things of heaven. But ye divided hearts, who have dreamed of a compromise between heaven and earth, and have appeared tormented with fears and scruples, now know the cause of your condition: Ye fear God, but ye do not love him. Love had speedily cut the difficulty; everything for God, nothing for self, is its motto. Everything for God, provided God is mine. Then let him enrich or impoverish my life, let him extend or limit my activity, let him gratify or oppose my tastes; if I have my God, I have all things at once.—Alexandre R. Vinet.

"It is finished." We are ever taking leave of something that will not come back again. We let go, with a pang, portion after portion of our existence. However dreary we may have felt life to be here, yet when that hour comes—the winding-up of all things, the last grand rush of darkness on our spirits, the hour of that awful sudden wrench from all we have ever known or loved, the long farewell to sun, moon, stars and light—brother men, I ask you this day, and I ask myself, humbly and fearfully, What will then be finished? When it is finished, what will it be? Will it be the butterfly existence of pleasure, the mere life of science, and selfish gratification; or will it be, "Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do?"—F. W. Robertson.

THE SOLEMNITY OF AUTUMN.

By Rev. James Hastie.

The beauty of autumn, the bounty of autumn, the beneficence of autumn, these topics have often been descanted upon, and worthily so; but there is a kindred theme too often overlooked, viz.: The Solemnity of Autumn.

Pre-eminently, autumn is a solemn season. Autumn's beauty is the beauty of death. Autumn's plenty can be had only at the price of dissolution. The gorgeous hues of the maple and beech are but the pictorial form of the lament "Ichabod," "the glory (of summer) is departed." From field, and forest, and fruit tree comes the solemn reminder: "We all do fade as a leaf." "In the midst of life we are in death."

The change that comes over the face of nature between June and October is not greater than the change that comes over man between youth and old age. In both cases, trials play an important part in the transformation. Sun and wind, and biting frosts have much to do in beautifying the variegated leaf and fruit. And is not character ripened and beautified by providential trials? Happy those whose autumn of life is more conspicuous for the beauty of ripeness than for the deformity of decay; whose character glows with love and meekness and goodness, with faith and hope and charity; who are more humble, more pure, more Christlike as the winter of the grave draws near. But, happily, the solemnity of autumn is not a gloomy solemnity, but a gladsome. It contains the promise and potency of coming seasons. The fruit it matures as it passes away is embryonic fruit, and contains in germ springs and summers and autumns yet to be. And has not the Christian the best of grounds to be gladsome and hopeful in the autumn of life? "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Yes, precisely so. "As the sowing so the harvest." "Glorify, honor, immortality, eternal life"—this fruitage hereafter can only spring from Christ the crucified, believed on here and lived out in daily life. "As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "He that hath ears to hear let him hear" to profit this present preacher on his timely topic: "The Solemnity of Autumn."

Sawyer, Que.

Religion gives a man courage. I do not mean the courage that hates, that smites, that kills, but the calm courage that loves and heals and blesses such as smite and hate and kill; the courage that dares resist evil, popular, powerful and ungodly, yet shall thereby overcome. That is not a common quality. I think it never comes without religion.

"No men help their times so much," it has been said, "as the men of hope." Every one should cultivate the habit of hopefulness. There is much in this world that tends to discourage people, and some persons are especially prone to melancholy. But pessimism advances no interest, and finally condemns itself, for if all things are as the pessimist says, why is it worth while even to be pessimistic? Be hopeful, and you will be an efficient servitor of your own times.—Zion's Herald.

*S.S. Lesson, Oct. 3, 1909. Acts 21: 27-39. Commit to memory v. 39. Study Acts 21: 17 to 22: 29. Golden Text—Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.—2 Timothy 2:3.