

Our Mission Union,

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OUR COLUMN FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS.

NUGGETS OF GOLD FROM THE S. S. LESSONS.

By REV. JOHN MCEWEN, Secretary S.S. Association of Canada.

[April 12.] Paul's Shipwreck. [Acts xvii. 27-44.]

Fourteen days and nights in a storm, and unable to guide the ship. Comforted by the Divine assurance of the safety of all, but conditioned and depending on a faithful use of all possible means of safety; and the man who had the vision, is the foremost in attending to the means.

Lines of Presentation for an Adult Class.

1. THE GROWTH OF A GOOD MAN'S INFLUENCE with an unpromising class, and under trying circumstances. A company of three hundred and seventy-six. Paul's advice at Fair Havens was disregarded; but when the storm came he did not chide them. In this he acted wisely, and doubtless wrought with the sailors—and thereby grew in sympathy—as one of them. Now he comes before them as a messenger, and with a message from the true God.

2. PAUL'S PERSONAL FAITH WAS A GREAT ELEMENT in his influence over men. They could only deal with the present,—he by faith lays hold of the future, and thereby of God's providences.

3. PAUL'S COMMENDABLE EXAMPLE,—“He gave thanks.” Thanks for the encouraging vision. Thanks for their safety thus far,—the anchors were yet holding. Thanks for the day dawn, and land before them. Thanks for the food to strengthen them for work before them. Thanks for the favor given him before the people. Thanks for the opportunity of commending the Lord to them. “In everything by prayer and supplications with thanks giving.”

4. THE CONSISTENCY OF DIVINE PURPOSE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. These are also clearly presented, as also the relation of believing prayer to Divine providence.

[April 5.] Paul's Voyage (Acts xviii. 1, 2, 14-26.)

Paul has appealed to Rome, and to Rome he must go. There is no historical description of a long voyage come down from ancient times, so accurate, minute and natural in its details, as this lesson; and the same must be said of the geographical particulars setting forth the personal experience and observation of the writer.

“We embarked,” v. 2, Luke, Paul and Aristarchus.

1. Undergirding the ship, v. 17. 2. Lowering the top gear. 3. Lightening the ship of cargo, v. 18. 4. Hope all gone, v. 20. These are the various stages in the experience of the voyage. “In the storm Paul knows not where he is, but the angel of the Lord knows where to find him;” and cheered by the angel, he addresses the crew on the misfortune that had overtaken them by going against his advice, but the Lord had assured him of eventual deliverance, to all, but warning them of the loss of the ship, and that they must be cast on an island.

LESSONS TO BE INTELLIGENTLY LODGED IN THE MEMORY.

1. THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING A CHRISTIAN in the days of trial. God speaks by His Word and Spirit, v. 24. Consult Gen. xv. 1; Psalm xxxiii. 4; Isa. xli. 10-14; Luke xii. 31; Rev. i. 17; also a previous lesson, Acts xxiii. 11. This is God's encouragement along the ages. “Thou shalt be brought before Caesar.” “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.”

2. THE TIMELY CONFESSION OF HIS STATE AND CONVICTIONS. “God, whose I am.” v. 23. “Whom I serve,” I believe God. v. 25.

3. THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHRISTIAN in the days of darkness, v. 24; consult Gen. xviii. 24.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

“SECRETARY M. C. Hazard divides the church into three classes, viz., the church militant, the church triumphant, and the church termagant. The last class consists of those who take the back seats in church and growl at what others do.”

MR. ALBERT WOODRUFF, President of the Foreign Sunday School Association, gives the following statistics: Switzerland has 495 Sunday schools; Spain, 100; Japan, 40; Portugal, 30; Italy, 150; France, 1,050; Germany has 1,977 Sunday schools, 8,325 teachers, and 162,257 scholars.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL STATISTICS: England and Wales—teachers, 422,250; scholars 3,800,000; total, 4,222,250. Scotland—teachers, 47,972; scholars, 494,533; total, 542,505. Ireland—teachers, 32,548; scholars, 384,627; total 417,175. Canada—teachers, 41,712; scholars, 340,170; total 381,882. Australia—teachers, 3,910; scholars 37,915; total, 41,885. New Zealand—teachers, 1,101; scholars, 9,947; total, 11,048. Total under English Government—teachers, 549,553; scholars, 5,067,192; total, 5,616,745. Various countries in Europe not enumerated above—teachers, 20,000; scholars, 400,000; total 420,000. India, China, Africa, Polynesia, West Indies,—teachers, 2,000; scholars, 100,000; total, 102,000; South America—teachers, 3,000; scholars, 150,000; total, 153,000. Total outside of the U.S.—teachers, 574,553; scholars, 5,717,192; total, 6,291,745. United States—teachers, 886,328; scholars, 6,623,124; total, 7,509,452. World—teachers, 1,460,881; scholars, 12,340,316; total, 13,801,197.