

there were inquirers connected with all the Churches Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Moravians, Covenanters, and Roman Catholics, and some hundreds unconnected with any denomination.

I cannot occupy your space by giving on account of Mr. Moody's addresses at any of the concluding services. I touch rather on results. Moved under the power of the truth in the hands of the Spirit, the place was a Bochim—as solemn as the day of judgment. Many, I believe, were dealing as directly with God upon His throne of grace as they must do upon that last day before the great white throne. Hundreds knelt before God and before all men. Others sat remote in some quiet corner, struggling under the birth-pangs of this new life. The workers did all they could. Overcome with the greatness of the blessing, they might be seen as of old, all through the Hall, beckoning to their partners to come and help them.

By nine o'clock Mr. Moody left some of us in charge of the meeting for inquirers, and went to the closing meeting for men, whither Mr. Sankley had preceded him. I shall not attempt to describe the appearance of the meeting as I reached it, at the close of Mr. Moody's address, for, indeed, I could not; suffice it to say there was great searchings of heart, and earnest, painful seeking after God. The area of the church was filled with men on their knees, waiting at the throne of grace. How many found Him whom they sought none knoweth, saving He to whom all hearts are unfolded. Man can only judge from the outward manifestation and profession. I think, however, all competent witnesses would be ready to declare their belief that there was joy in heaven over many a sinner brought to repentance that night.

Looking back now upon the week of unceasing effort by these servants of God, in Belfast, for the glory of Christ in the salvation of men, we find that the whole town was stirred as it probably has not been for many years, if ever, on the subject of religion. The desire to hear the Gospel was so great that it was impossible to meet it. Some two thousand five hundred, giving names and addresses, professed more or less interest in Jesus and His salvation, while very many whose names were not taken are among the most hopeful inquirers. Mr. Moody frequently expressed his wonder at the desire to hear, and declared that if he had known it he would have arranged to have spent some months instead of days in preaching the Gospel in this dark and unhappy land.

Some of the most intensely interesting cases were to be seen on Saturday in the rooms of the Y.M.C.A., when the names and addresses were taken of those seeking admission to the meetings for converts and inquirers. A number of workers were present, and as they met with one and another in great mental distress, they took them aside, and with open Bibles, from the Word, they endeavoured to show them the way of life through faith in Jesus. As a specimen, I may mention the case of two, husband and wife, with which I dealt personally. Both of them were upwards of seventy years of age; both of them in tearful agony concerning their lost condition. Taking them aside to a quiet corner, I preached Christ to them, and, pointed them to John i. 12, they seemed, one after the other, to enter in among the many who received Him to whom He gave power to become the sons of God. So it seemed to be with many others, who, coming to receive cards of admission to the meeting as inquirers, left with glad hearts, not as seekers, but as having found the Messiah! As in the closing hours of the Sabbath a few of us knelt and commended our beloved brethren to the grace of God, we did so with thanksgiving and gratitude to God for what He had wrought, through them in Belfast, and with increasing confidence and brotherly love towards them. On Monday morning, at the early hour of seven, they left for Dublin, on their way to Leicester, whither, I trust, the Lord has gone before them.

REV. H. M. WILLIAMSON.

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IN the whole of Russia there are not more than about 14,000 doctors, properly so called. The Empress has given particular attention to the inadequacy of medical aid in contending against the enormous spread of disease, and recently, when the Government, instigated by the Minister of War, determined upon abolishing medical schools for women, as a precaution against female Nihilism, Her Majesty distinctly expressed herself against the measure. As soon as it was known that the Empress recognized the necessity of female medical education, large sums of money flowed in from all parts to support the threatened institutions.

MR. J. DICK PEDDIE has given notice of motion for the introduction of his Bill for the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. He has brought this question up every session for the last few years. Lord Colin Campbell, who has given notice of an amendment to Mr. Dick Peddie's disestablishment motion, says, while he believes in the immense utility of an Establishment, he does not hold the Establishment principle as essential. He believes in the great harmfulness of an Establishment where it is upheld against the wishes and inclinations of the people. Sir James Campbell has given notice that he will move an amendment to the Affirmation Bill.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XV.

PAUL'S CONVERSION.

April 15, 1883.

Acts 9: 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. —Acts 9. 18.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—"The chief of sinners may become the chief of saints."

CONNECTION.—About the time Philip was leading the Ethiopian to Jesus, Saul, having probably imprisoned and driven away all the foreign Jews who were Christians, went to the High Priest for authority to pursue them to Damascus. Aretus, king of Edessa, had possession of Damascus, and was a great friend of the Jews. Theophilus, a son of Annas, was High Priest. Roman authority was relaxed—news had just arrived of the death of Tiberius, and the President of Syria had withdrawn the army from Jerusalem to concentrate his forces in Syria. The Council and Priests would exercise all the power they dared. Time, A.D. 37.

NOTES.—Saul. Saul was born about the time that Jesus visited Jerusalem with his parents, possibly three or four years earlier. Although his teacher (Gamaliel) was moderate and candid in his views, yet Saul, trained as a strict Pharisee, early had a hatred for the disciples. As a young man he was doubtless "of them of Cilicia" who disputed with Stephen. His hatred for Christians made him "exceedingly mad" against all the disciples of Christ. He probably became a member of the Sanhedrim when quite a young man, when his great intellect won him the respect of many older Jews. Receiving credentials from the high priest, Saul was on his way to Damascus when the events of the lesson occurred. Damascus, *activity*: a noted and beautiful city of Syria, and counted the oldest in the world; Abraham's steward was from it (Gen. 15: 2); the city was conquered by David (2 Sam. 8: 5, 6); was taken by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 16: 9); by the Chaldeans after the destruction of Jerusalem; ruled successively by the Persians, Greeks and Romans; the place of Paul's first preaching; is still a great city of 140,000 people, and under the Turkish rule. In the Roman age there was a nearly straight street about three miles long and one hundred rods wide, it was probably in this street that Ananias found Saul. Ananias: a devout disciple of Damascus. Tradition says he was afterward bishop of Damascus, and died a martyr. Tarsus: a large city on the river Cydnus, and the capital of the province of Cilicia in Asia Minor. It was made a free Roman city by Mark Antony, but this did not confer Roman citizenship upon its people; Paul became a citizen in some other way. It was a seat of Greek philosophy and literature and ranked next to Athens and Alexandria. The city now has about 20,000 inhabitants, and is called *Tarsous*.

I. THE PERSECUTOR PURSUING.—Ver. 1.—Breathing out threatenings and slaughter (*Revelation*, "breathing threatenings"): not only expressing threats, etc., but literally "breathing in," living in an atmosphere of rage and blood. A ravening wild beast.

Ver. 2.—Desired of him letters to Damascus: Julius Cæsar had expressly granted to the High Priest authority concerning "any question touching the Jewish policy." Augustus had confirmed these privileges. Probably there were many Christians at Damascus, and to break up Christianity there, as they had broken it up in Jerusalem would, they hoped, put an end to it. Any of this way (*Revelation*, "of the Way"): "The Way" seemed to be the name given to the belief of Jesus for some years, afterwards beginning at Antioch, the disciples were called "Christians."

II. THE PERSECUTOR ARRESTED.—Ver. 3.—As he journeyed, it was one hundred and forty miles; in their slow way of travelling it would take about a week. We know not how many thoughts the Holy Spirit had been pressing upon Saul during these days. A light from heaven: it was about noon (22: 6). The brightness must have been very great—God was there! (Matt. 17: 2, 5).

Ver. 4.—He fell to the earth: not only Saul but his

companions (26: 14). Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? this was in the "Hebrew tongue" (26: 14), whether the Aramaic vernacular, not understood of those who habitually used the Greek, or the ancient Hebrew, only understood by the learned, we cannot tell. The evil to Christ's saints was evil done to Himself (Matt. 25: 40, 45).

Ver. 5.—Who art thou Lord? "Lord" was here a term of great respect, not necessarily worship. Saul did not yet know *who* spake to him. I am Jesus. If He had said "I am the Messiah," Saul would have earnestly disclaimed persecuting Him. He made the matter perfectly plain to Saul. It is hard for thee, etc. (omitted in the *Revision*): these words, though a part of the story, belong more properly to chap. 26: 14, and they show the uneasiness of his soul. He was resisting the Holy Spirit who had been speaking to him in his heart, and now arrested him in His Providence. It was the Spirit's last, supreme, agonizing effort, which, if resisted, might have left him undone forever!

Ver. 6.—Arise, and go into the city: the words in ver. 6 preceding these are omitted in the *Revision*, on the authority of all the best manuscripts. Jesus did not send him back, but told him to go to the city, and that he should be directed. What a revolution now in his feelings!

Ver. 7.—The men . . . stood speechless: they heard the voice, but did not, or could not, distinguish the words. They would, however, be witnesses, to whom Saul could appeal concerning the miracle. Seeing no man: Jesus actually appeared to Saul (ver. 17, 1 Cor. 15: 8), but his companions did not see the Lord.

Ver. 8.—Arose: he was now obedient, and willing to follow as God wished. He saw no man: his blindness continued three days. Perhaps he never regained his former strength of eyesight, and his partial blindness was "the thorn in the flesh" he speaks of (2 Cor. 12: 7, Gal. 4: 14, 15).

Ver. 9.—Three days . . . neither did eat nor drink: This blindness was a mercy—it gave him solitude, and time to think. There seemed to be a terrible struggle. "Must he, and could he, give up everything?" (Phil. 3: 4-6.) At last he came to the point of full surrender! (Phil. 3: 8.)

III. THE PERSECUTOR A CHRISTIAN.—Ver. 10.—Disciples . . . named Ananias: we know nothing more of him than is here related. In a vision: not perhaps in the direct, personal way He had appeared to Saul on the way—the Lord has many ways of communicating (Job 33: 14-16) I am here, Lord: he expressed a ready willingness. Perhaps he thought the Lord was about to give him directions for flight or safety, as well for the other Christians as for himself.

Ver. 11.—Enquire in the house of Judas: he would be a leading Jew, and we may suppose one hostile to the Christians. Perhaps, like Sosthenes and other opposers, he too became a convert. Saul, of Tarsus: it was a dramatic name—a name of terror to Ananias. Behold he prayeth: this was to reassure Ananias. A man once said to me, respecting his son, "I tell you, when a careless, thoughtless boy becomes a praying boy, you may know his change is genuine!" When the persecutor got to his knees all heaven would rejoice!

Ver. 12.—Hath seen in a vision: is it not so now? Every time the Lord sends his servants with a message, he speaks also to the hearts of those to whom they are sent. Sometimes the voice is resisted (Jer. 11: 7, 8). In Saul's case it was obeyed. Might receive his sight: it would have a good effect on Saul that the man who restored his sight should teach him.

Ver. 13.—I have heard by many of this man: Ananias' faith was not strong enough to meet this terrible persecutor till he was further assured concerning him. The great persecution had now lasted for months, and all the disciples knew and dreaded Saul. And had they not prayed often too for his conversion?

Ver. 14.—Here he hath authority: all these circumstances were known. Eastern people are fond of gossip. Bonar and McCheyne read the Hebrew Scriptures in synagogues in Palestine, two months after, on the Danube, twelve hundred miles away, Jews said to them, "We heard of you English brethren being in Palestine."

Ver. 15, 16.—He is a chosen vessel: Christ chose him for one of His apostles. He was now ready to accept the office. Gradually (not then) the Lord would show him—and lead him through afflictions for His sake. All this being so Ananias need no more hesitate! Nor did he.

Ver. 17.—Putting his hands on him: here was a soul surrendered to Christ. The laying on of hands, so often used by God in connection with the gifts of the Spirit—his receiving his sight—his accepting the "brother"hood of Ananias—his baptism—his being filled with the Spirit—seemed all to be compressed into one short interval of time.

Ver. 18.—As it had been scales: the effect was as if scales had fallen from his eyes; he was no longer blind. Arose, and was baptized: probably very privately, as in the case of Samuel's anointing David. And we can imagine a great explosion in Judas' house as soon as it was known that Saul was of "that Way!"

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

1. A furious Saul can always get a treacherous high priest to aid him!
2. The Holy Spirit followed Saul on his journey, and, at His own time, struck him down.
3. Those who oppose God's children, or who persecute good thoughts and principles in their own hearts persecute Christ!
4. Little doubt but some in the house of Judas were converted.
5. There is work for each particular man. For Paul as an apostle, for me in my narrower sphere.
6. Seeing Christ made Saul a "brother" to Ananias. Let the same experience bring the same recognition now!

S AUL THE
INNER
SEEKING
ALVATION.

P AUL THE
PENITENT
RAYING FOR
ARDON.