

## Teachers' Department.

## Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

DECEMBER 27th, 1857.

Subject.—PAUL APPEALS TO CESAR, AND IS BROUGHT BY FESTUS BEFORE AGRIPPA.

For Repeating. For Reading.  
Acts xxiv. 24-25. | Acts xxv. 1-27.

JANUARY 3rd, 1858.

Subject.—RANK AND DIGNITY OF THE AUTHORS OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

For Repeating. For Reading.  
Heb. i. 1-4. | Heb. i. 1-14.

## THE QUESTIONER.

## Mental Pictures from the Bible.

Reader, you need but "search the scriptures,"  
To comprehend our Mental Pictures.

[No. 44.]

On a mountainous elevation which gives a commanding prospect of the extensive plain below, may be seen a company of nobles and princes; two of their number are more prominent than the rest, and attract the attention of the whole. Around may be seen seven rude altars, on which are the remains of seven lambs, still smoking as if they have been recently offered in sacrifice. On the plain below is an encampment with their tents pitched in the greatest order and regularity. Of the thousands of inhabitants of those temporary dwellings the male portion of them appear armed and equipped for military operations. One of the two most prominent individuals overlooking the scene below, is evidently a king. The other is in the simple garb of a prophet. In much excitement the king addresses the prophet with the language of entreaty; but after the latter has delivered an oration in the presence of the company, the king changes his tone and manner to that of anger and remonstrance. The whole company are filled with disappointment and dismay.

SOLUTION TO PICTURE NO. 43.

The Apostle Paul taken from Jerusalem to Caesarea.—Acts xxiii. 23-31.

## Selections.

## Christ in the Ship.

BY MARTIN LUTHER.

(Translated from the German.)

The Lord Jesus Christ enters into the ship with his disciples. As yet there is no storm, but fine, peaceful weather, so that the sea is calm and still. Else would the disciples hesitate to follow him. But as soon as they launch out into the deep, there arises a great tempest, so that the little vessel is covered with waves, as if it would sink.

We learn from this history, that when Christ enters into the ship there will no longer be a calm, but a great wind and storm will arise. He himself teaches us this truth in Matt. x. 34—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword." Wouldst thou be a Christian? Learn from this, then, first to count the cost. Prepare for storms and for discord; expect nothing less. Take courage, that thou mayest not be terrified, as at an unforeseen event. Fear not such storms, but fear God, that thou mayest not, for the sake of the world, forget his word, and dare to defy it. Remember, if thou art not ensnared by the world's favour, thou canst not escape its hatred.

This history also teaches us the right kind of faith; that which in such storms seeketh Christ and waketh him up. Temptations, indeed, ever beset us. They are the waves which our Lord Jesus Christ permits to break over the little vessel; that is, he lets the devil and the world rage against Christians, so that one fears he will be overcome. Yet the Lord remains silent, and seems as if he would not help us. He is asleep in the ship. We must take courage, and believe there is no danger. The Lord Jesus is with us, and if he appears not to see us, we must show that we see him; we must believe that he can calm the waves, however high they rage and swell. If the devil holds up thy sins before thee, if he threatens thee, with eternal condemnation, still despair not, but remember that Christ is not far from thee. He sleeps; thou must seek him by earnest prayer and wake him up. Thy deliverance is more important than his sleep. Indeed, thou must have a Christ who is awake, else it is all over with thee. Leave him no rest then, until thou wakest him up. Christ sleeps, in order that we may truly feel temptation. If he did not sleep, and the storm soon lulled, we should never know what a Christ he is, and might think deliverance came by our own power. Faith is strengthened by these trials, so that we are compelled to acknowledge that no human power helped us, but to Christ and his dear word we owe our deliverance. Who then, would complain that the cross is too heavy, if such fruit follows it?

## Christian Choirs.

BY A MUSICAL PROFESSOR.

[From the London Baptist Magazine.]

Some years ago an admirable essay was published by Mr. Binney on The Service of Song. In it he says, "Prayer and praise are the two principal parts of Divine worship; or perhaps, more properly, the only exercises that are worship. Preaching is not worship. The preacher is not worshipping when he speaks, nor the hearers when they hear. The three exercises of preaching, prayer, and praise may, without irreverence, be spoken of in the same manner in which the great apostle speaks of the three great elements of the Christian life—faith, hope, and love—Now abideth preaching, prayer, and praise; the greatest of these is praise." He traces out the analogy somewhat fancifully perhaps, and goes on to say that "the service of song on earth is but the prophetic anticipation of what is to come and continue for ever in that world where love and praise will be alike eternal. Preaching will be unnecessary when all are saved, and none ignorant. Prayer will be superseded, where nothing is left to bewail or fear. Praise alone of the service of the church 'never faileth.' Nothing can supersede it; it cannot die. Faith and hope, preaching and prayer, will alike terminate; nothing will be eternal, but love and song."

It cannot be a trifling question, therefore, as to how this service of song should be conducted in the earthly sanctuary, since it is but a prelude to the worship of "the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

It consists of two parts—the musical and the devotional. It is distinguished from other portions of public religious service by being musical; it is distinguished from other musical engagements by being devotional. The following suggestions upon this part of our public services are offered by one who has for many years taken a very deep interest in psalmody, and who, to the extent of his powers, has done his best to promote and improve it.

The cultivation of the art of singing has greatly increased among us of late years. For this we are indebted, in a great measure, to the Committee of Council on Education, who, acting through Mr. Hullah, introduced class singing into thousands of schools. To Mainz also we owe much, especially in the North; and to many, both professional persons and amateurs, who, finding class singing practicable, have carried out systems of their own with success. The publication of good music at cheap rates has also had an important share in the general improvement. Any assembly in England is now sure to contain a considerable number of singers, though the proportion differs widely in various localities. Ordinary religious congregations do not differ in this respect from other assemblies, and there is no reason why the fact should not be turned to account in our worship.

Singing has from early antiquity formed a part of divine worship, and the Christian church has the authority of its Founder and the apostles for its continuance. The church has an earnest desire to extend the blessings it enjoys, and cheerfully welcomes all comers to its public services. Hence a congregation usually contains many persons who are not Christians. Praise and prayer are the only parts of worship in which the people audibly join, and in these all should join—save any who lack either heart or voice. The singing should, of course, "be devout and in order," as much as any other part of the service. It was reckoned in olden times a terrible sin to offer to the Lord diseased or faulty animals in sacrifice; can it be less a sin in Christians, because of the expression of God's love in Christ, to present for his acceptance careless, slovenly, and discordant songs? Or can it be supposed that He who made the ear cannot hear, or takes no note of how this service is rendered?

The effect upon the congregation is a secondary reason for making our psalmody as good as possible.

The proper duty of song is to excite feeling. It reaches depths in the heart inaccessible by other means, and carries us beyond the region of mere words. Ahnfelt, the evangelist of Scandinavia, is now by his Christian ballad singing, awakening the Northmen from their moral catalepsy. Almost every period of great religious progress has been marked by earnestness in psalmody. Very natural that it should be so. Let a man have his heart full of genuine love to God, he cannot be indifferent or careless in any part of his service; and hearty singing excites instant sympathy. Jonathan Edwards, not a rash writer, says, in describing a religious revival of his day—

"Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable that there has been scarce any part of divine worship wherein good men amongst us have had grace so drawn forth, and their hearts lifted up in the ways of God, as in singing his praise. Our congregation excelled all that I ever knew before in the external part of the duty; the men generally carrying well and regularly three parts of the music, and the women a part by themselves; but now they were evidently wont to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty pleasant indeed."

A state of affairs very strange and unnatural in more formal Christians arose some years ago. The church, feeling the desirableness of psalmody and its own inability to conduct the service efficiently, called in the aid of persons, not Christians, who for a money payment sang God's praises, and the church's prayers, and vows. These persons had no option, but were expected to sing whatever was directed; words sometimes false for any one to utter; sometimes to make solemn avowals of longing desired—never felt; of anxious wishes to die—the reverse of fact; and of entire self-dedication to God—a lie! All this paid for by the Christian church as an offering to the all-knowing, heart-searching Jehovah!

This shameful practice has been mostly banished, but the principle under a mitigated form still exists, the difference being the absence of pay. Non-Christians are still employed and recognised as the official singers of the church.

The outward similarity in this country between Christians and non-Christians leads to confusion in this as sometimes in other cases. Transfer the scene to India. A mission church in Calcutta is in want of a choir, and not finding Christian persons to take the position, allows it to be occupied by a party of Hindoos, intelligent but unconverted. These who, surrounded by the gospel light of a Christian land, refuse or neglect the overtures of redemption, are vastly more blameworthy than are Hindoos, and more dishonour Christ. A Hindoo choir would therefore be more appropriate in a Christian church than a choir of unbelievers. By placing the latter in such a position, the church not only dishonours its Master and itself, but most terribly facilitates their self-deception or indifference. Why should they desire any further Christianity than they have when the church gives them the post of honour? What, then, shall we prevent any from singing who are not professors? Shall the almost Christians, especially the young, be discouraged and driven away? Never! Let their willing service be most thankfully accepted, cherished, and welcomed; but let their services be really and entirely voluntary. Place them not in an official position where they must sing, without choice or discretion, whatever words are ordered. Let Christians lead the song, and let whoever will join the chorus. Are Christians not to be found fully qualified for the office? The Almighty does not ask from his people what they have not, or cannot obtain. He requires the best service of song they can render. A psalm artistically very imperfect, but the best utterance of a devout and humble heart, will be more acceptable to the Lord, than a magnificent display of vocal skill without truth.

There is no reason why the song should not be musically excellent, as well as truthfully devout. There is nothing in the love of God to spoil either the voice or the ear; rather the reverse, for a right and loving heart improves the whole man. How strange that a Christian choir should be such a rarity! always an effort to commence and a struggle to maintain! Marvellous the excuses that are offered by persons asked to assist. "Voice not strong enough—can't sing in a morning—disagreeable to sit away from one's family—so many engagements—distracts the attention—the behaviour in the choir"—and other such, resolving themselves, however, in truth, into—"It's too much trouble."

Another reason is, of course, ignorance of music. But the potent hindrance is that Christians do not regard it as a duty. In his "Christian Cautions," the writer before mentioned, has the following passage:—

"Do you not live in sin in the neglect of singing God's praises? If singing praise to God be an ordinance of God's public worship, as doubtless it is, then it ought to be performed by the whole worshipping assembly. If it be a command that we should worship God in this way, then all ought to obey the command, not only by joining with others in singing, but in singing themselves. For if we suppose it answers the command of God for us only to join in our hearts with others, it will run us into this absurdity, that all may do so; and then there would be none to sing, none for others to join with."

If it be an appointment of God, that Christian congregations should sing praises to him, then, doubtless, it is the duty of all; if there be no exception to the rule, then all ought to comply with it. But if persons be not capable, be-

cause they know not how to sing, that doth not excuse them, unless they have been incapable of learning. As it is the command of God that all should sing, so all should make conscience of learning to sing, as it is a thing which cannot be at all decently performed without. Those therefore who neglect to learn to sing live in sin, as they neglect what is necessary in order to their attending to one of the ordinances of God's worship. Not only should persons make conscience of learning to sing themselves, but parents should conscientiously see to it, that their children are taught this, among other things."

Experience leads us to make the following suggestions:—

Classes for instruction in singing should be maintained in every congregation. For a very small fee from each member, well-qualified teachers may be found to undertake a class; and if cordially supported, an immediate effect on the psalmody is perceptible. Such a class affords the great desideratum of a healthful, cheering, and entirely beneficial amusement for young people. The young ought to have recreation, and if their religion, as well as their bodily health, is to be hearty and vigorous, they must have it.

The principal choir should be of sufficient strength to subdue, as also to excite, the voices of the congregation. Verses of a plaintive character, to be appropriately sung, require more strength in a choir than loud passages of praise. In the latter the people freely join; but if the choir be weak and much subdued, as in the former case, then the congregation begin to fear a "break down," and instantly stop singing, and, of course, all the desired effect is lost. It is in these changes, suiting the singing to the sense, that the true influence of psalmody lies, and without a strong choir they cannot be produced. Auxiliary choirs should be placed in various parts of the chapel. These must have a good understanding with the conductor. Under his control, they have an excellent effect in promoting enjoyable singing by the people. Some persons are afraid of hearing their own voices, and unless others around be singing, will remain silent; some require a leader to their own part; all sing the better for hearing the song sustained around them.

The use of an instrument must be left to local feeling and judgment. In many cases the introduction of an organ has diminished the volume of voices, and in every way been detrimental; in other cases, especially where the congregation has been advanced in musical education, it has proved agreeable.

By these means choral worship will become devout, hearty, artistic, and delightful.

"But," says Mr. Binney in the essay already alluded to, "the great thing is to be good. The singer should himself be a true song. His mind and heart, his reasons and passions, his inward and outward life, should all be in harmony with one another, and his whole nature should be in harmony with God's. Every day and hour, every act and utterance, allowing for unavoidable human infirmity, should flow on and rise up as the words and verses of a divine psalm. This is the melody that God best loves. The accordant harmonious movements of the virtuous universe give forth an unintermitted song of infinite grandeur, sweetness, and force, of which God is the sole and ceaseless author, and to which he is ever listening delighted! Let us aspire to bear our part in that glorious anthem: When men are reconciled to God by the faith of Christ, when sanctified by the Spirit they appear before him in 'the beauty of holiness,' there are advances made toward the realisation of that picture in which the prophet portrays the ultimate and everlasting complacency of God in his church. In the service of song could alone be found what might adequately intimate the exquisiteness and depth of infinite delight. Sing, O daughter of Zion; be glad, rejoice with all thine heart. The LORD THY GOD is in the midst of thee; He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing."

## Something about Sailors.

JACK'S PECULIARITIES.

Some twenty years ago, at the first establishment of a Sailor's Home in this city, there came about thirty of the sons of Neptune to engage board at this institution. They came from the U. States' ship North Carolina, then just arrived from her three years' cruise. They were headed by a boatswain—a fine specimen of a sailor—and he was the principal spokesman, while the others appeared to leave every arrangement entirely with him.

Jack approached the superintendent with a Sailor's Magazine under his arm having on its cover a cut of the house, the name of the keeper, and its number and location.

After satisfying himself that he had boarded the right ship, according (as he said) to one of the lieutenants' orders, and found every thing thus far ship-shape, he began catechising the superintendent, no one else of the party being allowed to speak or interfere until he had finished. If interrupted, he would quaintly remark