

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubeta's Notes.

Second Quarter, 1903.

APRIL TO JUNE.

Lesson VIII. May 24. Paul Before Agrippa.—Acts 26: 19-29.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day.—Acts 26: 22.

EXPLANATORY.

I. PAUL AND THE NEW GOVERNOR, FESTUS.—Acts 25: 1-12. The New Governor. After Paul had lain in prison for two years, Felix was removed on account of grave complaints of his conduct. In order to conciliate the Jews as far as possible, he was base enough to leave in prison an innocent man whom they hated. Felix had good reason thus to try and put the Jews under obligation to him at the close of his government. For the danger was great to the retiring governor of complaints being sent to the emperor, of oppression and plunder, which were often listened to and punished. Porcius Festus was appointed in his stead. "His rule, unfortunately, was prematurely cut short by death, before he had completed his second year of office."

The Attempt of the Jews to Gain Possession of Paul. Immediately on the arrival of the new governor, the Jews sought to have Paul taken to Jerusalem for trial, for there they had more power over the courts, or could secretly assassinate their enemy. Their charges against him were doubtless the same three which Tertullus brought against him in our last lesson. Festus asked Paul whether he was willing to go. The question was whether Paul would accept an informal acquittal from the Roman court on condition that he submit to a trial before his own people on the other court.

The Appeal to Caesar. Paul well knew that there was no justice for him in the court of the Sanhedrim, where the judges were already committed against him, and had plotted to murder him. He therefore objected, saying that he had done no wrong to the Jews, and why should he be tried by them? He then appealed to Caesar, that is he carried his case to the royal court in Rome.

II. THE ROYAL COURT ASSEMBLED AT CESAREA.—Acts 25: 13-27. The Visit of Herod Agrippa II. to Festus. Soon after these things, Herod Agrippa II., the brother-in-law of Festus, together with his sister wife Bernice, the sister of Drusilla, the wife of Felix, made Festus a visit of congratulation at Cesarea.

Bernice. The sister of Agrippa, and of Drusilla, the wife of Felix. Both Agrippa and Bernice were Jews in religion.

The Scene at the Royal Assembly. The scene lay in the same magnificent hall in the official palace, which eighteen years before, had witnessed the still more stately scene when the father of the present King Agrippa was called a god, and came to his tragic end. Paul, in his fetters, was standing up ready to speak. Before him were Festus and his court, King Agrippa and Queen Bernice, in all the pomp and splendor of Oriental royalty.

The question stated. Festus arose before this brilliant assembly, and stated the object of their coming together. The prisoner had been vehemently accused as one worthy of death. He had appealed to Caesar and must be sent to Rome.

A LAST RESORT.

Pure Food Should Be The First.

When the human machine goes wrong it's ten to one that the trouble began with the stomach and can therefore be removed by the use of proper food. A lady well known in Bristol, Ontario County, N. Y. tells of the experience she had curing her only child by the use of scientific food: "My little daughter, the only child and for that reason doubly dear, inherited nervous dyspepsia. We tried all kinds of remedies and soft foods. At last when patience was about exhausted and the child's condition had grown so bad the whole family was aroused, we tried Grape-Nuts.

"A friend recommended the food as one on which her own delicate children had grown strong upon so I purchased a box—as a last resort. In a very short time a marked change in both health and disposition was seen. What made our case easy was that she liked it at once and its crisp, nutty flavor has made it an immediate favorite with the most fastidious in our family.

"It's use seems to be thoroughly established in western New York where many friends use it regularly. I have noticed its fine effects upon the intellects as well as the bodies of those who use it. We owe it much." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Note how this assembly to try Paul was the means by which he could preach the gospel to people whom he could reach in no other way.

III. PAUL AND THE GOSPEL. HIS DEFENSE BEFORE THE ROYAL COURT.—Vs. 1-23.

Argument from his own experience. Then for the third time in the Acts is related the story of his conversion, the wondrous change wrought in himself by Jesus Christ.

Note 1. That this is an example of one of the most effective ways of preaching the gospel. The best preaching grows out of personal experience. The preacher speaks with the authority of one who knows.

Note 2. Especially in this case, Paul stood before them a living miracle, an "incarnate argument."

Note 3. Paul's plea was for the Romans as well as for the Jews; it was light, salvation, forgiveness for his audience and for his accusers. He set before them a glorious hope of deliverance from sin and Satan, and all the powers of darkness and remorse, and a glorious inheritance among them that are sanctified.

Proof from his own practice. Paul gave his life to the cause, and thus gave the strongest possible proof of the gospel by obeying the call.

19. WHEREUPON (after hearing the call) . . . I WAS NOT DISOBEIENT UNTO THE HEAVENLY VISION. Yet the seeming cost and the struggle were very great. He did not ask his audience to do what he had not been willing to do himself.

20. BUT SHEWED FIRST UNTO THEM OF DAMASCUS. Immediately after his conversion (Acts 9: 20-22). Then after two or three years of probable retirement he returned to Damascus and preached again (Gal. 1: 17, 18; Acts 9: 23, 25). AND AT JERUSALEM. For a brief time, going there from Damascus (Acts 9: 26-29; Gal. 1: 18). He also visited there, and of course, preached at other times. THROUGHOUT ALL THE COASTS (borders, region) OF JUDEA. The exact time of this preaching is not known, as no record is given of it. The three stages of the spiritual life are accurately noted (1) THAT THEY SHOULD REPENT. This is the first duty of every one. (2) AND TURN TO GOD. Hating sin or even turning from it is not enough. (3) AND DO WORK MEET FOR REPENTANCE. The works which are the natural fruit of true repentance.

Without any direct reference to Agrippa and his audience, no appeal could be more effective than these statements.

21. FOR THESE CAUSES, not because of the charges made against him, but (1) because he called on these Jews to repent. He troubled their consciences. (2) Especially because he delivered the gospel message to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, placing them on an equality before God, which was his unpardonable sin in the eyes of the Jews, but a reason why the Romans should acquit him. These were the reasons why the Jews WENT ABOUT TO KILL ME. 22. HAVING THEREFORE OBTAINED HELP, originally an alliance against enemies, such aid as a warrior receives from auxiliary or allied forces. God was Paul's powerful ally. Paul was on God's side, and therefore could not insult him by professing his temple, or opposing his religion. SAYING NONE OTHER THINGS, etc. He was true to the Jewish Scriptures, simply explaining them, and showing how they were fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah.

23. THAT (the) CHRIST (the promised Messiah) SHOULD SUFFER. Therefore the fact of Jesus' suffering on the cross, which was one of the chief obstacles to the Jews' reception of him as their Messiah, was yet exactly in accordance with the Scripture teaching concerning the Messiah. THAT HE SHOULD . . . RISE FROM THE DEAD a living Saviour and teacher and guide, and by this resurrection should proclaim LIGHT even UNTO . . . THE GENTILES. Read this verse as in the R. V. By the resurrection of Christ, life and immortality were brought to light.

IV. FESTUS AND THE GOSPEL.—Vs. 24, 25. 24. AS HE THUS SPAKE, was speaking. WITH A LOUD VOICE, no doubt with something of impatience, if not of anger. "THOU ART BESIDE THYSELF, mad, insane, raving. From Festus' standpoint, a crucified Messiah bringing light to the Gentiles, the resurrection of the dead, an unseen King over a spiritual kingdom, could be but the delirious fancies of a disordered brain. MUCH LEARNING many writings. DOTH MAKE THEE MAD. Either Paul or Festus was beside himself. They lived in different worlds, and one or the other was wrong. If Festus was sane, Paul was mad. If Paul was sane, Festus was mad.

I AM NOT MAD. Paul speaks for himself and lets Festus make the application for himself. MOST NOBLE FESTUS. "Oh I love the great missionary for that word. I think I hear his voice thrilling as he utters it.

V. AGRIPPA AND THE GOSPEL.—Vs. 26-29. 26. FOR THE KING (Agrippa) KNOWETH, because he was trained in the

Jewish Scriptures. THIS THING WAS NOT DONE IN A CORNER. Obscurely, known but to a few; but the very enemies of Jesus caused it to be proclaimed all over the land, by their opposition.

27. KING AGRIPPA, BELIEVEST THOU THE PROPHETS. Agrippa, as a Jew, had been instructed in the Scriptures, and accredited them intellectually, however little effect they had upon his conduct. But if he believed the Scriptures, then Paul could prove from those promises the truth of the gospel he was preaching.

28. ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN. There are two quite divergent opinions as to the meaning of these words.

29. I WOULD TO GOD, I earnestly desire of God, the only source of such a blessed good. WERE BOTH ALMOST, AND ALTOGETHER, with, or in little, and with much labor, or time or persuasion. SUCH AS I AM, EXCEPT THESE BONDS. The chains he had upon him while he was speaking.

Such as I am. Paul the prisoner possessed much more than the brilliant assemblage before him.

That Paul's appeal had some effect upon Agrippa is seen in the fact that "from this time a kindly feeling seems to have sprung up in the king's heart towards that strange Nazarene sect."

VI. THE DECISION OF THE COURT.—Vs. 30-32. The court decided that Paul was innocent, and might have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Caesar; but that the appeal must stand. But this decision was the means of bringing him safely to Rome. It made a favorable impression on the Roman officer who took him there and upon the Roman authorities after his arrival.

THE HELP OF A YOKE.

Did you ever stop to ask what a yoke is really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal which wears it? It is just the opposite. It is to make its burden light. Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke, the plough would be intolerable. Worked by means of a yoke, it is light. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a gentle device to make hard labor light. It is not meant to give pain, but to save pain. And yet men speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery and look upon those who wear it as objects of compassion. * * Christ's yoke is simply his secret for the alleviation of human life, his prescription for the best and happiest method of living—Henry Drummond.

THE POOR DYSPEPTIC.

Is the Most Miserable of Mortals—Only Similar Sufferers Can Understand His Hours of Agony.

There is no mortal more miserable than the poor dyspeptic. He is never healthy, never happy—always ailing, always out of sorts. Every mouthful of food brings hours of distress—every moment of the day is spoiled and soured.

If you are a dyspeptic, you know the signs; the coated tongue, the dull headaches, the heartburn, the biliousness, the persistent torment after meals, the hopeless despondency. Any one of these signs point to indigestion. The one sure cure for indigestion is Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. They make new blood—that's the whole secret. Through the blood they will brace up your strength, awaken your liver and set your stomach right. If you ask your neighbors you will find proof of this right at your own home. Mr. Charles Wood, Mass., one of the thousands of dyspeptics cured by the use of these pills, says: "For upwards of twelve years I was a great sufferer from indigestion and nervousness. Everything I ate tortured me. I doctored almost continuously, and used almost everything recommended for this trouble, but never got more than temporary relief until I began the use of Dr. Williams' pink pills. Words cannot express the good these pills have done me. I am in better health than I have enjoyed in years before, and I have proved that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure when other medicines fail."

Bad blood is the mother of fifty diseases, and Dr. Williams' Pink Pills will cure them all because they convert bad blood into good rich, red blood, without which there can be neither health nor strength. Don't be persuaded to try something else—take nothing but the genuine Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent post paid at 50c. a box, or six boxes for \$2.50, by addressing the Dr. Williams medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.



LOADED UP WITH IMPURITIES.

IN THE SPRING THE SYSTEM IS LOADED UP WITH IMPURITIES.

After the hard work of the winter, the eating of rich and heavy foods, the system becomes clogged up with waste and poisonous matter, and the blood becomes thick and sluggish.

This causes Loss of Appetite, Biliousness, Lack of Energy and that tired, weary, listless feeling so prevalent in the spring.

The cleansing, blood-purifying action of

BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS.

eliminates all the pent-up poison from the system, starts the sluggish liver working, acts on the Kidneys and Bowels, and renders it, without exception,

The Best Spring Medicine.

WANTED.

Young lady compositors. Address, Paterson & Co., 107 Germant St.

I. T. KIERSTEAD

Commission Merchant

AND DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF COUNTRY PRODUCE

City Market, St. John, N. B.

Returns Promptly Made. ap15