

Sunday School Lesson

November 24, 1946

A. D. Cann

PAUL IN ATHENS AND CORINTH

Lesson: Acts 17:22-28; 18:1-4; I Corinthians 1:22-25

Golden Text: For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. I Corinthians 3:11

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

From Thessalonica Paul and his companions moved to Berea. Here is an exception to the general rule; they received a royal reception in the synagogue. It is stated—"these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." From here Paul moved on to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remained a while at Berea.

I. PAUL PREACHES IN ATHENS:

As Paul's custom was he went to the synagogue and ministered to the Jews and proselytes. However, his ministry consisted mostly of discussions in the market place. Here he encountered certain philosophical schools, some of which invited him to give a systematic exposition of his views. In so doing Paul exposes the terrible idolatry of Athens. He describes the spiritual nature of the one true God and exhorts the people to worship him. His message is "repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." The message here is essentially the same as elsewhere with this difference—that he stressed the judgment. This was no doubt because of the extraordinary superstition in which he found himself. A number of converts were won. At this point in the Apostles' ministry let us notice—

II. PAUL'S METHOD OF MINISTERING IN CORINTH:

Paul's method of ministering in Corinth is a sample of his manner of opening a new work and is worthy of the Christian workers imitation. Notice (1) He goes to his own countrymen, the Jews. He did thus because they believed in one God and the scriptures which prophesied of Christ. (2) In synagogues where he could meet the people. If there were no synagogues then he went to the market place or held street meetings. (3) By means of helpers as Aquilla and Priscilla. (4) By daily labor with those of the same craft. All Christians should take advantage of such opportunities. (5) By using the Sabbath.

III. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS:

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. The Jews were ever looking for signs. The preaching of Jesus was attended by signs and wonders, but the eyes of their souls were closed because they would not receive the inward, invisible, spiritual kingdom. Consequently they rejected the most convincing sign of all—the resurrection of Jesus. What we fail to see we stumble over, what we are unwilling to comprehend or acknowledge we term foolishness and so both Jews and Greeks have missed salvation through faith in a crucified Saviour. Some, however, have accepted the call and know that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

QUESTIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. Why were the Christians at Berea considered more noble than those at Thessalonica?
2. What did Paul emphasize in his ministry at Athens and why?

3. What was Paul's method of opening a new work? What about trying some of Paul's methods to get new members in our Sunday School.

4. Why is the gospel a stumbling block to the Jews?

December 1, 1946

A LETTER ON CHRISTIAN LIVING

Lesson: Acts 19:23-30; Ephesians 6:13-18
Golden Text: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Ephesians 6:10

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

In Paul's third missionary journey he revisits several of the churches in Asia, but his chief place of labor was Ephesus where he remained two and one-half years.

I. THE FAR REACHING INFLUENCE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY:

In Acts 19 we have recorded at least three different facts that show the influence of Paul's ministry in Ephesus and the surrounding country. Notice (1) The burning of many books of magic which cost large sums of money. This proves the thoroughness of the people's conversion. (2) The testimony of the silversmith, Demetrius, to the effect: "that not alone in Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands." (3) "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also that the temple of the great goddess Dianna should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom Asia and the world worshippeth."

II. MALIGNANT OPPOSITION:

A revival of salvation always generates a revival of opposition. Paul's peaceful ministry in the synagogue did not last over three months. Neither did his ministry to the Gentiles last without organized opposition. This opposition from the silversmiths was largely because of selfishness. The business of making charms, idols, etc., compares very much with the tobacco, liquor, theatre, wicket magazines, organized vice and gambling business of today. All of these evils are a unit inspired by the same source—Satan. Those who engage in such business are enemies of vital Christianity. May the Holy Ghost help us to do all we can to destroy these evils.

III. THE CHRISTIANS' ARMOUR:

Paul being in prison and guarded by a Roman soldier had opportunity to study his armour and make a spiritual application. Notice (1) The girdle is worn as a belt to support the whole body, likewise is the truth a support to the whole spiritual man. (2) The gospel of inward peace gives rest to the soul even if the feet are in perpetual motion. (3) The righteousness of Christ inwrought by the Holy Ghost is a breastplate. (4) The shield of faith quenches all unbelief and equips for conquest. (5) The helmet of salvation. The head is that part that should be most carefully defended. One blow here may prove fatal. We must take heed and beware of false prophets and false doctrines. (6) Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Till now our armour has been mostly defensive, but we are to attack Satan as well as secure ourselves. We must know how to rightly divide the Word of Truth. (7) Praying always—at all times. We may have all the other armour mentioned and still meet with defeat if we fail to pray. It is this means of grace that gives edge to his sword and make him "more than conqueror."

QUESTIONS AND PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

1. What do we learn about Paul's ministry from the testimony of Demetrius?
2. A revival of salvation will help to destroy organized evil: how may the Sunday school promote such a revival?
3. Describe the soldiers armour and explain the spiritual application.

OBITUARY

MRS. STELLA MULLEN, beloved wife of Rev. H. E. Mullen, died at Victoria Public Hospital, Fredericton, N. B., Wednesday noon, October 23rd, at the age of 49 years. She is survived by her husband, two sons, John Wesley and Verdee Hewson; two daughters, Phyllis L. and Lillie Lee, at home, and a sister, Mrs. Minot Mullen, Havelock, N. S. She was a fine Christian, a devoted wife and mother and was greatly interested in the work of the church. The funeral was held from the home, 233 Aberdeen street, and was conducted by Rev. P. J. Trafton, assisted by Revs. S. G. Hilyard, E. R. Watson, H. S. Wilson, H. C. Mullen, H. L. Robertson, Raymond Parks, and Lic. C. Alley, Revs. G. A. Rogers, A. D. Cann, G. A. DeLong, and H. O. McGeorge were pallbearers. There were many beautiful floral offerings and a large attendance of friends from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine. Mrs. Mullen will be greatly missed in the home and in the Lord's work. To the sorrowing ones we extend our sincere sympathy.

Mrs. Minnie Barr, widow of Robert Barr,, passed away at her home in Fredericton on Sunday morning, November 3. She has been in poor health for some time and suffered a heart attack early Sunday morning.

Sister Barr had been a faithful member of the R. B. Church at Fredericton and will be greatly missed by a wide circle of friends. Another good woman has passed to her reward. She was 81 years of age. Funeral services were conducted at Fredericton, November 5, by Rev. H. E. Mullen. Rev. P. J. Trafton and Rev. F. A. Dunlop assisted. Burial was at Jemseg.

"CAN'T DO IT"

The story is told of a minister, a temperance man, visiting a friend. At dinner the friend wished him to take a glass of wine.

"Can't do it," said the minister. "'Wine is a mocker'."

"Take a glass of brandy, then."

"Can't do it, brother. 'Strong drink is raging'."

By this time the host became excited and remarked, "You will pass the decanter to the gentleman next."

"No, my friend. I cannot do that. 'Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink; that putteth the bottle to him.'"

"Well, then," said the host in desperation, "pass it over to me."

"Can't touch it," said the minister, "for the good Book says, 'Touch not, taste not, handle not.'"

—The Motor Wisconsin.

"WE WOULD SEE JESUS"

A minister one Sunday found a slip of paper on his pulpit. On it were written these words: "Sir, we would see Jesus!" He felt distressed but not offended.

He began to examine himself humbly and made the discovery that his congregation was justified by their request. So in prayer and fasting he sought the Lord for days in deep heart-searchings and overcomings. Shortly after he found another slip on his pulpit with these words, "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."