THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

From the New York Observer.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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MARCH 2.—Paul at Athens.—Acts 17: 22-34.

GOLDEN TEXT.—In him we move and live and have our being.—Acts.17 : 28

As there had been no safety for Paul at Thessalonica, so there was none at Berea. His persecutors at the former place pursued him to the latter. Powerless to protect him there, the brethren hastily sent him away. Their purpose was at first "to go as far as to the sea." But God had a purpose of his own to fulfil; and by some means those who conducted the Apostle were moved to bring him to Athens.

This celebrated city was not only the capital of Attica in Greece, but the intellectual capital of the world. It was the home of art and learning, of temples and statues, of poetry and philosophy. It was that one city in all the world where human wisdom and genius have done their best.

Paul was not brought hither by any personal ambition, or vain confidence in his own powers. Nor yet--finding himself here under divine guidance--was he in haste to begin his work. Being alone, for Luke had been left at Philippi and Silas and Timothy at Berea, he despatched a commandment to the two latter to "come to him with all speed, and set himself to wait for them.

But note here the difference between a thoroughly Christian spirit, full of that which actuated the Master himself, and that of, we might say, most of ourselves. The modern traveler "waiting at Athens," would think of the fine opportunity thus afforded of gratifying his taste and completing his education by seeing the sights; would give himself to the study of the temples and statues, so numerous and celebrated, as curious and pleasing products of human genius and skill. What Paul saw was a "city full of idols." It was this which stirred his spirit. Here God was neither honored nor known. Here none had heard of "Jesus and the resurrection," or believed in, or cared for, a judgment to come. So affected was Paul by what he saw that he could not wait for his companions in labor. Straightway he began to reason, not with the Jews in the synagogue only, but with all devout persons. and even in the market.

The gospel earnestly presented rarely fails to excite commotion. So it was at Athens. The Epicureans, the Atheists and Materialists of their day, and the Stoics, who believed in no hereafter or personal Moral Ruler, were particularly stirred by what they heard. But while some called him a 'babbler," and others a "setter forth of strange gods," all were curious to hear him further. For there is wonderful drawing power in the cross. Possibly, down in the hearts of some of these novelty hunters, there was a half-conscious hope that his words would prove bread to their hungry souls. So, for a better hearing, they brought him to Areopagus, or Mar's Hill. And what we have now before us is probably an outline only of even that part of his speech which he was permitted to utter. *As a wise as well as faithful teacher.*

1. *He begins by conciliating their favorable attention.*—He takes care not to put himself into antagonism with those he would convince and persuade. It is noteworthy that this was uniformly Paul's way, in his epistles as well as speeches. He here refers approvingly to the religious bent of his hearers.

The New Version makes him address his listeners as "somewhat superstitious," instead of "too superstitious," as in the old. But it is doubtful if even this conveys the true sense of the original. *Very religious* comes yet near to it. This was true of the Athenians. Their idols were everywhere. Petronius satirically said it was easier to find a god in Athens than a man. Every man has a religious nature. To this we may always appeal; and it is both just and wise to do this in a kind and winning way.

2. *He starts his argument from a truth his hearers are ready to concede.*—He reminds them that among the objects of their worship he had found an inscription to an *unknown god.* Thus they confessed that there might be a divinity of whom they had no knowledge. "It is this God," Paul says, "of whom I desire to speak to you." Here was courtesy, tact and conciliatory wisdom; and here also was a good starting point.

When Paul addressed the Jews he at once appealed to their Scriptures, for every Jew was ready to assent to the truth of these. It would have been folly to do this with the wise pagans of Athens. They neither knew nor cared for the Jewish Scriptures. So, we see the wisdom of always finding some truth to which our hearers will assent. We must get a standing place, and starting point, from which to proceed. Your listener believes in a God? Yes. Then, you can ask him if God has any rights, any claim, on us: if we have rendered what is his due. If we have not we are sinners. How, now, can a sinner be good? It is thus that we may approach those modern pagans, commonly called infidels.

3, *He shows them what sort of a being the true God is.*-- He is not like an idol which can be set up in a temple made with hands, which can be served with food and drink as their idols were, but the Maker and "Lord of heaven and earth." But if he made all, then all nations are subject to him; it is he who determines their times and appoints their bounds. All then depend upon him. All are alike accountable to him.

4. *He affirms the purpose of God in providential dealings with men.*--It is that they may be moved to seek and find him: "if haply they might seek after him and find him." He is near to us: in him we live and move, and have our being: we are his offspring; he is not a dumb, dead object like gold, or silver, or stone; he desires that we should know him and be in relation with him. So Paul tells these wise Athenians not only what is the noblest object of human search, but that is our fault, not God's, that we have not known him. Thus, without naming it, he brings home the idea of sin. To this great point he would lead them, as the first step towards salvation.

5. *He announces the condition of divine favor, the way to escape in the day of judgment.*--That condition and way is repentance. Hitherto God had not dealt strictly with men, but had left them to nature and their own consciences. So far as their transgressions had been sins of ignorance, he had overlooked them; it was as if he had not seen them. It is required of a man according to that which he hath; he that has less knowledge will be beaten with fewer stripes. But now light had come into the world, and men had no longer any cloak for their sin.

This does not mean that any had before been wholly without light, and altogether excusable. The voice of conscience had always accused men of sin, and called them to repentance. But now, to that inner voice God was adding his spoken word, and all the convincing light of the gospel of Christ. However it might have been with them before, without repentance they were now without hope.

It is to impress the need of haste to obey this command to repent, that the Apostle goes on to announce a day actually appointed when the world shall be judged; when each shall receive his righteous award. His allusion to the resurrection is perhaps to show that Christ, having power over the grave, has the power and right to judge; and is, perhaps, also to suggest that all the dead would come forth to receive their award.

6. *He gathers some fruit.*—What further promise and invitation Paul had to offer, these proud Athenians would not stay to hear. Nevertheless this partial gospel message was not without effect. While some mocked and others said, "we will hear thee again," a few, and among them one member of the Court of Areopagus, clave unto him and believed. We do not know that Paul ever visited Athens again. It was a glorious opportunity which they all had and the many spurned.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Of all men the Christian desiring to be useful should be courteous.

2. Very religious men may be far from God, and hard to reach with the gospel.

3. It is not by human wisdom that men find God; the best skilled in literature, philosophy and art may be ignorant of him.

4. Since all have one father we should esteem all as brethren.

5. Since our times and habitations are appointed of God we should study to be content.

6. That God is "not far from any one of us," is to the wicked a reason for alarm, and to the righteous a reason for rejoicing.

7. The greatest and wisest have need to repent; there is one lowly way of salvation for all.

8. The certainty of a judgment is a powerful reason for haste to be prepared for it. That it will be righteous cuts off hope for all who fail to take refuge in Christ.

9. The pride and satisfaction of human culture makes it hard to reach with any saving power. To it the gospel is foolishness. Nevertheless the gospel is God's power unto salvation and none can ever be saved who reject it.

10. There are differences in fields, but, we may hope for some fruit in the hardest.

Unearthing a Treasure Box.

Ellaville, Ga., Feb. 14.—While digging to-day on the plantation of Rev. John R. Respass, in Schley County, two negro boys unearthed a box containing $345 in gold and silver coin, and a Bank of England note for £50.

When General Wilson raided Georgia capturing Macon and Columbus toward the close of the war, many Southerners buried their treasures and money to evade confiscation. Among others John R. Respass, then of Schley County had $5000 in gold and silver coin, and Mrs. Respass buried it in different parts of the plantation. After the excitement was over they began to gather up the buried money, but failed to locate the box countaining about $500. Two years ago, Mr. Respass sold the place to J. M. Gay.

To-day, as his hands were going to work from dinner, one of them discovered at the root of an old stump in the field a $20 gold piece. The men continued their explorations and soon found a tin box the botton of which having rusted spilt the contents in the ground. They picked up fifteen $20 gold pieces, one $10 gold piece, four $1 gold pieces, one $5 gold piece, 102 twenty-five cent silver pieces, ten five cent silver pieces and four ten cent silver pieces, making a total of $316 gold and $26 40 silver.

In the meantime C. M Joiner and Jerry Hill returned home from Macon, where they had been carried by a United States officer on a charge of distilling whisky. The men gave bonds for their appearance, and hearing of the finding of the money, determind to secure it, claiming that it was their property and threatening the negroes with arrest unless it was immediately surrendered. The men frightened them sufficiently to secure possession of the treasure. Mr. Respass has now issued a warrant for the arrest of Joiner and Hill.

—Two elegant dressed ladies were shown to their seats in the parquette of the National theater at Washington the other evening, and when a gentleman with a stylish young woman came down the aisle, a few moments later, one of the elegantly dressed ladies went out to meet him, pounding him with her fist and pulling his hair. She shouted in great excitement that the gentleman was her husband who had carted that female around long enough. She had successfully laid in wait for him and took him home.—*Washington Post.*

It has been decided in the House Commitee on Commerce, by a vote of 14 to 1. that there should be remedial legislation of some kind for the regulation of inter-state commerce. Mr. O'Neill of Pennsylvania, cast the negative vote.

The hearing of the cotton men before the Ways and Means Committee, which was to have taken place to-morrow has been postponed until next Monday It is reported that Mr. Morrison is inclined to modify his bill so as to place iron and copper ores on the dutiable list.

The Grand Jury of Greensburg has found a true bill in the case of each person charged with being participants in the famous Murraysville riot. The charges are murder, assult with intent to kill, and aggravated assult and battery.

Darlington & Bro.' of West Chester, have received from Tennessee an invoice of 100 partridge, which will be distributed among Chester County sporting men for breeding purposes.

IN the *American Farmer* Mr. D. Carter, in giving an account of the growth of a tomato on a pile of slaked shell lime, states that it was four feet long and abounded with tomatoes. He was surprised at its growth and fruitfulness under the conditions, and considered it demonstrated that slaked shell lime was the fertilizer for that plant when heavily applied, it seeming to answer all purposes.

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Tillage vs. Manure.

A writer in the *National Live Stock Journal* once hauled twenty-four large loads of the best manure upon two acres of clay-loam land, had it well cultivated into the soil, which had been worked in the ordinary way, but was somewhat lumpy. This and the adjoining two acres were to be sown to corn for fodder. Upon the other two acres no manure was put, but it was ploughed and cultivated till the soil four inches deep was as fine as a garden bed. One and a half bushels of corn were drilled per acre upon each piece, drills sixteen inches apart. When this corn was in blossom and ready to cut, the unmanured two acres stood eighteen inches higher than the manured piece. On selecting two sample rods in different places upon each piece, cutting the green corn and carefully weighing it, the manured piece gave 275 pounds per rod, and the unmanured, but finely pulverized, gave 350 pounds per rod —the manured giving twenty-two tons per acre, and the other twenty-eight tons per acre. The cost of extra working was $2 50 per acre.

The plain moral of this story is that thorough tillage pays. One great difference between garden land and ordinary ploughed land is that the soil of one is made fine so that the rootlets of the plant can work through it easily and find food which is no locked up in impenetrable lumps. But there is nothing in the experiment to discourage any one from using fertilizers. No doubt the two acres of half-tilled and lumpy land yeilded much better for the manure. But neither is there any doubt that thorough tillage with the manure would have paid better than either one alone. Both are indispensable to the highest success.

SPRING PROTECTION.—There is a great deal said about winter protection of strawberry and other plants, while the importance of spring protection is barely considered. During the severest part of winter, when snow covers the land and the soil remains frozen for some months in succession, there is little danger for the plants. The critical period comes towards the end of February and in March, when the increasing warmth of the sun's rays thaws the ground in daytime to freeze again during the night following.

THE EYES OF POTATOES.—A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* writes: "A potato has three crops in itself—an early, a middle and a late one. The cluster of eyes at one end will ripen one to two weeks earlier than the central eyes. The two or three eyes immediately surrounding the root end should in all cases be discarded in growing for home use or for market. They produce mostly small potatoes, and if large they are watery and soft. My usual method is to set one man to cut off the root end, and another to cut off the 'eye end', thus forming three heaps. The root end heap goes to the hogs. My great trouble is to get them cut close. All the waste flesh goes into heaps for cattle or hog feed.

PRUNING OLD TREES.—The best way is, first, to cut out all the dead limbs, leaving no stubs, but smooth surfaces on the main stem or branches, avoiding any larger cut surfaces than practicable. If this treatment does not leave the tree in good shape, or if some branches are too long, and the tops are not symmetrical, cut back the long branches to a fork, so that there may be no projecting stubs, and so that the shorter of the two branches at the fork shall remain. This work, if carefully performed, will enable you to bring all the limbs into a proper length to make good tops. This work may be done late in winter or early spring, but never while the trees are growing or are loaded with foliage. Then cover all the wounds with paint, grafting-wax, or other substance or composition to make a water-tight coating. If in addition to this treatment, the whole surface of the ground could be covered with old straw as a mulch, and a light top-dressing of coarse manure could be applied, the trees would probably renew their vigor. It should always be borne in mind, in pruning any old trees, to reserve the young and vigorous shoots, and remove the old and feeble ones, whenever a choice is to be made between them.

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