

PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

REV. DR. COURT ON THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR JULY 9.

The Persecution of Paul and Silas Because They Cast a Demon Out of an Insane Girl—The Prisoners Rejoicing and the Great Earthquake.

Golden Text: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts xvi, 31). Lesson: Acts xvi, 19-34.

After Lydia's conversion the missionaries used to go to the synagogue or place of prayer at regular intervals. A demon-possessed girl shouted after them as they walked several days. Paul at last ordered the demon to come out of the girl in virtue of the name of Jesus. This girl's owners became enraged against Paul for exorcising the evil spirit. She was a fortune teller, using the art of ventriloquism to deceive and make large gains for her owners, the loss of which ended them to accuse Paul.

I.—THE MISSIONARIES IN PRISON. (Verses 19-24).

1. The occasion of Paul's imprisonment. (a) The miracle dried up the ill-gotten gains of the poor, demon-veiled slave girl. No compassion for her sufferers, no joy for her deliverance, but the owners, the hard hearts of those covetous owners. A human soul's degradation was nothing to them. They made money by it, and therefore they were enraged at the stopping of the supplies. How mean to take the ravings of a poor insane girl for prophecies in order to make money by them! (b) These owners seized Paul and Silas, leaving Luke and Timothy, as less prominent, untouched. They dragged the missionaries into the "agora," (forum or market place, where the magistrates were accustomed to hold court and try cases. This is the first persecution stirred by the gentiles that has been reported to us. The rulers are here called "the archons." Then we read that they were brought before the "strategoi"—the pretors. Until lately commentators used to think these two names designated the same persons. Meyer, however, says that the archons were "the city judges," but "the strategoi" were the Roman pretors—the duumviri, two Roman magistrates, who were to take cognizance of all offenses against Roman law and authority. Hence the form of the accusation. Craftily the real cause of their enmity to Paul is concealed, for they knew that no law was available to punish a man for curing a suffering creature. Besides their calling us shaven men, mean, contemptible, base, if not illegal. Hence they profess great regard for Roman authority and seek to stir up anti-Semitic spite, just as might be done in Russia today. (c) The charge was a false one. Conybeare and Howson thus express the charge: "These men are throwing the whole city into confusion. Moreover, they are Jews, and they are attempting to introduce new religious observances, which we, being Roman citizens, cannot legally receive or adopt." 1. This was false in part, for the missionaries were not exciting any disturbance. 2. Yet Roman law and usage were against innovation in religious matters. The Jews, as the Romans came down with all their power on the devoted Christians. Citizens were beheaded, and others were thrown to the wild beasts. 3. The accusation that the missionaries were Jews had at that time great force. No people were so much hated and despised. Shortly before this they had been expelled from Rome. Philip, as a colony of Rome, would imitate the mother city. Upon the whole, the indictment was craftily got up.

II.—THE JAILER CONVERTED. (Verses 25-34).

1. The momentous question. (a) Instantly the jailer calls for lights, probably awaking his assistants for that purpose. The plural is used in the Greek. (b) Terror-stricken, he comes to Paul and falls at his feet, and he tells him the story of his "masters." (c) He asks what he must do to be saved—to be on God's side like Paul and Silas.

2. The gospel taught. (a) Paul's word is, "Believe on Jesus Christ"—trust Him. (b) He will save those from all their sins, from all their fears. The promise includes all the household of the jailer. (c) Paul teaches them the word of the Lord—explaining the gospel.

3. Results. (a) The jailer becomes kind, washing the bleeding backs of the prisoners. (b) Then he and all his folks are baptized and become Christians. (c) Finally he feeds the missionary servants as his "masters." All is joy in the jailer's house—the joy of salvation—which doubtless Paul and Silas shared.

RELIGIOUS BRIEFS.

The new bishop of Massachusetts is Right Rev. William Lawrence, S. T. D., of Cambridge. He is 43 years of age and comes of one of the best known families in the old Bay State. In 1888 Rev. Mr. Lawrence was made preacher at Harvard college and occupied that important post over four years and until his recent election to the high office he now holds.

Bishop Lawrence is handsome, eloquent, learned and well equipped with brains. He succeeds the late Phillips Brooks as bishop.

Thomas Spurgeon telegraphed that he would supply his late father's pulpit for 12 months from July next, quoting 11 Cor. iii.

An aged pastor may contrive to keep very young in heart and spirit. Such a one is the Rev. J. de Kewer Williams of Hackney, London, now 76 years old, as fresh and vigorous a figure as any in any Congregationalist pulpit in England. He is full of fun and wisdom, preaches every Sunday, minds every duty and is loved by all.

Lately at a public dinner in Hackney, where there were three men with "six" before their names, he described Hackney "as the most benighted borough in England."

That very distinguished Greek scholar, Edmund Law Lushington, brother-in-law of Lord Tennyson, professor in Glasgow university since 1838, and mentioned in "In Memoriam," is dying at 83 years old.

The Presbyterian Journal speaks of the "admirable" exposition of the Sabbath school lessons" by the Rev. Dr. Robert Court of Lowell—a graceful compliment gratefully received.

The Episcopalian Hymnal gets an appreciative review from Professor R. E. Thompson in the Sunday School Times. He calls "hymnal" a word "both modern and mongrel." Of Bonar's productions seven are taken, and of Edward Caswall's, the Jewish father, nine are selected. Dr. Thompson corrects some of the particulars as to authorship and date somewhat inaccurately.

The real estate owned by the churches in Boston amounts in value to nearly \$15,000,000.

From returns of last communion the accessions in the Congregationalist it seems as if the genteler churches had the fewer converts.

The archbishop of Canterbury did what was the only thing consistent with his place as a Christian man—refuse to put Christi- anity as represented by him or the church into competition with other forms of religion at Chicago. Christianity takes no second place and tolerates no rival while resting all on its spiritual claims.

It is queer to see Christian professors of Biblical theology quoting the antiscipularists Kuenen and Wellhausen as highest authorities on the Old Testament than Jesus or Paul. It is queer still to see men say in print that to depreciate the authority of Jesus and Paul increases their spiritual value!

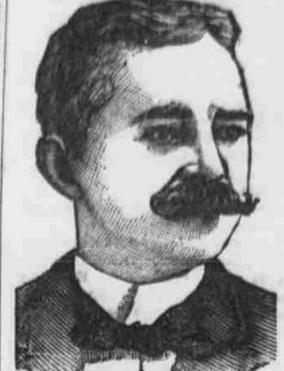
The Marble Collegiate church on Fifth avenue, New York, was but thinly attended two years ago. It is now crowded. There are no evening classes, no soup kitchens, no entertainments to raise money. The associate pastor writes 90 letters every Saturday and leaves 2,000 calendars for the guests. The preaching is orthodox, and personal invitation and a warm welcome do the rest. The church is richly endowed. It is catching the rich and well to do. The business method of soliciting customers succeeds.

St. Bartholomew's church (Episcopal), New York, has raised for expenses and charities in 4 1/2 years the sum of \$1,985,000.

Mrs. Sattell has cast her shield over the married Greek priests in communion with Rome. When will Irish or American priests enjoy like privileges?

The Salvation Army has 1,436 officers at work in the United States.

An Italian R. C. church in New York has 25,000 communicants. Another has 15,000 and has every Sunday 7,500 worshippers at six services.



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BREVETTES.

Carter Barker of Wisconsin has bought Homestead, 2:14, for \$2,200. Homestead won several races for Salisbury last year.

Geers thinks Nightingale has a good chance in Buffalo's \$50,000 race for all, and he has stronger hopes for Hal Point- er in the \$10,000 race.

The appraisers of the estate of the late W. S. Hobart valued his trotting stock at \$180,550, but under the hammer of Peter C. Kellogg it fetched \$198,395.

The spring trotting meeting at Vienna closed with a cab race, which was won by a double team, which trotted two miles and half a furlong to the cab in 6:23—about a 3-minute gain.

Josh Billings used to say that the precocious boy never amounted to anything else, and there are some breeders and trainers who are beginning to think the remark will apply as well to precocious colts.

Cricket, 2:10, by Steinway, is with foal to Sidney. The produce should be a pacer, but a horseman suggests that it will have too much speed to pace and will trot simply to keep from "tearing itself to pieces."

Leo Mantle, who was recently elected senator from Montana, is a well known breeder in that state. He owns a number of trotters—Ilton, 2:28 1/2; Evening Star, 2:29, and Dan Tucker, 2:29, being among the number.

A. H. Moore proposes to encourage the training of the get of Director. He offers to give \$500 each to the owners of horses eligible to the 3:00 class that win the most races and the greatest amount of purses respectively.

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