MORE GOOD MEN AND WOMEN

The Creation is Longing to See the Manifestation of the Sons of God.

For all creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched neck, is waiting and longing to see the manifestation of the sons of God.—Romans viii. 19. (New Testament in modern speech.)

More good men and women—for this the creation, gazing eagerly as if with outstretched neck, waits and longs. This is the energy of all moral effort—a steady supply of good men and good women. This is the steam which makes the engine move.

In proportion to the extraordinary increase of our resources are we doing the good in the world that we ought to do? I doubt it. Stephen, John Ruskin once remarked, did not get bishop's pay for his long sermon to the Pharisees; he only got stones. Paul had no cathedral called by his name from which to preach his gospel to the Roman world. When Augustine and his noble monks landed at Ebbsfleet and met the English king between there and Canterbury there was no missionary society and missionary press behind him. It seems to me that we ought to do vastly more with our numbers and wealth than men did

WHO WERE FEW AND POOR.

We leave the work to the machinery when we ought to do it ourselves. All your machinery needs intelligent people to work it. Yet we still go on discussing "methods" of church work or Sunday school work or something else; and the underlying assumption is that there is one particular specific, all but infallible, "method" which, if we could only discover it, would do the work itself.

This is preposterous. There are just as many methods as there are men and women. There are as many good methods as there are good men and women and as many bad methods as there are idle and worthless people. The great society meets, elects an influential committee, the influential committee meets, elects an able executive; the able executive meets, carries pious resolutions, plans great schemes, goes home comfortably to dinner, lives happily ever afterwards and leaves two or three people to do the work. This world would be a better place to live in if the people who carry resolutions would go forth to carry them out and when they have planned the work do it and say nothing about it.

They are not valuable; they are dangerous, harmful, destructive, if they change the emphasis from the inner to the outward life.

IMPROVED METHODS ARE GOOD,

but improved men and women are better, and the soul of improvement is the improvement of the soul. Are you a better man to-day, kinder to those about you, fairer to opponents in controversy, more just to rivals in business, more anxious to render obedience to all the claims of good citizenship, more willing to go out to your way, take trouble, make sacrifices to help your church, to help good movements and to help your fellows? If not, something is lacking, some divine electric spark which might kindle in your heart the glory of the Lord.

The machinery cannot be worked without good men and women, so we have seen. But this also is true: The entire object of the machinery is to produce more good men and women. All preaching, all praying, all worship comes to this, Churches, organizations, theologies are everlastingly valuable if they help us to keep our hands clean and our hearts pure, if they assist us to do justly and love mercy and walk humbly before all that we can know or think of God.

Rev. Charles F. Aked, D. D.

THE S. S. LESSON

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, APRIL 18.

Lesson III. The Conversion of Saul. Acts 9: 1.30. Golden Text, Acts 9: 4.

I. What Paul Was Converted from.—Verses 1, 2. Why does the account of Saul's persecuting begin with "but" ("and" in authorized version)? To contrast it with the propagating work of Philip, just described. And why is yet used? It goes back to the mad zeal of Saul against the Christians at the time of Stephen's death (Acts 8: 3). That same threatenings and slaughter continued. Paul himself (Acts 26: 9-11) paints a vivid picture of this persecution, which evidently involved the death of more than Stephen, and which followed the fleeing disciples far beyond Jerusalem and even Palestine.

II. How Paul was Converted.—Verses 3-7. How was Paul journeying? Perhaps on horseback, as usually represented by painters; or on a camel, according to Canan Cook; on an ass or mule, according to Felten. After a journey of five or six days, he was near Damascus, perhaps within sight of the beautiful city.

What wonder stopped him in the way? It was about noon Acts 22: (6), and the Eastern noon is exceedingly bright; nevertheless, there fell about Saul a light from heaven that was brighter than the sun (Acts 26: 13), and in the midst of it he saw the glorified figure of Jesus (vs. 17-27).

III. What Paul was Converted to.—Vs. 8-30. At least five results of Paul's conversion are indicated in these verses, which may best be studied from this point of view.

1. Converted to Lowliness (vs. 8, 9). How is that shown? By what immediately followed. The company with aul, in spite of their amazement, arose and stood (v. 7, before he did. Paul's eyes had been closed, and when he opened the lids, he perceived to his horror that he was blind.

What was the outward sign of this new lowliness? That he was led by the hand, and thus brought . . . into Damascus. What a contrast to the entrance he had planned!

How did he spend the next three days? In helpless blindness, so absorbed by his new situation that he could neither eat nor drink.

What did his new situation involve? If he yielded to what he now clearly saw was the truth, and proclaimed himself a Christian it meant the loss of his former influence and power, the surrender of his ambitions and hopes, the giving up of his family and his wealth, becoming a despised outcast, himself subject to the same perils and persecutions that he had been inflicting and knew all to well. On the other hand, the radiant vision he had seen commanded his allegiance. It was a promise of ultimate victory. He would only be leaving the losing side. And Christ himself had promised him (Acts 26: 16-18) a notable part in the conquest of the world to Christianity, that he, blind as he was, should "open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." It was a terrible three-days struggle.

2. Converted to Christian Testimony (vs. 10-15, 20). What disciple was sent to help Saul? His name was Ananias. It is good to have some one to redeem that name. Paul afterwards (Acts 22: 12) said of him that he was a devout man, held in high honor by all the Jews of Damascus, in spite of his Christian profession. Moreover he was learned in the law—precisely the man that could appeal to Paul.

3. Converted to Sufferings (vs. 16, 23-25, 29, 30). What very strange motive for following him did Christ present to Saul? That he was to suffer many things for the sake of Christ (v. 16). These sufferings began at once, in separation from his family, isolation from his friends, the entire recasting of his life. It is to this period (the "many days" of v. 23) that we must assign the retirement into Arabia mentioned in Gal. 1: 17, 18, which lasted three years — at least one full year and parts of two others.

4. Converted to the Divine Indwelling (vs. 17-19). How did Ananias obey the vision? By finding Saul, laying his hands on him, calling him Brother Saul in token of his admission into the Christian brotherhood, and telling him that the same Jesus that had appeared in the way to him had sent himself, that Saul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Two great gifts—the greatest in the physical and the spiritual realms.

IV. Have we Experienced This Great Transformation? — That is the question for us as we close this lesson.

"Conversion" means "turning." It implies turning from something, and to something else. Paul, as we have seen, turned (1) from pride (intellectual and spiritual) to lowliness, a humble following of Jesus and co-operation with other Christians; (2) from violent opposition to Christ, to the boldest and most persistent testimony for Christ; (3) from a life of authority and ease, to a life of persecution and suffering; (4) from the emptiness of worldly wisdom, to the unfailing guidance of the Holy Spirit; (5) from the weakness of worldly power, to the invincible strength of the Spirit. Such a turning is made by every true convert.

There are 150 firemen on some of the larger Atlantic steamers.

It is estimated that the Kaffirs steal $1,250,000 worth of diamonds every year from the Kimberley diamond mines.

MOST HATED PUNISHMENT

THE WHEEL-HOUSE, A CRUEL DEVICE FOR PRISONERS.

Little Meat is Provided—Bread, Porridge and Potatoes are the Staples.

Eight ounces of bread and a pint of gruel for breakfast and supper, bread and suet pudding or potatoes for dinner, not one morsel of meat for seven days—that is how a convict begins a sentence of hard labor. During his second week he tastes meat but twice, on Mondays and Fridays, and then only three ounces at a time, says an English paper.

Even after four months, when long-sentence hard-labor men are at last put upon full diet, there is still meats but twice a week, and of that four ounces only each time. The rest of the diet is bread, porridge, potatoes, suet pudding, and on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays a pint of soup.

THE AWFUL WHEEL-HOUSE

is the fate of the hard labor man. The "house" has four wheels, each wheel divided into compartments, so that no convict can talk to or communicate with his neighbor. Fifteen minutes on and five minutes off is the unbending rule. It is cruelly hard toil for then novice, climbing this endless staircase.

Try walking upstairs for a quarter of an hour without stopping, and see how you feel at the end or it. Try it again after a brief five minutes' rest and then a third and fourth time. Try it after breakfast of half a pound of whole meal bread and a pint of sticky gruel. There is no possibility of rest, for if the foot remains an instant too long upon the step it moves away and the next step scrapes the skin from the shin. Small wonder that "two years' hard" is a sentence which the most hardened crimial looks on with dread.

As a matter of fact almost any of them prefer five years' penal servitude to two of hard labor. The food of a convict undergoing penal servitude is hardly luxurious, but it is better than that in hard labor prisons. Breakfast consists of the usual pint of gruel and half-pound of bread. But the gruel is better than the hard labor skilly. It contains two ounces of oatmeal and half an ounce of molasses.

There is meat on three days a week—beef twice, mutton once—five ounces each time, and it is boiled with onions and vegetables. A pound of potatoes is the dinner allowance.

THE SOUP IS GOOD,

being made of beef, pearl barley and onions. There is cocoa for supper, of the very same quality as that which is served to the navy.

The whole meal bread is well made, and of full weight. Small wonder that on this diet men frequently regain lost health, and the death rate is only ten per thousand—less than half that of the healthiest towns in the country.

The work is not the hopeless toil of the treadwheel. Men are put to trades—tailoring and shoemaking principally. Many at Portland and Dartmoor work in the open air. Then there are various privileges, and even money, to be gained by good behavior and hard work.

A convict on arriving is placed in the probationary class. He can earn eight marks a day. If he has 720 marks at the end of his first year he gets into the third class. He then has black facings on sleeves and collar, he may write and receive one letter in six months, and receive one visit of twenty-one minutes in the same period. He is also able to earn a gratuity of one shilling a month.

If at the end of the second year he has succeeded in earning 2,290 marks, he passes into the second class, distinguished by yellow facings. He may now send and get one letter every four months, and receive three visits during the year. Another 2,920 marks, and he passes to the first class,

IN BLUE-FACED DRESS.

A letter may now reach him once in three months. He may look forward to a forty minutes' visit once in the same time.

A year before a penal servitude prisoners' discharge he may pass into the special class, with all-blue uniform, tea instead of cocoa, and—greatest treat of all—roast instead of boiled beef. Many men say that the everlasting diet of boiled meat is one of the worst parts of their punishment. The craving for a chop or a sausage becomes simply terrible, and lasts long after the desire for tobacco has vanished.

Penal servitude convicts may also gain considerable remission of their sentences by good conduct and hard work. Hard work pays in every way, for a clever, handy man may get the greatest coveted job of cook or cleaner, or even of gardener, which is the biggest prize of all.

The governor of a prison has, of course, power to punish refractory prisoners. The punishment which even the toughest convict dreads is a "bashing." Thirty-six lashes may be given, and few men can keep consciousness beyond twenty-four. The punishment over, the man is wrapped in a blanket soaked with salt water, and taken to the hospital.

The birch is used as well as the cat, and almost equally feared. Next to a thrashing, the cells are the most dreaded punishment within a punishment. The man sentenced to solitary confinement is put on a diet of

BREAD, WATER AND GRUEL.

If he is noisy he is shut up in a noise-proof cell, which is almost dark.

Third in the list of severe punishment comes the wearing of irons. In these a man must eat, sleep and work, and even bathe, perhaps, for six months on end. These punishments are wonderfully rarely necessary. The dread of being degraded from his class to the one below it is the best weapon against the convict in the hands of authorities. No prisoner cares to risk this, or run the chance of losing any remission of sentence.

It may be news to some that, though the diet is everywhere the same by law, yet there is much choice in the matter of prisons. Wormwood Scrubs seems the favorite, for there, they say, a man can live without being hungry. But Portland and Princetown none like, particularly the former. The keen sea air gives the convicts an appetite which their food is never sufficient to entirely satisfy, especially as the work there is perhaps the heaviest of any that is done by convicts.

FOUND AT LAST.

A Poor Cobbler Who was Perfectly Content.

Charles Frohman, the theatrical man, talked the other day about contentment.

"I don't work for money," he said. "The hardest workers never work for money. When did money bring content?

"You know the story of a satrap and the Persian physician? A certain young and profligate satrap, exhausted alike in body and in mind, sent for a famous Persian physician and said:—

"'I have squandered my youth in riotous living. My frame is enfeebled like an old man's, and my mind disordered with remorse and horror. Can you help me?'

"The Persian physician, looking gravely at the pale satrap, answered:—

"'You have but one hope. Go forth and find, if there be such, a perfectly contented man. Persuade this man to exchange shirts with you, and you will straightway be strong and happy again.'

"The satrap set out upon his search. He travelled many months in vain. But at last he heard of a cobbler who was said to be absolutely contented.

"The satrap came at last to the cobbler's door. The house was but a hovel, and on a board before it the cobbler lay asleep. Awaking him, the satrap asked if it were true that he was quite contented, and the cobbler, with a laugh, declared that it was

"'Then,' said the satrap, 'I have a boon to ask at your hands. It is that you will exchange shirts with me. For thus, a wise physician has said, I may become strong and contented also.'

"But the cobbler shook his head.

"'Most cheerfully would I grant your request, young man,' he began, 'but——'

"'Nay, nay, deny me not,' the satrap cried. 'I will pay you any sum that you may name.'

"'I seek not your gold, youth,' said the cobbler, 'but—but——'

"'But what?'

"'The truth is, I have no shirt.'"

WHAT IS THE NEXT STOP?

In New Zealand an automatic device has just been patented for telling railway passengers the name of the next station. The names of the various stations are printed on a roll, which is rotated by toothed wheels. A "tripper" is placed, either on the track or by its side, between each station, and this is so adjusted as to strike a lever on the passenger car. The motion is communicated to the toothed wheels governing the roll bearing the station names, and the ringing of an automatic bell announces to the passengers the fact that the name of the next station is on view.

CANTON FULL OF ROBBERS.

Canton, China, at present is full of robbers. It is said that in some parts the people are really afraid to go to rest at night, inasmuch as it is certain that thieves will enter and rob the place. Accordingly some one sits up, while others sleep. The following is a queer criticism of China's police by a correspondent: "We have a police force, whose work consists mostly in sleeping at post or helping the nearest shopkeeper to chop wood or a neighboring blacksmith to blow his fire."

Teacher—"If you are kind and polite to your playmates, what will be the result?" Scholar—"They'll think they can lick me!"

WORTH KNOWING.

A Few Items of Fact That Should Interest You.

The cotton factories in Lancashire spin enough thread in six seconds to go round the world.

A cave has lately been discovered in New Zealand which is larger even than the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

Germany's colonies are five times as big as herself, those of France eighteen times, and Britain's ninety-seven times.

At the Strozzi palace in Rome there is a book made of marble, the leaves being of marvellous thinness.

In Persia there are no distilleries, breweries, or public-houses, and native wine is the only intoxicating beverage used.

When a dentist in China is extracting a tooth for a patron, an assistant pounds on a gong to drown the cries of the patient.

The same force which moves one ton on a smooth high-road will move eight tons on a railway or thirty-two tons on a canal.

Aeronauts have noticed that the barking of a dog is the last sound they hear from earth, being sometimes then at an elevation of four miles.

A pigeon used by a Manchester firm of mill-owners to carry messages from one mill to another has saved the firm $1,145 in telegrams during the past ten years.

A bridal wreath in England is usually composed of orange blossoms. Germany uses myrtle, Italy white roses, Spain red roses, Greece vine-leaves, and Bohemia rosemary.

Three hundred Berlin streets are planted with 14,000 trees, which are said to represent a value of nearly $200,000. About 1,000 gardeners and assistants are employed to take care of them.

A public notice to the following effect was recently placarded at Thirlstane, Tasmania: "I, Sarah Fitzpatrick, if not claimed by Francis Fitzpatrick in fourteen days, will be married again.—Sarah Fitzpatrick."

In Abyssinia it is the law that the murderer be turned over to the relatives of the dead person, and they, if they please, may put him to death in the same manner in which the murdered person was killed.

A naturalist asserts that if the earth were birdless man could not inhabit it for more than nine years. All the sprays and poisons in the world would be quite inadequate to keep down the insects, which would eat up everything.

A fox can scent a man half a mile away if the wind be blowing in the animal's direction. A mouse can smell cheese 50 feet away. A deer may be sound asleep and yet he will catch the scent of a person passing 200 feet off.

A poulterer in the Rue Montmartre, Paris, who makes a specialty of game of all kinds, is selling a dromedary and two kangaroos. He expects, he says, to see camel cutlets and kangaroo steaks as items on the bill of fare of every restaurant in Paris.

New York is to have another "skyscraper," with towers which have forty-six and forty-seven storeys respectively. The building will have a tower of sixty-two storeys with a main building of thirty-four storeys, and it will be over 900 feet high. This is easily a record.

In one of the excavated cemeteries in Egypt the bodies of many pet dogs have been found. One of the animals had ivory bracelets round its legs, while several had collars of twisted leather, one with a leather lead attached. The teeth of many of the dogs were in a noticeably bad condition, the result of idleness and unhealthy luxury.

A man named Robert, who was turned out of his house on the outskirts of Paris in October, has camped out with his family under a bridge, and has placed the municipality in a quandary. The prefect of the department has even offered him a house, but Robert says no. He cannot be arrested for vagrancy, because he neither begs nor moves from his position.

SPECTACLES FOR HORSES.

Used When Young, They Produce High-Steppers.

The business of one well known firm of opticians in England consists largely in the manufacture of spectacles to promote high stepping. They are made of stiff leather, entirely closing the eyes of the horse, and the glasses used are deep concave and large in size. The ground seems to the horse to be raised and he steps high, thinking he is going uphill or has to step over some obstacle. This system of spectacle is generally adopted while the horse is young, and its effect on his step and action is said to be remarkable. It has been discovered that the cause of a horse's shying is as a rule short sight, and it is now suggested that the sight of all horses should be tested, like that of children.

In Abyssinia, the wife is master. The house and its belogings are hers, and, if her husband offends her, she can turn him out.

STILL TO BE EXPLAINED

MANY AREAS OF THE WORLD ARE UNDISCOVERED.

The Tread of the Pioneer is Still Waited on Nearly all the Continents.

Few people probably realize the great areas on nearly all the continents which still await the tread of the pioneer. That there still remains plenty of scope for research on the face of the globe is brought vividly to the mind by a long and interesting survey of new and projected exploring expeditions printed in the London Times.

SOUTH-EAST ARABIA.

South-eastern Arabia is one of the regions which await the pioneer. Here, embraced within a line drawn north from Aden to Nejd and another eastward to the peninsula called El Katr, is an area of some 400,000 square miles. It is largely occupied by the Roba el Khali, the "Dwelling of the Void," probably the most forbidding desert on the face of the earth. The southern border has been explored, but the desert itself has been untrodden except perhaps by hurrying Bedouins. Now G. W. Bury, an experienced Arabian traveller, proposes to make an extensive expedition into the unknown interior, examining ruins and buried cities on his way.

IN TIBET.

In Tibet, Dr. Stein will follow Dr. Sven Hedin. "While the main object—the search for the treasures that have been buried for centuries under the ever encroaching sand—is archaelogical, he regards geographical exploration as of first importance."

Another problem is "that of the unknown stretch of the Lower Brahmaputra, which flows for 100 miles or more through the country of the intractable Abors." An adventurous Englishman, taking his life in his hands, is now on his way through Assam bent upon solving this problem. It is only a few days ago that Mr. Brooke, who was making for the same district from a different direction, was murdered on the Tibet-Chinese border.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT.

Several African expeditions are planned, some of considerable magnitude, but, as the writer in the Times remarks, "one might walk over any part of Africa now without meeting with adventures, unless, indeed, one provoked them." But Mr. Virscher will make another attempt to reach the Tibesti highlands, the practically unexplored mountain range which runs for some 700 miles north-west from Dar Fur into the heart of the Sahara.

WORK IN SOUTH AMERICA.

More pioneer work perhaps remains to be done in South America than in any other continent, for here "probably some 2,000,000 square miles are still unexplored." But after all "it is around the Polar regions more than elsewhere that popular curiosity still hovers, since these are still surrounded with a veil of mystery."

In the south Polar area Lieut. Shackleton's expedition is still at work. What he has accomplished cannot be known until March or April, when it is hoped that the Nimrod will return to New Zealand, either with the expedition on board, or with the information that Shackleton has decided to continue his work for another year. Meanwhile Dr. Charcot in the Pourquoi Pass has begun his enterprise on the Graham Land side of the Antarctic.

ROYAL EDITORIAL OFFICES.

His Majesty is a Great Newspaper Reader.

Most people are aware of the multitudinous duties of King Edward, but it is not generally known that there is a department in each of the Royal residences which approximates to the newsroom of the daily paper. Here newspaper items from the great journals of the world are "cut" by newspaper men, say, for reports of news dealing with the higher spheres of politics, foreign affairs, and a myriad other topics, alike of interest to the King and his responsible advisers.

His Majesty is a keen man of affairs, and probably the best-informed monarch in the world. Even when on a special journey, his newspapers are set out on the table in his saloon carriage for his perusal, and the morning news finds no more omnivorous reader.

In the Royal work-rooms cuttings and references are carefully preserved in special books, and indexed for future references. King Edward's editorial offices, as we may call them, are the best organized of all, though those of the Kaiser, at Potsdam, run them very close.

Now-a-days, however, every Court has an intelligence department attached, and its multifarious duties provide plenty of work for Royal messengers and other members of the confidential staffs.