Sunday School Lesson

December 2. Lesson IX, Paul Before His Judges—Acts 24: 24-27; 26: 19-29. Golden Text—I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. —Acts 26: 19.

ANALYSIS.

I. THE TRIAL BEFORE FELIX, 24: 24-28.
II. THE TRIAL BEFORE AGRIPPA, 26: 19-29.

INTRODUCTION—The arrest at Jerusalem had far-reaching consequences. The story in Acts tells of the different speeches which Paul made in his defence, after the long imprisonment which he endured at Caesarea. It is probable that he had a considerable amount of freedom when there; but, nevertheless, he must have often chafed against these limits placed upon his activity. Luke was his companion during part of this time and they, no doubt, often discussed the fundamentals of their belief, and, perhaps, Luke was already gathering material for his literary works. Some place the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians in this period of Paul's life, but most prefer to assign them to the later imprisonment at Rome. But we may be sure that this time was not wasted, and Paul would penetrate more and more deeply into the mysteries of the gospel of Christ.

I. THE TRIAL BEFORE FELIX, 24: 24-28.

V. 24. Felix, Procurator of Judæa and Samaria, had a strange career. Originally a Greek slave, he had obtained freedom through the influence of the mother of Claudius, the Emperor, and he was the first freed man who had held such an office in the Empire. The Roman historian, Tacitus, says of him that, "With all manner of cruelty and lust he exercised the power of a king in the temper of a slave." Felix had married thrice and his present wife was a Jewess, who naturally would be anxious to see and hear one whose character had been so much discussed.

V. 25. It is possible that Felix had taken some personal interest in the movement which was so directly associated with the religious life of his wife's people, but Paul saw that such interest was very superficial, and that the real weakness of his judge lay in his character. It is suggestive that he makes no mention of Christ, as was the usual case in his sermons, but he reasons of righteouness, temperance and judgment to come. The message had so powerful an effect upon Felix that he had to bid Paul cease from his preaching till another opportunity might arise.

V. 26. Here a further light is cast upon the character of Felix. It was no unusual thing for prisoners to bribe their judges, and Felix hoped that this strange man might have some special source of revenue.

V. 27. Probably in A.D. 59, Porcius Festus took the place of Felix. Evidently there was no just cause why Paul should not be released, except that it might cause unpleasantness among the Jewish authorities. Festus is not well known to us from secular history, but evidently he had a better sense of justice than his predecessor. His lot, however, was not an easy one. Shortly after his arrival at Cæsarea he went up to Jerusalem, and was at once urged by the Jews to bring Paul for trial. He was suddenly recalled to Cæsarea because of the visit of Agrippa, but he determined to attend to this case, and, on the day after his return, he takes up the matter of Paul's trial and suggests that Paul should consent to go up to Jerusalem. "Wilt thou go to Jerusalem and stand for your trial before me?" Now Roman citizens were not compelled to take such a trial, and Paul is indignant over their subterfuges, and he takes a step that was to prove so important in his life, which was to bring him to Rome. He appeals to Cæsar. Luke makes it clear that Paul was forced to this action only as a last resort.

II. THE TRIAL BEFORE AGRIPPA, 26: 19-29.

V. 19. This is the most ceremonious of all the trials which Paul endured. The pageantry of the state adds to its impressiveness. King Agrippa was the great grandson of Herod the Great and had early won the favor of the Emperor of Rome, who had made him ruler of the northern parts of Palestine. "Clever, indolent and dissolute, he pursued a pro-Roman policy all through the Jewish rebellion of A.D. 66-70, and lived at Rome for nearly thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem." Agrippa had for a long time desired to see and hear Paul, and he and his sister gladly embrace this opportunity.

V. 20. Paul gives a third narrative of his conversion, telling of the heavenly vision that came to him on his way, by which he was appointed to be the herald of the gospel to the Gentiles. He sums up the Christian life in three stages: (1) repentance (2) turning to God (3) a new life.

V. 23. He lays stress upon two of the great doctrines of the Christian religion, which had a very prominent place in Paul's preaching, and which he found predicted in the Old Testament, namely, the crucifixion and the resurrection.

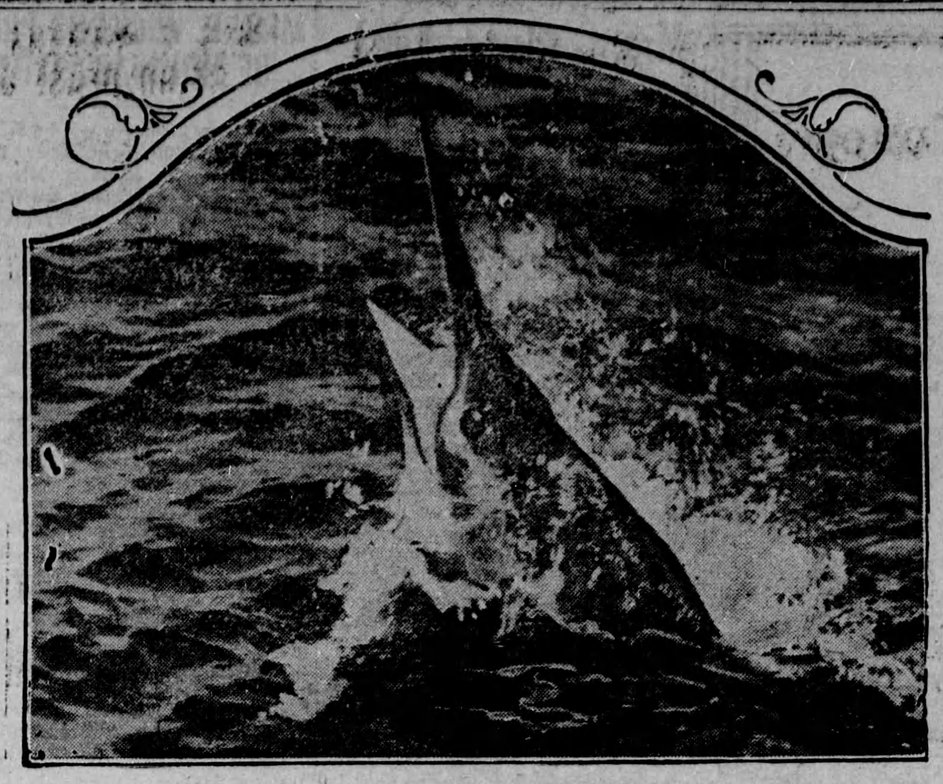
V. 24. Festus, with his Roman upbringing, could not understand the enthusiasm and spiritual insight of this strange prisoner and he fears that his mind has been unhinged by much reading and solitude.

V 25. In calm, courteous, but decided langueg Paul lays aside this charge and appeals to King Agrippa to testify to the fact that the whole country has heard of the fame of this movement.

V. 27. Paul knows that Agrippa cannot deny the validity of Old Testament prophecy, and he hopes to be able to make good this claim that Christ is the only fulfilment of their writings.

V. 28. But Agrippa will not commit himself, and with a jest he turns it all aside. "You think you can make me a Christian all in a minute." The meaning is not quite clear. It may signify in a short time, or by a short argument.

V. 29. Paul replies that, whether by long or short argument, he would like to count Agrippa and all others as members of Christ. He would have them like himself, except for the chains on his hands, or feet.



SWORDFISH TRYING TO GET LOOSE FROM HOOK

An action snapshot secured in New Zealand. These fish give spectacular displays in their efforts to win their freedom.

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Solicitor (referring to a woman)—"Can you tell us her age?" "Witness—"No, I can't." Solicitor—"Was she old or young?" Witness—"I am unable to say." Solicitor—"Well, was she bobbed?" Witness—"Bobbed, but that is no guide to a woman's age in these days."

Farm Notes

BEEF SCRAP AND BUTTERMILK FOR POULTRY

In the feeding of poultry at the Lacombe, Alberta, Experimental Station, buttermilk and beef scrap were compared as a source of animal protein for winter egg production. Pens of white Wyandotte pullets were used in the experiment, which lasted from the beginning of November until the end of the following April. Except for buttermilk given to one lot and beef scrap to the other the ration was the same with the different pens. At the end of the experiment it was found the pens given beef scrap produced slightly better results than those receiving buttermilk, from the standpoint of egg production. The cost per day of eggs produced was 1.6 cents per dozen in favor of the beef scrap.

The report of the superintendent of this station, published by the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, gives the result of many other experiments in the feeding of poultry and in the other investigations and activities being carried on at the Central Alberta Station.

PROFIT FROM MILKING HERD

With a good milking herd and a liberal supply of forage and other foods a good profit can be made in the production of milk at all seasons of the year. During the whole of 1927 a record was kept by the superintendent of the Lacombe, Alberta, Experimental Station, of the weekly production and feed cost of the milk produced from a herd running from eight to thirteen head. During most of the year from twelve to thirtnen cows were milking.

The report of the station, published by the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa, contains an interesting table showing the cost of feed to produce 100 pounds of milk varying from as low as 63 cents to $1.30. From about the end of April to the first week in October the cost was less than one dollar a hundred. Without counting other costs than feed the profits from the herd in milk ran as high as $63 in seven days in the month of June; the lowest profit for the year was for the week ending January 15, when it amounted to $14.94 from the eight cows then giving milk.

The feeds were valued at 1¾ cents per pound for meal mixture, $4 per ton for ensilage; $15 per ton for hay; 88 per ton for oat green feed, and $2 a month per cow for pasture. The meal was mixed and fed in the proportion of 400 pounds rolled oats, 200 pounds bran, and 20 pounds oil cake meal. The meal was fed on the basis of 1 pound of the mixture for every 3½ pounds of milk produced.

ROOT ROT OF OATS

Although all of the cereal grains are subject to diseases known a foot-rots or root-rots, oats suffer perhaps more than the other cereals. One form on oats of a foot-rot or root-rot, more or less common in the Prairie Provinces, is unfortunately so inconspicuous as to give little or no hint of its presence. Frequently frought, wind, frost and other unfavorable conditions are blamed when foot-rot is really the cause of an unhealthy appearance of a field. The division of botany of the Experimental Farms has been working on this disease for several years, and has issued a bulletin which throws considerable light on the method in which it works, the damage it causes, and gives the results of their investigations from the standpoint of control.

Proper cultural methods, including rotations, the possibility of developing resistant varietie , and the use of chemical compounds for seed treatments, are indicated from the work done as methods that may be expected to assist in the control of this and other diseases.

Thi bulletin is numbered 105 and entitled "Seeding Blight and Foot-Rots of Oats caused by Fursarium Colmorum (W.G. Sm) Sau. It is published by the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, and copies may be obtained from the Publications Branch of the Department.

DIFFERENT SILAGES FOR DAIRY COWS

In northern sections where corn for silage cannot be grown successfully either of two crops may be used as a substitute. Silage from a mixture of oats, peas, and vetches seems to give results about equal to sunflower silage for feeding dairy cows. These two crops were compared at the Dominion Experimental Station for New Ontario at Kapuskasing. The superintendent in his report for the year 1927 published by the Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, states that the experiment was carried on to determine the relative value of the two silages for milk production. Ten milking cows were selected which were in such stage of lactation that each would continue milking throughout the following four thirty-day periods which the experiment covered. During this period the silage fed was interchanged from month to month and accurate records kept. This experiment has been conducted yearly for five years. For the first three years each animal was fed five pounds per day more sunflower silage than oats, peas and vetch silage. This was done to balance up the dry matter as between the two kinds of silage. During the later two years the quantity of sunflower silage given was reduced, so that the cattle consumed equal quantities of each silage. Besides the silage ration, each cow received twelve pounds of hay per day, and six received in addition twenty pounds of roots per day. The grain mixture consisted of bran, 4 parts; ground oats, 2 parts; ground barley, 2 parts, and oilcake, 2 parts. This was fed in accordance with the individual requirements for the cows, according to the quantity of milk being given.

During the five-year period the average daily production of milk was 24.83 lbs. for the cows on the sunflower silage, and 24.52 lbs. for the cows on the oats, peas and vetch silage, while the cost of feed per 100 lbs. of milk produced was $1.63 and $1.78 respectively, showing that these two crops are very similar in feeding value, what little advantage there is lying with the sunflower silage. Issued by the Director of Publicity, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.

AN EXPLORER'S WIDOW

Mrs. Mary Akeley. Her husband, Carl Akeley, American scientist, died on the slopes of an African volcano while conducting an expedition for the Belgian government.

Silence

When trouble is brewing, keep still. When slander is getting on its legs, keep still. When your feelings are hurt, keep still—till you recover from your excitement, at any rate. Things look different through an unagitated eye.

In a commotion, once, I wrote a letter and sent it, and wished I had not. In my later years I had another commotion, and wrote a long letter; but life rubbed a little sense into me and I kept that letter in my pocket against the day when I could look it over without agitation and without tears. I was glad I did. Less and less it seemed necessary to send it. I was not sure it would do any hurt, but in my doubtfulness leaned to reticence, and eventually it was destroyed.

Time works wonders. Wait till you can speak calmly; then you will not need to speak, maybe. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable, sometimes. It is strength in very grandeur.—Burton.

Others

There are two times when a sensible man will not allow his position to influence his attitude toward others too much. One time is when he's top of the heap. The other time is when he is at the bottom. The right kind of effort on the part of somebody may change the relative positions very quickly.

Desert Pact Ends Ancient Feud in Arabia

Peace Signed by Paramount Sheiks of 15 Important Bedouin Tribes

Jerusalem—A long-standing desert feud has been ended by the peace pact signed at the Government House in Transjordan by the paramount sheiks of 15 of the most important Bedouin tribes roaming Syria, Jebel Druze and Transjordan. The peace conclave was called by the French and British mandatories to adjust outstanding feuds resulting from long-distance inter-tribal raiding of such powerful, populous tribes on the Syrian site sd r etaetaetaetaoinnt Syrian side as the Ruallas, disposing of thousands of tents and tens of thousands of camels and horses; and on the Transjordan side of Beni Sakhr and Howelitat.

The ancient foes, after three days' bargaining agreed to sign a pact drafted by Europeans based on written and unwritten Bedouin law, under which the former enemies bury the hatchet. The pact does not contain a definite undertaking regarding future peace, but the mutual forgiveness renders it unnecessary.

Turkish Methods in Desert

Emir Shekib, cousin of Abdullah, the ruler of Transjordan, presided; the British resident at Amman was represented by a young officer, Kirkbride, na authority on Bedouin law and customs, while five intelligence officers accompanied the desert chieftains from Syria.

London—A striking illustration of the different methods of the Turks and British ruling the desert is provided in the Bedouin peace pact. The Turks used all the wiles at their disposal in order to keep the feuds going, the usual plan being to offer one tribe desert-grazing rights in the recognized beat of another. Gifts of money were also employed. The quarrels over pasture, instead of end peaceably, as between Abraham and Lot, resulted in camel raiding.

The basis of the present settlement is the old desert law that "blood feuds arising from such quarrels need not necessarily be wiped out by the blood of some member of the slayer's family, but can also be paid for in money, camels or mares by the family or tribe which has suffered the fewest casualties."

An Ancient Tribe

The Rualla chieftain is of the famous family of Ibn Shaalan. Rualla used to wander from Homs and Hama in Syria as far south as Quasrel-Azraq and Wdi Sirham, between Transjordan and Nejd dominions, where their territory encroached on that of their ancient foes, Beni Sakhr. Laely, however, they have been obliged to remain in the north of Syria.

Beni Sakhr is said by some to be the ancient tribe of Issachar, but they have another name Ahl-esh-Shimal, and tradition traces their descent to a child abandoned on the deser, presumably Ishmael. The Howeitat are a scattered tribe, and mainly center round Wadi Sirhan, but with branches stretching through the peninsula to the deserts north-east of Cairo. They have been sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, in the Rualla-Beni Sakhr feud. While the two latter tribes are generally highly regarded among the Bedouin tribes, the Howeitat have a bad name for treachery.

All three fought against the Turks in the Great War.

Dawn

There is something very beautiful to me in the preparation for the sight of the sun which there is in dawn; and also in the light that remains in the sky after the sun has passed out of our sight, softening the transition to darkness, as the warm sense of affection which is drawn out in a parting, and possesses the heart for a time, softens the transition to the blank of absence.—John McLeod Campbell.

Mother—"Did you apologize to that lady, dear, for stepping on her foot?" Small Boy—"Yes, mother, I told her I was sorry she couldn't keep her feet out of my way."

MUTT AND JEFF.—Bud Fisher.

When is a Quarter Not a Coin?