

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for October 20
Golden Text—Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.—Acts 9: 20

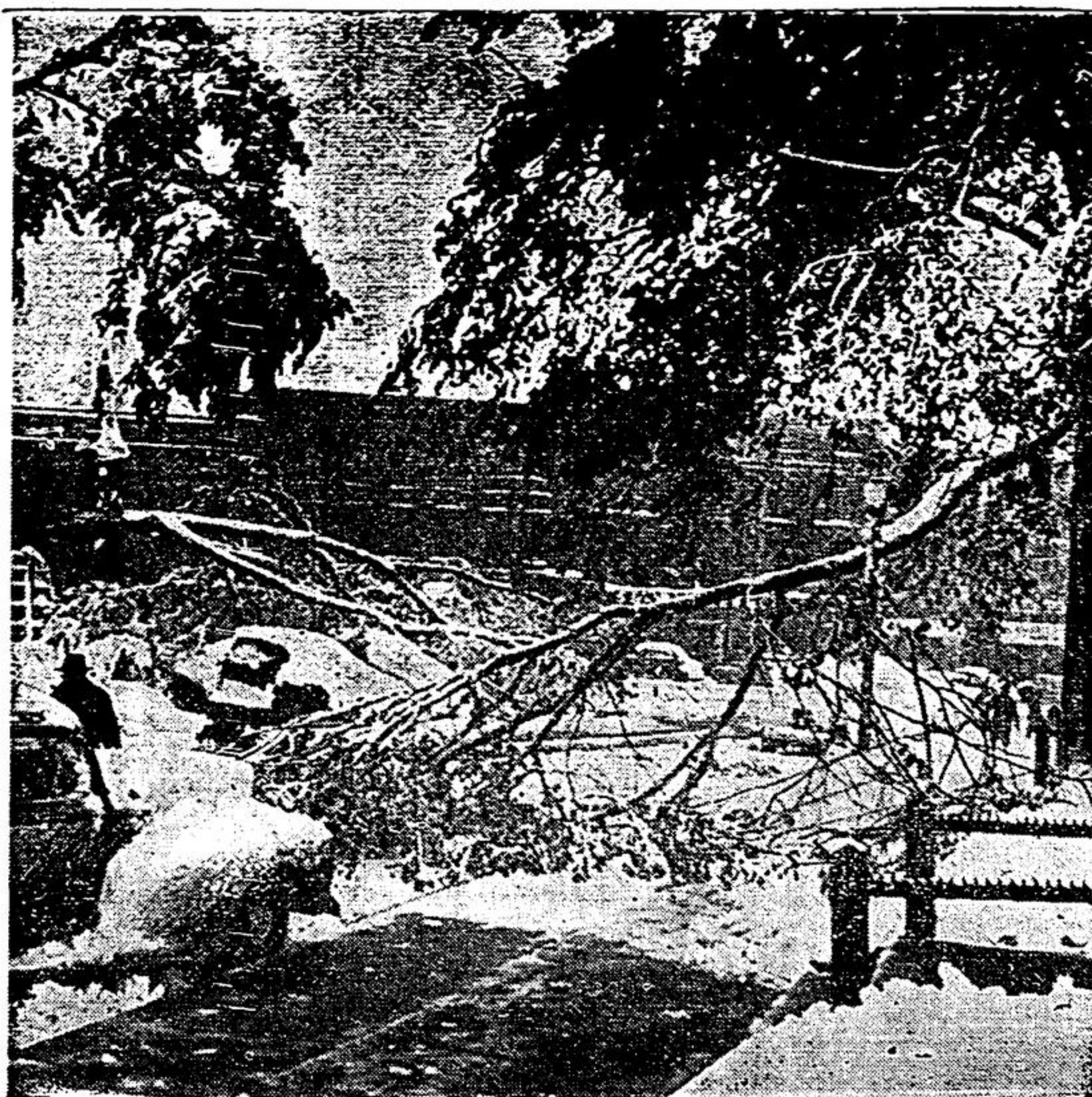
The Lesson as a Whole
 Convinced beyond all possibility of doubt that Jesus Christ was indeed the promised Messiah of Israel and the Redeemer of the world, Saul of Tarsus was not the kind who could keep his new-found confidence a secret. Though none knew better than he what it would cost to declare his faith he could not do otherwise than seek to share with his Jewish brethren the blessed knowledge of Christ, which now meant so much to him. So, first in the synagogue of Damascus and later in Jerusalem he preached the "faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1: 23). Luke passes over the period of quiet waiting upon God in Arabia (probably the district known as Arabia Petra) where, no doubt, through diligent study of the Scriptures and the particular illumination of the Holy Spirit, he learned God's present plan for the salvation of both Jew and Gentile, and came to understand something of the great mystery, hitherto hidden, of Christ and the Church (Eph. 3: 3-9; 5: 32).

Assured that he was chosen of God to proclaim the Gospel to all mankind, he entered with boldness into the synagogues, finding bitter opposition from some, but being used of God to the salvation of others. Finally, as a plot had been discovered that certain unbelieving Jews were determined to kill him, he left Damascus and went on to meet some of the earlier disciples at Jerusalem. Afraid of him at first, they were reassured by Barnabas, who was able to verify the facts connected with his conversion. Soon he was found preaching in the very synagogue where once he had so zealously persecuted the Christians, until again an effort was made to kill him—this time, by Greek-speaking Jews—Hellenizers, as they were called. Feeling that all doors were closed for the time, he went home to Tarsus and remained there in seclusion until Barnabas sought him out and persuaded him to accompany him to Antioch. There his ministry to the Gentiles really began.

Verse by Verse
 Acts 9: 19b.—"Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus." He who had started from Jerusalem to imprison followers of Christ was now a prisoner of grace and found he needed spiritual food as he fellowshiped with those he had intended to persecute.

Verse 20.—"He preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." A comparison of Galatians 1: 15-17 with this passage would seem to indicate that the Arabia experience came in before he began to preach openly to the Jews in Damascus. He struck, at once, a new note, as he proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God. Earlier, Peter had used a term meaning really a servant or child (Acts 3: 13; 4: 27) as he stressed particularly His Messiahship. Paul put the emphasis upon His true deity.

Verse 21.—"All that heard him were amazed." It seemed almost inconceivable that one so recently a zealous opponent of the Gospel should now be one of its foremost exponents, yet such has often been



EARLIEST SNOWFALL IN 58 YEARS

Foretaste of winter hits Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic coast when Ottawa reported the earliest snowfall in 58 years and communications were crippled. At Malone, N.Y., 12 inches of snow broke limbs from trees, disrupted traffic, shown here.

the experience of great sinners saved by great grace.

Verse 22.—"Saul increased the more in strength.... proving that this is very Christ." Like Peter, he, too, stressed the fact that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. He was preaching here to Jews, and this was the truth they needed to know.

Chap. 11: 25.—"Then departed Barnabas..... to seek Saul." A work of God having begun among the Gentiles in the Syrian city of Antioch, there was need of someone who could lead these young believers on in Christ and help to extend the work. Evidently Barnabas felt that Saul was just the person suited to do this and so speed the testimony to the Gentiles. Doubtless, Saul had told him of the commission he had received at the time of his conversion (Acts 26: 16-18). So Barnabas hastened to Tarsus to persuade Saul to go with him to Antioch.

Verse 26.—"The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Saul, recognizing the mission of his friend as of God, accompanied Barnabas to Antioch, where he gave himself faithfully to the great work that had begun already. The number of believers in Christ so increased that they attracted the attention of the Antiochians, who gave them the name that has belonged to the followers of the Lord Jesus ever since.

Gal. 1: 17.—"Neither went I up to Jerusalem..... but I went into Arabia." So sure was Paul of his

divine commission that he did not go to Jerusalem to seek recognition from the church or the apostles there before beginning his ministry, but he went out into the wilderness, to be alone with God, and thus to be prepared spiritually for the great work he was to undertake.

Verse 18.—"After three years I went up..... to see Peter." Contrary to Romish traditions, this was not as recognizing Peter's supremacy, but it was an opportunity which Paul was glad to embrace to meet and confer with one who had been a personal friend of Christ's while He was on earth.

Verse 19.—"James the Lord's brother." This personal relative of the Lord Jesus after the flesh was one who did not believe until after the Resurrection, when he became an outstanding witness..... Christ, and a leader in the church at Jerusalem.

Verse 20.—"I lie not." It was because some questioned Paul's apostolic authority and insisted that he was not recognized as an apostle by the Twelve, that he used such strong language.

Verse 21.—"The regions of Syria and Cilicia." It was in these parts that Paul's real ministry began. From the first, the Lord used him in Syria and near-by districts in a mighty way.

Verse 22.—"Unknown by face to the churches of Judaea which were in Christ." While he had preached in Jerusalem after Barnabas introduced him to the Christians there, he had not gone out into the cities and villages of Judaea. His special

work was among the Gentiles.
Verse 23.—"He..... now preacheth the faith once he destroyed." This word had gone far and wide and created consternation among the Jews and joy among the Christians.

Verse 24.—"They glorified God in me." The believers in Judaea realized it was the grace of God that had wrought this great change, and they gave Him the glory for what He had done in saving their bitter persecutor and making of him a valiant defender of the faith of Christ.

The Heart of the Lesson
 Saul of Tarsus was chosen of God to carry the message of the Gospel to the Gentile world. For some strange reason, the Twelve had been very dilatory about carrying out the Lord's express command to disciple all nations, and had confined their work almost entirely to those of Israel. But now the time had come when the Gospel must be carried into all the world; so God gave to Saul a vision of the need of men, such as none other had entered into. Immediately after his own miraculous conversion, he began to preach to his Jewish brethren, and at Antioch he broke all barriers of racial and religious prejudices and reached out to the Gentiles, thus beginning a program of world evangelization which has gone on, in some measure at least, through all the centuries since.

SERIOUS DROUGHT REIGNS OVER EAST GWILLIBURY TWP.

One of the worst droughts experienced in the Gwillimbury area for many years, is being suffered by the farmers there this fall. "We haven't had any rain since the middle of summer," stated Ross Chapman, Queensville farmer in The Tribune office a few days ago. Mr. Chapman reports that turnips are no larger than apples, and farmers will have no root crop at all. Every shower and storm seemed to bypass the section north of Newmarket, with the result that farmers are going outside the drought area to make purchases of roots.

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