

PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONS AND DOMINION RUNNERS-UP



York's Markham Calf Club team which won the Provincial championship in the inter-county contest at the O.A.C., Guelph in judging and dairy husbandry. Representing Ontario at the Royal Winter Fair they stood second with nine provinces competing. Left in front is Ray

man of the contest at Guelph, and John Kennedy of Agincourt, high man of the team at the royal. Behind is Assistant Agricultural Representative A. Oliver Dalrymple who coached the boys and W. M. Cockburn, Newmarket, Agricultural Representative.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for December 29 Golden Text.—I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both the wise, and to the unwise.

Rom. 1:14

The Lesson as a Whole

While not desiring to make anyone an offender for a word, it seems to the present writer that the heading for this lesson is somewhat misleading. Paul proclaimed Christ for the world, but nowhere does he intimate the possibility that the world will be won for Christ in this age of grace. His testimony is that "in the dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:10) all will be headed up in Christ, but during the present dispensation God is saving a people out of the world, who are to reign with Christ in the day of His power. Meanwhile, "evil men

and seducers shall wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. 3:13) as the world ripens for judgment. The Gospel is not a panacea for social evils. It is designed to save all who turn to God in repentance in order that they may not be judged with the world when Christ returns (Acts 17:30, 31).

When people are regenerated by the Word and the Spirit (Titus 3:5) it is their responsibility, as much as in them is, to "do unto all men" (Gal. 6:10), but it is not incumbent on them to change the world order and in that way bring in the Kingdom of God, as many teach today.

To the last, Paul proclaimed the Gospel as the only remedy for sin and preached the Kingdom of God as a spiritual state into which the saved enter by new creation (Acts 28:31). When the Lord Jesus returns from Heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who

have spurned the glad tidings of grace (2 Thess. 1:7-10), then the Kingdom will be set up in displayed glory and power over all the earth. Verse by Verse

Acts 9:15.—"He is a chosen vessel unto me." When Ananias was commanded to go to see Saul, after his conversion, he demurred because of his past record as a persecutor; but the Lord reassured His servant by revealing His purpose for the new convert. In grace he had been laid hold of to be a minister and a witness of the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 1:23). He was to be God's messenger to the ends of the earth, veingelizing both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 26:15-18).

Chap. 19:21.—"I must also see Rome." As he was planning to conclude his third missionary journey, Paul felt impressed that it was the will of God that he should go on to Rome after fulfilling his commission to take the bounty of the churches of Greece and Macedonia to Jerusalem. He little realized that he was to go to the imperial city in chains!

Chap. 28:28.—"The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." After arriving in Rome, Paul, as his custom was, gave the Gospel "to the few first" by calling the elders of Israel (the chief of the Jews) to meet him in the room where he was imprisoned. Upon their evident rejection of the message, he declared that it must go to the Gentiles and prophesied that they would hear it.

Verse 29.—"The Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves." Not fully convinced that Paul had proclaimed the truth, the Jews talked over what they had heard and debated the matter, but there is no evidence that they were convinced that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world.

Verse 30.—"Paul.....reached all that came in unto him." God in His providence had so arranged that Paul, although a prisoner awaiting trial, should not, at this time, be confined in some almost inaccessible dungeon, but was permitted to live under guard in a rented house, where he was free to preach the Gospel and expound the Scriptures to all who came to visit him.

Verse 31.—"Preaching the kingdom of God." It is important to see that the Kingdom of God as now proclaimed is the recognition of the divine authority over the lives of all who are born again (John 3:3). It is not the establishment of a new world order, as many claim, for we read, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).

Rom. 1:13.—"That I might have some fruit among you also." For some years Paul had looked forward to going to Rome, the Imperial capital, that he might be used of God to win some there for Christ and to edify those who had come to know the Lord through the ministry of other servants of God.

Verse 14.—"I am debtor." He to whom the truth of God has been committed is responsible to pass it on to those still in their sins, irrespective of race or degree of culture. He owes it to all men whom he may be able to contact, to share with them what has meant so much to him.

Verse 15.—"I am ready." Recognizing his indebtedness to those in Rome, the apostle was eager to discharge his obligation by going to their city to preach the Word.

Verse 16.—"I am not ashamed." He did not mean, merely, that he did not blush to be known as a Christian, but realizing the Gospel is God's own answer to man's deep need, he was prepared to proclaim it to the ignorant and the educated, to sinful men of every class. He knew it to be the divine dynamic by which alone men might be saved, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Chap. 15:22.—"I have been much hindered from coming to you." How little did he realize that many more hindrances were to arise ere his hope to visit Rome was consummated! His arrest at Jerusalem, long imprisonment in Caesarea, and the stormy sea voyage with its disastrous shipwreck, were all to intervene before he should reach Rome. But God brought him there in His own way and time.

Verse 23.—"Now having no more place in these parts." He felt he had fulfilled his mission in western Asia and in Greece and contiguous lands, and so he looked forward to Italy as the next field of labor.

Verse 24.—"Whenever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you." Scripture is silent, though early church traditions says he did, after being freed from his first imprisonment. Often, however, God permits our most careful plans to be upset, that He may work out His purpose in our lives.

The Heart of the Lesson From the moment that Christ Jesus was revealed to Saul of Tarsus, it became that all-absorbing passion of his soul to make known to others the Gospel which had been so blessed to him. Changed from a persecutor of the saints to a preacher of the Word he never faltered in the great work of proclaiming the message of grace to a lost world. He knew that Christ was the only answer to man's dire spiritual need and he longed that all might share the knowledge that had been of such value to him.

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