

the claims of the institution in any such way as to conflict with the general interests of the Church, but that, on the contrary, they have been among the most forward in urging the claims both of Home and Foreign Missions, including the better support of the ministry.

Second, "Alumnus" suggests, in the interest of our Home Mission work, a "rearranging and lengthening of the sessions" of Knox College, adding that "there is a strong feeling abroad in the Church that this might be done without unreasonably overtaxing them" (the Professors). Here again I crave to enter a disclaimer. I have never met the feeling expressed, and if it exists in some quarters, as this letter would seem to show, I am unable to respect it, as I believe the greater part of my brethren will be. The work of our Professors is very heavy, and including, while it continues, two or three hours lecturing each day, should scarcely be compared "with the labours of ministers in the pastorate," and the summer recess is not necessarily, even in relation to their proper work, a season of rest. Any Professor who will guide well the studies of the future ministers of the Church in these days, must do an amount of reading in his special department for which there can be little leisure while the work of the session is in progress.

Third, "Alumnus" remarks "it will pay better to cultivate and attract the thousand little rills from the people's purse than to depend upon the showy munificence of the millionaire." It does not appear to me that the authorities of Knox College specially need a reminder of this kind. The Church has been doing little else in relation to it from the beginning but cultivating "the little rills," and not without a measure of success; and in doing so—in sending its Principal and Professors over the length and breadth of Ontario to take up subscriptions for the Building Fund, of twenty and ten and five dollars, and even smaller sums, it has imposed on them a kind and degree of labour which many brethren have been unable to witness without regret. But if "Alumnus" must testify, through your columns, to the importance of paying attention to the smaller givers, why fasten on the giving of the more wealthy the disparaging epithet, "the showy munificence of the millionaire?" Have not some of the wealthy among us lately laid the Church under great obligations by the devotion of their wealth to Christian objects? Has not the General Assembly, in the most solemn way, expressed its gratitude to God for their exercise of liberality? And is "the munificence" of the wealthy necessarily "showy?"

I do not wish to apply any severe language to your anonymous correspondent. I must be permitted to say, however—and I am sure in saying it I express the feelings of many in the ministry—that the tone of his letter is not generous, not even fair, and that it were to be greatly regretted if such a mode of writing were to become common in the Church.

Toronto, May 29th, 1882.

JOHN M. KING.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.—Rev. Dr. Reid has received the undermentioned sums for the following objects, viz.:—Friend, Hullett, for Home Mission \$30, also for building churches in Manitoba and N.-W. Territory \$20; a Young Man in U. S., formerly connected with congregation of Thamesford, for Home Mission, \$20; Friend, Hamilton, for Home Mission, \$5; Anonymous, Toronto, for Foreign Mission—China \$1, also for India \$1.

We gladly make room for the following: Through the liberality of a gentleman in England, an offer has been made in order to increase the circulation of Christian literature in Canada. It is, to bear the expense of sending over here at almost nominal rates, a large number of parcels of books and pamphlets to ministers or Sunday school teachers who may like to apply for them. Some thousands of such parcels have in this way just lately been sent all over Great Britain; and now it is proposed to send a number across the Atlantic. Each parcel is to contain some of the newest publications by well-known authors—Haslam, Aitken, Spurgeon, etc., and especially Miss F. R. Havergal, whose works have lately had such an immense circulation in Europe. These names are a sufficient indication as to the contents of the books. The British Gospel Book Association of Liverpool have the matter in hand, and we understand that so long as the present grant holds out, any Christian worker in Canada, by enclosing to them a one-dollar bill, will have a ten shilling (or two and a-half dollar)

parcel of books forwarded free. In England the parcels were so much appreciated that we feel sure many on this side will be glad to avail themselves of such help. Address—"Gospel Book Association, 3 Hackney Square, Liverpool."

SAD things are seen in our courts. A stout young man was brought up for drunkenness. "I don't deny it," said the prisoner. "I was drunk, but you must not send me to prison. I'm the only support of a poor invalid mother. She'll starve if I'm locked up." "You lie, you rascal," said a poor old woman, standing up in court. "I'm his mother, Judge. Send him to prison if you want to." The Court sent him to prison for six months.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXIII.

June 11,
1882.

THE AFFLICTED CHILD.

{ Mark ix.
14-32.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"All things are possible to him that believeth."

TIME.—The next morning after our last lesson on the coming down from the Mount.

PLACE.—If Hermon was the scene of the Transfiguration, then this took place in one of the villages near its base.

PARALLEL.—Matt. 17: 14-23; Luke 9: 37-45.

Notes and Comments.—"When He came:" to the nine, whom He had likely left in one of the villages at the foot of the mountain. Luke says (9: 37), "the next day:" the power given to the twelve for the special object of their mission was lost by them; they could not work the cure sought.

Ver. 15. "Amazed:" Why? Had the Transfiguration glory not yet died out? That is the most likely explanation; but it did not, like the glory on the face of Moses, repel them, for they ran to Him and "saluted Him:" welcomed, did Him respectful obeisance.

Ver. 16. "He asked the scribes:" *REV. "them:" "what question ye:" margin, "among yourselves;" the two changes give the true idea.

Vers. 17-18. They did not answer, neither did the Scribes, but there was one whose heart was full of the occasion, the father of the afflicted child; he tells in a few strong words of the sufferings of his son, his only son (Luke 9: 38), and the failure of the disciples to help. The man did not know of the absence of Christ. "Dumb spirit:" the possession caused the boy to be speechless; he was also deaf, ver. 25; he could, however, utter a cry, Luke 9: 39. "Whosoever," etc.: the symptoms are of epilepsy. Some of the possessed had other symptoms. "I spake—disciples—could not:" Why? because of their unbelief, Matt. 17: 19-21. Their faith failed in face of the difficulty.

Ver. 19. "Faithless:" a fourfold picture of unbelief—the multitude who looked for signs and wonders, John 4: 48; the Scribes, more than unbelieving—bitterly hostile; the father with his "if thou canst," ver. 22; and the disciples themselves, weak, doubtful, and so, helpless, Matt. 17: 20. "How long?" before you have faith in Me, so John 14: 9. "Suffer:" have patience with you in your unbelief, and then with calm assurance He commands that the boy be brought to Him.

Ver. 20. When the lad saw Jesus the demon "tare him," etc.: a terrible picture (we have had others similar; see Lesson for March 12th) of the physical sufferings of those over whose bodies evil spirits had obtained mastery.

Vers. 21-22. "Asked his father:" partly, as it would seem, to show the desperate character of the malady, and partly to bring out the faith of the father; and the sufferer had been in this state from his earliest years. "If thou canst:" the desperation of weak faith; it was not strong at first, and the disciples' failure had weakened it further. "Have compassion on us:" he identifies himself with his suffering boy. Are we afflicted if our loved ones are possessed by an evil spirit?

Ver. 23. "If thou canst:" REV. omits "believe," making the sense, it is not what is possible with me, but with thee. *Alford*, however, retains the word; to be able, and to be able to believe, are with the Lord the same thing, especially in this Gospel. "All things are possible:" a fundamental law of the kingdom of God.

Ver. 24. How natural and how touching the picture: the yearning affection of the father for his child. "Help thou mine unbelief:" an earnest plea for more faith. There is no paradox, no inconsistency here; it has been the cry of many since that day. Weak faith is yet faith, and as it leads to prayer it gets stronger.

Vers. 25, 26, 27. "People came running:" likely they had been listening to the declamation of the Scribes, but now they are attracted to the other group, while Jesus, wishful, as usual, to avoid much publicity, proceeds to the cure. "I:" emphatic, in contrast to the disciples. "Come out—enter no more:" as the spirit would have desired. Then followed the inarticulate cry, the rending of the child by the demon, with such fearful power that "the more part" (so REV.) "said, He is dead:" But Jesus did not leave the miracle thus incomplete; He "took him by the hand, lifted him up;" and the child recovered strength—the cure was complete. It is Mark alone who tells us of these successive steps in the cure; Luke 9: 43 gives the effect of the miracle on the people.

Vers. 28, 29. The disciples ask the reason of their

* REV. means Revised New Testament; lit., literally; marg., marginal reading.

failure. They had received "power over all demons:" Luke 9: 1, and to cast out unclean spirits, Matt. 10: 1. Why had they failed? Matt. 17: 20 gives the answer more fully: it was because of their unbelief—see Isa. 58: 3. Three thoughts are here: the omnipotence of faith—to it the promise is illimitable, John 15: 7—the helpfulness of prayer, ("and fasting:" is omitted in REV.); and that there are gradations of evil and evil spirits—see Eph. 6: 12.

Ver. 30. "Passed through:" lit. a going aside, or passing by; He avoided the populous places, and followed unfrequented roads; He did not want a crowd to follow Him.

Vers. 31, 32. We have now the second announcement of the passion (the third if we consider the utterance to the three on the Mount). "He taught:" was teaching, not casually, but systematically; "delivered:" an additional particular to any yet given—all this by the counsel of God, John 10: 18; "rise the third day:" how explicit, how plain, and yet so dull were they that they "understood not;" "were afraid to ask Him:" Why? We can only suppose, possibly lest He should rebuke them as He had done before, Ch. 8: 17-33, possibly lest they should hear more to further destroy their expectations of an earthly kingdom.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Cautions.—These miracles of our Saviour, presenting as they do many points of similarity, especially on the line of the power and the compassion of Jesus, may tempt the unstudious teacher to dwell again and again on those points to the wearying of the class and the destruction of all interest. Don't do that; look for fresh points, new developments and manifestations of the truth. You are, it is true, to give "precept upon precept, line upon line," but it is to be "here a little, and there a little." Truth is wide, the Gospel is many-sided; teach all round, do not run in ruts; only see that your teaching leads up to the great central truth of our faith, the atonement of Jesus.

WHAT AND HOW TO TEACH.

PREFATORY.—What is the central truth of this lesson? Plainly, as we think, the question of ver. 22, and the reply-question of ver. 23, which, crystallized into a single thought, may be stated as teaching us that our blessings are measured by our faith in Jesus. Picture to your scholars the marvelous change from the mountain to the village beneath. In the one was the outcoming of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was; communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, and the testimony of the Father to the Son. In the other, the uproar and strife of the crowd; human misery; unbelief and sin; the renewed opposition of his enemies, and fresh conflict with the power of evil. In a small degree it resembled the coming, at the first, from the bosom of the Father to a world of evil and suffering.

Topical Analysis.—(1) The failures of unbelief (vers. 14-19). (2) The success of faith (vers. 20-29). (3) A teaching not understood (vers. 30-32).

On the first topic show how different the result now to that when the twelve went forth at the command of their Master, and accomplished just such miracles as they here failed to perform. Then, it is evident, they had a strong faith in their mission—they believed in the power given to them; now their faith was weak, and in the presence, perhaps, of such a manifestation of evil as they had not encountered, it broke down, and so it came that the severe rebuke fell upon them of being included with those around as a "faithless generation." The father, also, as we see, had but weak faith; he doubted even the power of Jesus; not like the poor leper, who believed in the ability, but was not sure of the will (chap. 1: 41), and so there was a faithless crowd, and the poor sufferer would have gone unhealed if the Master had not interposed. Teach here that doubt is defeat. In human affairs an assurance of success goes far to bring it; but in spiritual things, where faith is the laying hold of a higher power, it ensures it. Peter began to sink through want of faith (Matt. 14: 31), and the Saviour's rebuke showed him the cause of failure.

The second topic teaches the opposite truth. The possibilities of faith are unlimited; even weak faith, as we have seen in previous lessons, can produce mighty results. On the passage in Matthew's version (17: 20-22), *Stier* says, "Faith cannot make it its concern, in a literal sense, to be removing mountains of the earth. But if it could be and ought to be its concern, then faith would be able, literally, to remove mountains." Whatever the loftiest faith has achieved is within the reach of God's children.

The third topic shows us how slow to get rid of preconceived opinions as to the Messiah were the disciples, and in showing us that we have an additional proof of the truthfulness of the narrative. These men did not conceal their dulness and unbelief; they did not rise at once to a recognition of the claims of Jesus, but very slowly they were compelled to receive the truth. And is not the doctrine of the Cross hard to be understood to-day? Are you sure that your scholars have received it? But they must, if they are to be made wise unto eternal life.

Incidental Lessons.—That Jesus times His coming to the needs of His people.

That the world expects much from the disciples of Jesus. That it rejoices in their failures.

That when men feel their own helplessness, then they are ready for the coming of Jesus.

That a child can be possessed of the devil. (Are there such in your class?)

That if such, they must be taken to Jesus—"Bring him to Me."

Satan a Tormentor and Destroyer; Christ a Saviour, here as everywhere.

Main Lesson.—On Faith (1) Our spiritual failures are from want of faith, Matt. 17: 20; Heb. 3: 18, 19; James 1: 6-8. (2) Our faith is the measure of our success, Matt. 21: 21, 22; Mark 11: 24; Luke 17: 6; John 14: 12. (3) That Christ will increase our faith if we seek it, ver. 24; Luke 17: 5. (4) Victories of faith, Matt. 8: 10, 11; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 4: 7, 8; 1 John 5: 4, 5.