

for admission to Knox College. The grants for supplemented congregations and mission stations were revised. The induction of Rev. R. M. Croll into the pastoral charge of Simcoe was appointed for Tuesday, Oct. 1st, at 11 o'clock a.m.; Mr. Livingstone to preside, Mr. Laidlaw to preach, Mr. Goldsmith to address the pastor, and Mr. Craigie the people. It was resolved to put the Fort Erie mission field under one missionary, who shall be ordained and engaged for not less than two years. Mr. Campbell, of Niagara, resigned his charge, to take effect on the 22nd inst. It was resolved to enjoin each session to make arrangements for holding a missionary meeting during the winter, and the following overture was presented and laid on the table for future consideration: *Whereas* the General Assembly of last year decided "that the names of ministers who have received leave from the Assembly to retire, shall be retained on the roll of their Presbyteries, with the understanding that they have liberty to take part in the deliberations of the court, but not to vote. *Whereas* the above quoted decision is not in accordance with the desire of the majority of Presbyteries, as expressed in the returns made by them to last Assembly in answer to the question sent down for consideration, 'Shall the names of retired ministers be retained on Presbytery rolls?' and *Whereas* the effect of the decision referred to is to give many of the most experienced and honored of the ministers of the Church an inferior status in the lower courts and to preclude them from having a seat in the supreme court, and thus to deprive the Church of their matured wisdom in the consideration of matters of chief importance. Therefore, the undersigned respectfully overture the Presbytery of Hamilton to take such steps as may seem proper to bring this matter under the notice of the General Assembly indicted to meet in Ottawa in June next with a view to obtaining for ministers retiring from the active duties of the ministry a status in accordance with the wish expressed by the majority of Presbyteries. (Signed) John Laing, R. J. Laidlaw, Wm. Craigie."—JOHN LAING, Pres. Clerk.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XL.

Oct. 6, 1878. } *WARNING AGAINST FORMALISM.* { Luke xiii. 22-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."—Verse 24.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Luke xii. 35-59.... The watchful servants.
T. Luke xiii. 1-21.... The barren fig tree.
W. Luke xiii. 22-30.... The shut door.
Th. Matt. xv. 1-9.... Lip-service.
F. John iv. 19-30.... Spiritual worship.
S. Luke xiii. 22-30.... Warning against formalism.
S. Isa. i. 10-20.... Vain oblations reproved.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Our Lord is on his last eventful journey toward Jerusalem, and as He went through the cities and villages of Peræa, wherever there was an opportunity He stopped and taught the people, and in this and the five following chapters of St. Luke's gospel we have the record of the parables, and instructions which were probably spoken at this time.

One of the mixed crowd who followed our Lord addressed to him the question, Are there few that be saved? This man had apparently come to know something of what Jesus required, the self-denial and humility which He demanded of every disciple, and these requirements were too hard for him. They were utterly opposed to these assumptions of superiority and exclusive privilege in which the Jews with but few exceptions made their boast. At the same time the faithful words of Jesus disturbed his self-complacency, and awoke his sleeping conscience. Resenting this disturbance of his self-righteous complacency, and seeking some plea wherewith to excuse his disobedience, he put this question to our Lord. And there are many now who are guilty of the same folly. Conscience presses them hard. They cannot ignore or deny the claims of Christ, nor justify their own disobedience and unbelief. But with the strange deceitfulness of the sinful heart they seek to evade the true issue and to justify their continuance in evil by an appeal to the perplexing problems of life or to the unsearchable things of God. Explain these for us, they say, and then we will believe, forgetting that faith is the only explanation possible to us now. Explain, they say, the doctrine of the election or of the Trinity, reconcile this or that theory of science with the statements of Scripture; and thus they proceed with many questions, some merely idle and curious, others which must ever be objects of thought to earnest men; but all, when put forward in a self-sufficient and self-excusing spirit, out of place, unprofitable and hurtful to those who ask. Such persons are ever occupied with speculation and enquiry, as if these answered in some way or other to obedience and faith. They are like a man standing on the bank of a stream, whose passage is his only salvation; but instead of

crossing, he is engaged in measuring the depth, the diversity, the force and swiftness of the water. He surveys the shores. He even asks how many can cross with safety. He carefully notes all down; and satisfied, turns away. And there are many who imagine this to be religion.

There can be no doubt of the motive of the questioner who now appeals to the Lord, nor as to the meaning of his inquiry, when we turn to the answer of Jesus, which was addressed not merely to him but to the whole class to which he belonged.

Jesus in reply urges *present duty*, which he enforces by a warning to the disobedient, and encouragement for all who seek.

1. **PRESENT DUTY.**—Verse 24. It is as if Jesus had said, "Why do you speculate whether few or many be saved? Strive yourself to enter in." This was the spirit of his reply.

Strive to enter in at the strait gate. This is brief and sharp. These words show:—1. The genuine spiritual life has a single gate of entrance. It is the gate. Many will seek to enter in by other gates, but they shall not be able. (Note 1). There are a thousand wrong ways, but only one right way. Faithful obedience to Jesus Christ is the one gate into eternal life. Between the pillar of repentance on the one side and the pillar of faith on the other, it opens. Christ Himself is the Door, John x. 9; as He is also the Way, John xiv. 6. Herein is the exclusiveness, the intolerance of the Gospel—Christ alone.

2. This one gate is also a strait gate, Matt. vii. 14. "The Messianic kingdom is represented under the figure of a palace, into which men do not enter, as might appear natural, by a magnificent portal, but by a narrow gate, low, and scarcely visible, a mere postern." This narrow gate is a vivid image of all those terms and expressions of self-sacrifice and self-renunciation which Jesus so frequently made use of:—"giving up," "denying self," "bearing the cross," "forsaking all." "The spiritual life is a life of strait gates and narrow ways, a life where men lose to find, and die to live."

3. This narrow gate requires a determined effort to pass it. Strive to enter in. Literally, agonize to enter in. The Greek word is derived from the *agon*, the gymnastic contest. The Christian is to be an athlete; he is to press on like the runner, to put forth desperate and determined efforts like the wrestler. He is not called to an easy, self-indulgent life. The same word used here is found in 1 Cor. ix. 25: "Every man that *striveth* for the mastery is temperate in all things;" and in 1 Tim. vi. 12: "*Fight* the good fight of faith."

Earnest seeking is the necessary condition of receiving. Men fail of the kingdom, either because they do not strive or because they strive at the wrong place, not entering at the right gate.

II. Our Lord enforces His exhortation by a SOLEMN WARNING.—Verses 25, 26.

The illustration is drawn from a family feast which was celebrated at night after all have returned home. The house was lighted up; and in contrast to the brightness within, the outer darkness was still more gloomy. All the members of the family, for whom the father has waited, have entered and the door is shut. Then those who had before refused to enter, in alarm begin with earnestness to knock and to plead. They still cling to the false notion that they have a right within. But the Lord answers, I know you not, which, as St. Augustine says, is nothing else than "Ye know not me." It is that knowledge of intimacy and love of which Jesus speaks in John x: "I know my sheep and am known of mine."

They renew their plea. It is one of privilege. We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence. They claim acquaintance with Christ and to have even had some intercourse with him. Thou hast taught in our streets. We have heard Thee preach. This was all true, but it only increased their condemnation. They had great privileges, and on the mere possession of these privileges they based their claims. But all in vain. They had not improved their privileges. They had heard Christ, but they had not obeyed Him. Their connection with Him is only formal and external. They are not His friends. As such He does not know them, and they cannot enter. They are shut out, self-excluded; because they are workers of iniquity. Only wickedness keeps men from Christ.

We must remember that those who are here represented as seeking entrance too late, do so upon a false claim and do not really strive. They have no more desire now than they had before to repent and believe. We must not for one moment think that these persons do at last repent and yet are refused. No, it is that through their own sin and wilful rejection of Christ they are at last in a condition in which repentance is impossible. The claims which they advance are the old claims of their self-righteousness; but now they find that these are vain. Our Lord does not teach that these persons are now desiring holiness and salvation. They are past all such desire. Their entreaties are only the utterance of fear and shame.

What a dreadful possibility is here set before us, of deception and rejection; deceived by ourselves in spite of warning and privilege; rejected by Christ because we have loved sin and self more than holiness and truth. There remains for all such only weeping and gnashing of teeth, despair and rage, while their misery is increased by the consciousness of the good which they have lost. Abraham, in the kingdom, while they who boasted that they were Abraham's children are thrust out.

Not the possession, but the *profiting* by our privileges will carry us to heaven.

No worker of iniquity can abide with Christ. Rev. xxi. 27.

III. Our Lord then adds a GLORIOUS ENCOURAGEMENT, verses 29, 30, to all who truly and earnestly seek. They shall come from the east, &c. Here is the real answer to the question of the Jew. They shall be many that shall be saved; but what is that to you, if you are not among them? Here is the breadth, the universality of the Gospel. "Whoever cometh, I shall in no wise him out." "He is able to save unto the uttermost whosoever cometh unto God by

Him." The Gentiles from every quarter shall come and shall sit down to the great feast.

There is warning here to the self-righteous Jew and to all who trust in and boast of their privileges. There is comfort here for every penitent and contrite one, for all who seek, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. For there are last . . . first, and first . . . last. This proverb was literally fulfilled when the Gospel was first preached, and has often been fulfilled since.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Seek to enter in. We must not understand, "shall seek to enter in *by it*, and shall not be able." The emphasis of the command is, Seek to enter *at the narrow door*: for many shall seek to enter (elsewhere), and shall not be able. After "enter" is to be supplied, in both places, *into salvation, or into the kingdom of God*.

2. Strait gate. A narrow and difficult gate. The word is not the same as *straight*. The idea of a narrowness is preserved in our use of the word *straits*. Observe, the gate is put before the way (Matt. vii. 14). It is not, therefore, the gate out of life, at the end of the pilgrimage, but the gate into the Christian life, as Bunyan represents it in Pilgrim's Progress.

In a book of symbolic pictures there is one of the strait and narrow gate. The gateway in the wall (and there is no other way through it) was just large enough for a man to go through kneeling. One man is trying to go through with great bags of money unjustly obtained, but they will not pass. Another grasps the world in his arms, but it is too large to go through the gate. Still another has huge bales of rags labelled "self-righteousness," but he cannot get through the gate with them. Another passed through only by leaving his rum-bottles, which he broken at the bottom of the hill by the gate. There is room for any man, but there is not room for the smallest sin to pass.

OUTLINE LESSONS FOR THE MINISTER'S CLASS.

BY THE REV. T. P. FOTHERINGHAM, M.A., NORWOOD, ONT.

OUTLINE NO. 4.

Course on *The Sacraments, Part I.—The Lord's Supper.*
Based on *Thomson's Sacramental Catechism*.

Duty of partaking of the Lord's Supper: (continued).

7.—It expresses our acceptance of the inheritance purchased by Christ's blood. Heb. ix. 15-20.

8.—In it we bind ourselves to observe the engagements involved in the covenant sealed in the blood of Christ (Heb. xii. 24; xiii. 20), and to which we were bound at our baptism. Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. vii. 14.

9.—In it we feed on Christ by faith, for His body and blood are as really, but spiritually present to the faith of believers, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses. 1 Cor. x. 16 (Confession of Faith c. xxix. 7; Larger Catechism 170).

The two sacraments are distinguished in that—Baptism is administered but *once*; the Lord's Supper often.

The elements used in Baptism is water; in Lord's Supper bread and wine.

Baptism signifies our regeneration and cleansing in the blood, by the Spirit; the Lord's Supper signifies the spiritual nourishment we derive from Christ.

Baptism is administered to infants, recognising their position as within the covenant; the Lord's Supper only to those who are able to examine themselves.

The two sacraments agree in that—

Both are of divine appointment.

The spiritual blessings referred to are the same.

Both are seals of the same covenant.

Both are to be dispensed by ministers only (Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. iv. 1; Heb. v. 4).

Both are to be continued till Christ's second coming. (Matt. xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. xi. 26).

THE TEACHER'S REWARD.

Oh, teacher, faint not: thou art not alone,
He who hath called thee will thy labour own;
And though, at first, no grateful fruit appear,
Think not 'tis labour lost, but persevere;
Yield not the conflict to the Master's foe,
But still "from strength to strength" unwearied go.
Plant thou the seeds of heavenly truth with care,
And water oft with fervent, pleading prayer,
Then leave the rest to God, whose Spirit's power
Shall cause the seed to grow, the plant to flower,
Till in due course the ripen'd fruit appears
To cheer thy heart, reward thy prayers and tears,
And make thee sing for joy,—that peace bestow
Which they who serve the Lord alone can know.

Toronto.

J. Inrie.

THE ruin of many men dates from some idle hour. The diligent escape the snare.

He who seldom thinks of heaven is not likely to get there. The way to hit the mark is to keep the eye fixed upon it. Bishop Horne.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

NOT EXCEEDING FOUR LINES 25 CENTS.

MARRIED.

At the residence of the Bride's Father, 209 University Street, on the 19th inst., by the Rev. Dr. Wilkes, assisted by the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, LL.B., Mr. Robert Darling, merchant, Toronto, to Annie M., daughter of Charles Alexander, Esq., Montreal.

On the 17th September, by the Rev. Dr. Topp, James Knowles, Jr., to Emma, daughter of the late T. Skerry, Esq., all of Toronto.