

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

The Roman governors of Judea and Samaria became so oppressive that the Jews broke out in rebellion, and, seventy years after Christ, Jerusalem was finally besieged by Titus, afterwards Emperor of Rome. No tragedy on the stage has the same scenes of terror as are to be found in the history of this siege. The city itself was rent by factions at the deadliest war with each other; all the elements of civil hatred had broken loose; the streets were slippery with the blood of citizens; brothers slew brothers; the granaries were set on fire; famine wasted those whom the sword did not slay. In the midst of these civil massacres the Roman armies appeared before the walls of Jerusalem. Then for a short time the rival factions united against the common foe; they were again the gallant countrymen of David and Joshua; they sallied forth and scattered the eagles of Rome. But triumph was brief; the ferocity of the ill-fated Jews soon wasted itself on each other, and Titus marched on; encamped his armies close by the walls; and from the adjacent heights the Roman general gazed with awe upon the strength and splendour of the city of Jehovah. At a distance the whole temple looked like a mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles. But, alas! the veil of that temple had years before been rent asunder by an inextinguishable crime, and the Lord of hosts did not fight for Israel. But the enemy is thundering at the walls. All around the city arose immense machines from which Titus poured down mighty fragments of rock and showers of fire. The walls gave way, the city was entered, the temple itself was stormed; false prophets ran through the streets; even nature itself perished, and mothers devoured their infants; every image of despair completes the ghastly picture of the fall of Jerusalem. And now the temple was set on fire, the Jews rushing through the flames to perish in its ruins. It was a calm summer night, the 10th of August. The whole hill on which stood the temple was one gigantic blaze of fire; the roofs of cedar crashed; the golden pinnacles of the dome were like spikes of crimson flame. Through the lurid atmosphere all was carnage and slaughter. The echoes of shrieks and yells rang back from the hill of Zion and the Mount of Olives. Amongst the smoking ruins, and over piles of the dead, Titus planted the standard of Rome.

A SOCIAL NUISANCE.

Intelligent opposition to tobacco-using is manifesting itself in some unexpected quarters. In Germany, where smoking has been a national characteristic, the police in several of the cities have been instructed to stop all smoking by boys under sixteen years of age. This action is based on the testimony of the medical faculty, that tobacco-using is so injurious to the health as to impair the fitness of boys and youth for the military service, in which, in Germany, all young men must bear a part. In England, Dr. Drysdale, a distinguished London physician, has—in a letter to "The Times"—denounced tobacco-smoking as "deleterious to health and vitality," and as the cause of various disorders which he points out. Other medical men of London have fully confirmed Dr. Drysdale's view of this habit and its influence. "The Times" itself has been moved to a leading editorial on the subject, commenting particularly on "the selfishness and general want of consideration for others which smoking engenders." The "Christian World," of London, in mentioning these facts, declares: "Whatever value may be attached to the medical opinions we have referred to, all must admit that the smoker is a social nuisance." In this country, the ministerial associations and church conferences of various denominations are beginning to take action on the subject, and some of them now refuse to receive to their membership any young clergyman who uses tobacco. Many of the religious papers, North and South, including some in the more prominent tobacco-growing regions, are speaking out with unmistakable positiveness against the use of tobacco in any form. The "Interior"—an eminently conservative paper—puts the case strongly when it says: "We have no doubt that the number of

years of human life lost by the use of tobacco is greater than the number of years of life lost by the drinking of alcoholic liquors;" and again, of the habit of tobacco-using: "It is a great misfortune, every way, for a young man to contract the habit. He stands nine chances out of ten to have his life shortened by it, and ten chances out of ten to have his usefulness impaired." A great many excellent men still use tobacco; but we believe that there is not one among them all whose influence for good is not in some measure lessened by this indulgence. We believe, moreover, that the best men—the clearest-headed and the purest-hearted of these tobacco-users are coming to recognize this truth, and are one by one abandoning their vicious habit for the glory of God and the good of their fellows.

WHAT MAKES WEALTH.

The Rev. Dr. R. D. Hitchcock says: "Suppose no muscle is put into the land; no sweat moistens it; it goes back into its original wildness, and that which formerly supported one hundred civilized men affords support for one savage. The value which land possesses has been developed by labour. Have you considered how short-lived that value is? Crops lasts no more than a year. Railways, so soon as you stop work upon them, go to pieces rapidly and cease to be valuable. Houses have to be made over constantly. St. Peter's Church, at Rome, one of the most solid of structures, is repaired annually at a cost of \$30,000. A great part of the wealth of the world is only twelve months old; when men stop working it passes away. Suppose you earn \$1.25 a day and spend the same; at the end of the year you are no better off than at the beginning. You have only lived. Suppose you spend \$1, or, better still, 85 cents; then you have become a capitalist. Capital is wages saved, and every man can become a capitalist. I began to preach at \$550 a year; I've been there, and I know what it is. My rule was then, and has been ever since, to live within my income; so it would have been, no matter what my business. Spend less than you earn; then you will acquire capital, and your capital will be as good as that of Peter Cooper or any other man."

MR. D. L. MOODY spent the past winter in Baltimore, whither he went with the expressed intention of devoting most of his time, not to preaching, but to study preparatory to future work. His object in choosing that city was to benefit the health of his son. But Mr. Moody is one of those men who cannot see work lying round undone while he can by any possibility overtake it. So on the very first Sabbath he spent in Baltimore, he preached in the Penitentiary to an audience of nine hundred men, and he has kept up that service ever since. And not only so, but from that time he has preached every day except Saturday and Monday, often three and sometimes four times in each day, nearly every sermon being followed by an enquiry meeting under his own personal direction. This is not the worst sort of preparation for future work—that is if the worker's strength holds out—but where is the time for study?

A LETTER to the N.Y. "Observer" from Baltimore tells of a lady who had been skeptical, but who had received light by means of Mr. Moody's preaching. She and her husband had read Tyndall and Huxley and other infidel books, and had refused to believe the Scriptures, but now she is a full believer in the Word of God—and happy in a real Christian experience. Now, Mr. Moody is particularly free from the fault of preaching "science." He holds up the cross; he tells sinners they must be saved by the blood. In another church in the same city, a brilliant minister delivers elegant discourses, and "unanswerable" ones, in refuting the calumnies and sophistries of the philosophers, but there is chilliness rather than fervour among his people who admire the orator more than they feel his truth. It is preaching Jesus, simply, earnestly, affectionately, plainly, fully, that brings men to the acknowledgment of their sins and secures for them the joy of pardon.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXV.

June 22,
1879.

CONSECRATION TO GOD.

{ Mal. iii.
8-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Mal. iii. 17.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Mal. iii. 8-18.....Consecrated to God.
T. Rom. xii. 1-21.....A living sacrifice.
W. Eph. iv. 1-32.....The new man.
Th. Phil. iii. 7-17....."All things loss."
F. Phil. iv. 1-23....."Be careful for nothing."
S. Heb. x. 14-25.....Sprinkled from an evil conscience.
S. 1 Thes. v. 1-28....."Blameless" unto Christ's coming.

HELPS TO STUDY.

One hundred years have passed since the time of our last lesson. The captivity purged away idolatry and many of the other evils. But new evils have arisen. Selfish worldliness oppressed the poor and withheld the offerings of God. Miserable formality and ritualism degraded the worship of Jehovah. Sensual scepticism questioned the reality of the Divine utterances and the advantage of serving God. Malachi rebukes the blind formalities and unbelief of the people, and exhorts them to return to God, while he comforts those who, in the midst of the degeneracy and wickedness around them, held fast their loyalty and faith.

I. THE CURSE OF ROBBERY—Vers. 8, 9, 13-15.

The prophet in his graphic way repeats the common talk of Jerusalem. He holds up before them the wretched murmurs, the stout, boastful words which these ungodly men bandied to and fro, to shame them if possible, and lead them to repentance. The prophecy is full of these utterances. Compare chap. i. 2, 6, 7, 12, 13; ii. 14, 17.

The prophet appeals to their conscience—Will a man rob God? He is following up his previous appeal—ver. 7. Return unto me, God graciously pleads. The only response was a self-sufficient assertion of their own righteousness—Wherein shall we return? We have never wandered. We have no sin to repent of. And yet, God says, ye have robbed me, your Friend and Benefactor—chap. i. 6. In tithes—Lev. xxvii. 30-33; Deut. xiv. 28, 29; and offerings—Deut. xviii. 4; Neh. xiii. 10, 12.

We can defraud God of what is due to Him. It is hard to make men see when they have done wrong to one another; but it is even harder to make them see when they have wronged God. God has a claim on us for the support of His Church. What have we, which we did not receive? When we refuse to contribute to works of love, and to God's house, we are robbing God. Those who refuse to give are cursed. All robbing of God, whether it be of time (Sabbath breaking), or of what is due for the support of religion, leads to immorality, poverty, and ruin. The body is worn out, character deteriorates, and temporarily as well as eternally we receive the wages of unrighteousness, we incur loss. What poor economy then is it to stint our offerings? Those who do not give shall not have. Even from what the ungodly man has, he gets no real good, no happiness; so that a little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked—Ps. xxix. 9, 10; Matt. vi. 33. The toil of the wicked is vain—Deut. xxviii. 39; Heb. iv. 10; Micah. vi. 14; Hag. i. 6, 11.

Not only were they worldly and covetous, but the prophet discerns the root of it all in a spirit of practical atheism. Your words have been stout, bold, presumptuous, against me, saith the Lord. But their haughty, flippant answer is, What have we spoken so much against thee?—Ex. v. 2. They plead it is vain to serve God, that there is no profit in keeping His ordinances, and in their walking mournfully, that is their outward show of penitence and humiliation—Job xxi. 15; Zeph. i. 12. They set up false standards of right and good, calling the proud happy. And they strengthen themselves in evil by pointing out those who lived in sin, and worldliness, and yet appeared to prosper.

The wicked, they say, are set up, advanced to honour; and they that tempt God, live in open defiance, are delivered from trouble, do not seem to suffer. Now it is plain what is at the root of all this. They do not know what religion is. They think the service of God is a grievous bondage. What they do they think a necessary evil. They do it as a matter of duty, they hardly know why; or from fear, to escape hell, to silence conscience. They say what more could be expected of us, and after all, what good could we get by it. What return does God make to us? They are so far right; mere formal compulsory service does not pay. They are altogether wrong; for God's service is perfect freedom.

II. THE BLESSING OF CONSECRATION—Vers 10-12.

Here is the remedy for your trouble, the prophet declares—Bring all your tithes. Do not wait for better times. Do not say, we are too poor. The first act must be one of justice toward God whom they have robbed. Prove me; God is willing and anxious that men should put His promises to the test. He is willing to be judged by the results. Now, He says. His love, His desire for our good is peremptory and vehement. He promises a great Blessing, one which there shall not be room enough to receive. He does not limit His gifts by our needs, nor measure them