

rection of American philanthropy. Such Christians bind themselves by a fixed rule to bestow a certain proportion of their income on purposes of benevolence, and then stick to it. Whoever else may be stinted they determine not to cheat their Master out of His share. A debt to Jesus is as sacred as a debt to a bank, or to the company which insures their house. Such men and women as these are the Cochinatates and Crotons that feed our benevolent societies, or they would have run dry long ago.

A few days ago a man was buried in New York so modestly that nobody but his pastor and relatives were at the funeral. He requested this unostentatious service from his dying bed. Yet if all the mission-church members, and orphans, and hospital patients, and others who have been blessed by his generous bounties could have come to pay their tributes, no five churches would have held the crowds that would throng to the funeral of James Lenox. He probably gave more money to religious and useful objects than any other man who ever lived in America. One of his relatives estimates the total amount of his donations at about seven millions! Thirty years ago he gave systematically at the rate of \$100,000 per annum. During the last five years he gave away over two millions of dollars! He built five churches in New York City, and helped to build many hundreds of them elsewhere. So modestly did he give that his name seldom appears in connection with the donation. Mr. Lenox's determination—when he was a young man—was to be his own almoner for his Lord, and to give during his life-time, instead of accumulating a vast fortune, then bequeathing it to charities (to be wrangled over in surrogate's courts by contestants). He was the prince of systematic givers and from a consecrated purse. Who will rise up to imitate him, and win his crown?

International S. S. Lesson.

October 30th.

NADAB AND ABIHU.—Lev. x. 1-11.

(From the S. S. World.)

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.—Lev. xi. 44.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—God is not to be mocked.

LESSON EXPLANATIONS.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., NEW YORK.

The chapter before describes the inauguration of Aaron and his sons as the priests (vs 8, 9), the blessing of the people by Aaron (see 2 Chron. vi. 3-12), and the appearance of the divine glory, as a fire which consumed the offering on the altar (v. 24).

By the evening of the day (see v. 19) was darkened by an awful tragedy, provoked by sin. The sin is reported, punishment follows, certain principles are stated as proved and illustrated by God's work of judgment, and directions are given to get rid of the event. This is the natural division of the lesson; but it will be convenient to follow the order of the narrative.

Nadab and Abihu were the eldest sons of Aaron, as appears from Ex. vi. 23. Great honor had been done them before (see Ex. xiv. 1, 2), and now they were associated with their father in his priesthood. Perhaps they were "excited above measure" and heaved into transgression (see 2 Cor. xii. 7). How common it is for temptation to follow in the moment of a company and gladness following a great privilege!

The "cooler" was a pun, as its Hebrew name is recorded until now, but used for holding burning incense. We have a previous account of it, though doubtless there was authority for its being made. The putting there in it and incense on that particular day. Therein was in some things else, but what that was is variously regarded. Some think they did this at the very time. Incense was burned twice daily (see Ex. xxx. 7, 8). But nothing is here said of the time.

Some think the incense was other than that prepared (Ex. xxx. 34-38). But the "strange" element is in the fire. And this is the manner way of describing their sin (Num. iii. 4, xxvi. 61). This would be the taking of fire other than that enjoined, naturally that kept burning on the altar (Lev. vi. 12). In Lev. xvi. 12 it is prescribed for the incense on the great day of atonement, and the presumption would be in its favour for all such occasions. From the caution given in v. 9, it has been conjectured that they were excited by strong drink. It is not uncommon to find men so excited break out in religious extravagance. There are men who talk piously only when so excited. This is so far counteracted by the fact that they were not where incense was offered, but in front of the tabernacle (see v. 4). They may have been making a display before the people. This is certain, they were doing "before the Lord" what "he commanded them not."

The punishment was prompt and terrible. Fire, as lightning, which did not consume their garments (v. 5), slew them "before the Lord." About the mode of it we know nothing. The same fire had marked God's approval of Aaron's ministry (Lev. ix. 24. See a parallel in 2 Cor. ii. 16).

Moses, as God's representative ordering the new arrangement, here takes his place, and vindicates God (v. 8). He gives the substance of Ex. xxix. 44 and Lev. viii. 33. God is supreme, and obedience to Him is imperative on all who come nigh unto Him. They are not free to come "as they list." He is holy, and no wild excitement or wanton display can be permitted to pass under the form of service to Him. It is worth attention that at the opening of new work God has often emphatically shown how reverent acknowledgment of Him in this attribute is required in worshipers. See the case of Korah (par. pas.), Uzzah, Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 1-11 and 1 Cor. xi. 30).

Aaron's submission is noted. He did not rebel nor murmur. There is no petulant display of passion, no making of excuses, neither is there any overstrained and unnatural magnifying of God. It was as much as a father could do to "hold his peace."

The burial is directed by Moses, Ex. vi. 18 shows that the Uziel here named was the youngest of Aaron's uncles. These men were not priests. The "cats" were defiled and buried with them. These men, too, would be defiled (Num. xix. 11-13) for the passover coming five days later, and it has been supposed that the arrangement of Num. ix. 6-12 met their case.

In connection with this stroke an indictment is placed on displays of grief on the part of the priests. It would have implied vexation with what the Lord had done. It was not the same as in Lev. xxi. 10, 11, which was a permanent precaution against defilement; but a required assent at this time to the justice of God's act. The "covering of the head" is in reference to the Eastern habit of letting the hair fall loosely around the head, when the clothes are rent, in sign of grief (comp. Isa. xlvii. 2; Ezra ix. 3).

The word in v. 7 relates to the same thing, and to the order of Lev. viii. 33. They were not to attend the funeral of the slain sons of Aaron by passing from the court in front of the tabernacle (see Lev. i. 18). The reason is in the "anointing oil" etc. It became them to acquiesce in the divine sentence on the transgressors.

The rule against "wine," ordinarily the fruit of the grape, or "strong drink"—i. e., compounds from grain or other fruit though "wine" is sometimes included in the word (Num. xxvii. 7)—is a precaution against disqualifications for the sober, reverent, pure worship of the Almighty. This applied only to the periods of duty. Wine was a common article of food in the life of the East.

The "robes annexed" (vs. 10, 11) are that a distinction may be kept up in their own minds between things sacred and things common. "Unholy" is not the proper epithet here. A "piece" may be well enough surely in a parlour which would be unfit for the sanctuary. A lecture may be given in a lecture which would be unfit for the pulpit. There is not only in the ceremonial law, but in the nature of the case, a difference between things sacred and things common. And this distinction, secondly (v. 11), is to be kept in the minds of the people. They are not to worship God as they please. They are to worship as He pleases; and His pleasure is expressed in His statutes. Under the name of words in the Origin al had not ritually done the vile things, and even systematized them. The only

check on caprice, passion, self-seeking, fanaticism, superstition, or even "taste," is in close adherence to what is formally taught in the Scripture, or by fair inference from it.

(a) We are all, under the New Testament, to be a "holy priesthood" unto God (see 1 Pet. ii. 9). This includes all Christians.

(b) We do not offer blood, incense, or other material offerings. The New Testament has abolished these. We offer the "fruit of the lips," from the heart (see Heb. xiii. 15). We offer, also, gifts and services.

(c) We are warned against the "strange" fire of pride, ostentation, love of man's praise, animal excitement, or any other motive and influence than God has ordained. This is a warning to the children of ministers and other Christian parents.

(d) Sin in this matter hardens men, and the very means of approach to God may become the means of punishment.

(e) The time of great privilege and near approach is often the time of temptation and sin. There might be set up excuses for these young men; but God makes an example of them.

(f) The true "fire" is the same always—God's Holy Spirit—seen in one form at Pentecost, enjoyed by all saints. (See how, as usual with corrupt religions, sacred fire is found in the early heathenisms. The devil mimics Deity.)

(g) This is, like all the rest of Scripture, "written for our learning." "Our God is a consuming fire."

MISSIONARIES AS CIVILIZERS.

In his book entitled *A Journey to the Central African Lakes and Back*, Mr. Thompson gives cheering testimony to the efficiency of missionary work at Livingstonia on Lake Nyassa. This is the more noticeable from its contrast with his emphatic condemnation of the work of the *International Geographical Society*, of which Prince Leopold II. is the head. Mr. Thompson says that this great society, from which so much has been expected, has shown a singular want of wisdom in the choice of the men it has sent out. In almost every case these men have lacked aptitude for the position, being especially destitute of what New Englanders call "good common sense."

The stations thus far established, e. g., at Karema on Lake Tanganyika, and at Unyanembe, are unhealthy and unpromising. That at Karema is on a hill surrounded by a swamp, and is so far from the main line of travel as to be practically inaccessible. It is fortified, and is in fact, held more as a fort than as a trading-post, or a station for scientific observation. The station at Unyanembe is in the unhealthiest part of the village, when a perfect sanitarium could have been founded two miles away. And instead of making friends with traders and natives, the person in charge has incurred their hostility, and is not likely ever to be of service to them.

Nor, according to this witness, can these stations be made a depot of supplies for travellers or missionaries. Thus far, indeed, those in charge have received help rather than furnished it.

The missionaries, Mr. Thompson says, have done, what the *International* proposed to do. They have built up peaceful and thriving colonies among the savages. They have done this in the name of religion, and as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what the American board has done among the Zulus; and what it is seeking to do at the new stations soon to be opened in Umzila's Kingdom, and at Bhé. For work in Africa, the love of Christ is a better motive than even love of science and much better than a desire to open avenues of trade.

POWER OF THE SOUL OVER THE BODY.

—The great Turenne on the eve of a battle (1667) was meditating in his tent. The sudden report of a cannon startled him greatly. "Thou tremblest," said he to his body. "Thou would'st tremble much more did'st thou know where I shall take thee to-morrow!"

DECEIVING.

Jemmy was playing in the workshop, and he broke his father's new saw. When he saw the mischief he had done he was frightened. "What shall I do?" thought Jemmy. "Go and tell mother? Wait till father comes home and tell him?" He did neither. He hoisted a hard stick partly sawn on the wood-horse, and put the broken saw beside it. That looked as if Ozro had done it.

Ozro was a boy who lived with Mr. Davis.

Mr. Davis found things just as Jemmy had them. "Who broke the saw?" he asked. Nobody could tell. Alice did not, neither Esther, nor cousin George, nor Bridget; and Jemmy kept out of the way. Ozro, he sawed and split the wood.

When Ozro came home, Mr. Davis asked him. "No, sir," answered he promptly. Mr. Davis could not believe him, for was not there the very stick he had been sawing?

The next day Jemmy heard his father say to his mother, "I cannot keep Ozro; he lied right to my face. Of course he broke the saw; there was nobody else to do it. I do not mind so much about the saw; but the lie. I cannot trust him in future."

Jemmy wished the ground would open and swallow him up. He could not take his food; it stuck in his throat. Oh! he felt so mean, and wicked, and wretched.

After this, Jemmy found no comfort in Ozro's society. Ozro was a pleasant boy, who liked little boys, and was willing to help them in many ways. Jemmy hardly went into the workshop; and many a time he stayed out in the cold rather than go home at all. You know why.

"I have the prospect of getting another boy," said Mr. Davis, a few days after to his wife. "When Ozro's mother comes, I want to tell her I cannot keep her son and why. A boy who can tell me a deliberate lie like that is not safe company for any of us."

"Oh dear, dear, dear," cried Jemmy to himself; I wish I was dead—dead and buried." His load grew heavier and heavier.

At the end of the month Ozro's mother came to see him. Mrs. Davis was sorry to have such a message for her; but it must be told. The poor mother looked grieved indeed. "I never caught Ozro in a lie in my life," said she. "Can it be he as begun now?"

"N mother," said Ozro; I never broke that saw. You will believe me, mother?"

"Yes, my child, I believe you." And so did Mrs. Davis. His honest face had no guile in it.

"I believe you, Ozro," said Mrs. Davis. "There is some cruel mistake about this."

Tears came into the poor boy's eyes. "Stay till after dinner," said Mrs. Davis to Ozro's mother. "Mr. Davis will be home then."

Jemmy was home from school sick that day. When his mother went back to the sitting-room, she found him on his elbow on the table, and his head on his hand, looking very pale. "What ails you, Jemmy?" she asked.

Jemmy burst out crying. "What ails you, Jemmy?" she asked again.

"I'm the wickedest boy that ever was," sobbed Jemmy. "You shan't send away Ozro. I broke the saw."

"My child! My child!" exclaimed the mother.

I need hardly tell you that Ozro was not sent away. Everybody was glad that his character was clear.

Jemmy then asked Ozro's forgiveness as well as that of his parents.

His mother then gave him these words to learn; "Crooked paths; who ever goeth therein shall not know peace"