

Her great-grandfather was the Rev. Archibald McLean, minister of the parish of Kilmichen and Ross, Mull, about the middle of the last century. He was an eminent minister of the Gospel, and was commonly known among the people by the name of Mr. Archibald.

Her mother's father was the Rev. Neil McLeod, of whom Dr. Samuel Johnson said that "he was the clearest-headed man he had met with in the Western Islands." He married Margaret McLean, daughter of Mr. Archibald, whom he succeeded as minister of the parish of Ross, Mull, and was the father of the Rev. Alexander McLeod, D.D., of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, New York, whose son was the Rev. John Neil McLeod, Mrs. Blair's cousin.

The Rev. Dr. McLean, president of Princeton College, New Jersey, was her mother's cousin, being a descendant of Mr. Archibald. A cousin of her grandfather, Neil McLeod, was Rev. Norman McLeod, minister of Morven towards the end of last century, whose two sons were ministers in the Church of Scotland—viz., Dr. Norman McLeod, of Campsie, and latterly of St. Columba; and Dr. John McLeod, of Morven, who succeeded his father. Each of these also had sons in the ministry, one of whom was the late Rev. Dr. Norman McLeod, of the Bury Church, Glasgow.

All these eminent servants of the Lord in the Gospel have joined the General Assembly and Church of the firstborn; it may be therefore truly said that she has been gathered to her people.

Captain McLean was the son of Lachlan McLean, of Bun-essan, commonly called Lachlan-Ban (*i.e.* Lachlan the Fair). When the captain retired from the army he lived for some time at Cairsaig, on the south side of Ross, Mull, his family consisting of three children—viz., Margaret Burnet, Lachlan Allan, and Mary Sibella, the youngest.

Mary Sibella was born at Carsaig on the 9th of November, 1821. When she was ten years old her father removed to Campbellton, in Kintyre, in order that his children might have an opportunity of attending the Academy or High School taught by Dr. Brunton in that place, and thus receive the benefit of a good education. Here they continued for some years, attending the High School, and after leaving school Mary went to England to live with a near relative in Yorkshire. When Mrs. McLean became a widow, she returned to Mull with her two daughters, Margaret and Mary, and for a time resided with her widowed sister, Mrs. McLean, of Ardfinag, in Ross, Mull. Here they lived at the time of the Disruption in 1843, and from their well known sympathy with the evangelical party, they cast in their lot with and became zealous advocates of the principles of the Free Church of Scotland.

In the winter of 1844 Mary became acquainted with him who was destined to be her future husband, while he was in the Isle of Mull as a Home Missionary between Brolas and Torosay. In 1847 or 1848 Mrs. McLean with her daughters removed to Oban, where the eldest, Margaret, met with George Grierson, teacher of the High School of that place, to whom she was married. After this Mr. Grierson removed to Perthshire, to teach the High School set up at Aberfeldy by the late Marquis of Breadalbane. Mrs. McLean, his mother-in-law, with Mary, her daughter, accompanied him, and lived with him at Aberfeldy during the space of two years.

While they were here, the Rev. D. B. Blair returned from Nova Scotia in November, 1850, and after nine months, on the 26th day of August, 1851, he and Mary Sibella were united in the bonds of marriage by the Rev. Donald Clarke, Free Church minister at Aberfeldy. In the month of September they sailed for Nova Scotia in the good ship *Mic-mac*, and landing at Halifax were warmly received by the late Dr. Forrester and his excellent wife. After a long and wearisome journey over Mount Thom to Pictou, they ultimately arrived at Barney's River, where they took up their permanent residence, and lived together in peace, love, and happiness nearly thirty-one years, until death suddenly severed the connection on the morning of Tuesday, the 6th June, 1882.

On Monday morning, the 29th May, she was in her usual health, but on Wednesday evening, the 31st, she was seized with erysipelas of the most malignant type in her left arm, and when her husband returned home from the Synod on Saturday he found her in bed, very sick. He said to her: "I never saw you so sick; I fear the time of separation is come." She replied:

"It looks like it. I never felt so weak; my strength is all gone."

Dr. Murray was sent for to see her on Monday, and she rejoiced when he came. Being at this time unable to speak, on account of swelling in her tongue, she asked for a slate, and wrote down the question, "Is there any hope of life for me, or do you think it is death?" The doctor told her that there was little or no hope. This intelligence she received with calm resignation, and wrote again, "Will the struggle be long, or will I suffer much?" The doctor said to her he thought it would not be very long. She then wrote down on the slate: "I am glad to see you, doctor, and obliged to you for telling me so plainly your opinion of my case." The doctor then asked her what were her views as to the future, and immediately she wrote down the words, "The future is bright, bright—all bright."

At three in the morning she fell into a heavy sleep, and continued so till a little after eight o'clock on Tuesday morning, when she silently breathed her last without a struggle, and her spirit went to God her Saviour, who redeemed her with His precious blood.

She was beloved by all who knew her.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXXVII.

Sept. 10.
1882.

CALAMITIES FORETOLD.

[Mark xiii.
1-20.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—"A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself."—Prov. 22: 3

TIME.—Same day as last four lessons—Tuesday before the crucifixion.

PLACE.—Vers. 1, 2. In the Temple precincts. Vers. 3-10—on the Mount of Olives.

PARALLEL.—Matt. 24: 1-22; Luke 21: 5-24.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 1. "As He went out of the temple:" for the last time. He never returned. "Stones—buildings:" building was going forward actively at this very period, and doubtless many of the stones would be lying about—enormous blocks, according to Josephus.

Ver. 2. "Jesus answering:" the disciples had spoken of the present, the Master speaks of the future, and prophesies the complete destruction of this magnificent building. So unlikely did this then appear, that the disciples might well be amazed, and think that it must refer to the end of the world. Literally fulfilled when Titus gave orders—too exactly obeyed—"to raze to the ground the whole city and temple."

Ver. 3. The company pause and sit down before passing over the Mount of Olives; from thence they had full view of the temple. "Peter," etc.: two of these died before the prophecy was fulfilled. "Privately:" apart from the multitude, possibly from the rest of the disciples, yet we think the words of Christ were spoken to the greater company.

Ver. 4. "Tell us, when:" from the account of Matthew, we gather that "these things"—the return of their Master and the end of the world—were linked together as one event in the minds of the disciples.

Vers. 5, 6. "Take heed:" a warning for us as well as for the disciples. "I am," Rev. "He:" *i.e.* "the Christ," not simply professing to be His disciples, but to be *Him*—false anti-Christ. One of those who then heard Jesus testified to the fulfilment of His words—1 John 2: 18; 2 John: 7.

Vers. 7, 8. The calamities foretold in these verses had a terrible fulfilment; "rumours of war" came upon them, threats by successive Roman emperors, and tidings of war in different parts of the empire, including the great struggle of the Britons under Boadicea. "Earthquakes:" no less than six severe ones between this time and the destruction of Jerusalem are chronicled. "Famines:" we have that mentioned in Acts 11: 28, and others are recorded by secular historians. "Troubles:" Matthew and Luke, "pestilences:" some of terrible severity occurred at this time. "End not yet:" *i.e.* of the world age, which they had supposed identical; the Saviour is guarding them against this error.

Ver. 9. Luke prefixes, "before all these:" telling the disciples something that should happen to themselves first. *Van Oosterzee* says, "There is a remarkable climax in the persecutions here foretold. The slightest was delivering up to the synagogues for scourging; a heavier conflict would await them when 'brought before rulers,' etc., but the most painful trial would befall them when they should be betrayed by parents, friends and relations"—(see ver. 12)—All this was fulfilled.

Ver. 10. "The Gospel:" a joyful sign, opposed to and outweighing all the sorrowful ones, of the end of the world: a double meaning, the preaching of the Gospel went through the Roman world before the end of the Jewish State, it is to go through the whole world before the end of the world. Do we believe it, and act upon it?

Vers. 11. A caution against anxious worry and planning when the things foretold should come upon them, and a promise of special inspiration for such occasions. "Take no thought," Rev. "be not anxious beforehand." It omits "do not premeditate."

Vers. 12, 13. A continuation of the prophecies of suffering in ver. 9. Unbelief and hate were to break the closest ties of nature, and terribly did this come to pass. Read Fox, or any of the early Christian historians, for an account of

how they were "hated of all men," and endured the bitterest fires of persecution "unto the end,"—not the end of ver. 7—each must depend on the subject spoken of—here it is the believer's probation—Heb. 3: 14; 16: 23-39.

Ver. 14. "When ye shall see:" (Rev. omits "spoken of by Daniel the prophet"). Our Lord's hearers would understand this to mean an idolatrous power set up in and polluting the temple.

Vers. 15, 16. "Housetop:" by the flat roofs of Eastern houses a person might pass over a large part of the city, and thus reach the walls, when escape by the street was impossible. "Field—garment:" those who had gone forth to labour in the field, leaving (as they would do), their outer garment, were not to return even for that, needful as it would be to them.

Vers. 17, 18. This foretelling of the special misery of mothers "in those days," would, more than the rest, tell of their terrible character, for mothers were by the Jews accounted blessed and honoured of God. "Not in the winter," the difficulties then would be much greater, the mountain roads being impassable, and camping out at night perilous to all, specially to women and children. Matthew adds, "neither on the Sabbath:" when fearing to break the command they might be tempted to remain.

Ver. 19. For the horrors of "those days," see Josephus; the cruelties of the Romans and sufferings of the Jews were unprecedented.

Ver. 20. "Except—no flesh:" this phrase is restricted here by the context to the Jews—so Jer. 12: 12—"Mine heritage," "elect's sake:" those who were chosen by Him to be delivered from these judgments, for their sakes the days were shortened.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

The destruction of the temple.—The disciples, like their fellow Jews, imagined that the temple would always remain; that as Jerusalem would be the centre to which all nations should come to partake of the blessings of Messiah's reign, so the temple, which was above all things else the embodiment of the Jewish system, should be perpetually and increasingly glorified; but it did so represent the Jewish system, was it pre-eminently to share in the destruction to come upon the city and nation.

False Christs.—As the prophecy concerning these deceivers occurs again in the next lesson, we will dwell upon it there.

Wars and rumours of wars.—These are the natural outcome of the terrible wickedness so rife among the nations, and perhaps no other period of history manifested this so fully. It would be impossible here to name even the many details of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Suffice it that wars and massacres, tumults and rebellions were constant; in a very few years civil war broke out all over the Roman empire. Not long after this there were no less than five emperors of Rome, four of these having been slain, and the disturbances connected with each change were tremendous. This is the world without God, and without the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Social and physical disturbances.—The famine in the reign of Claudius; earthquakes in Campania and Asia Minor, whereby whole cities were destroyed; with pestilence of a frightful character in Judea and in Italy;—it would seem as if nature itself was horribly smitten for the sin of men.

Hatred and persecutions.—No part of the prophecy received a more complete fulfilment than this. Christians were hated of all men for the sake of the Master. Whatever might be the hatred of the heathen to each other, they had a common hatred of Christ's disciples; they were treated as the offscouring of the earth, and atrocities almost beyond belief were inflicted upon "the sect called Christians." Let us be thankful that we live in a time of liberty of conscience; let us prize and hold fast the blessed privilege.

Of the universal preaching of the Gospel.—Thank God for this one bright sign amid so many dark and dreadful. We have a duty to help the fulfilment of this; let us help that the Gospel may be "published among all nations."

The pollution of the holy place.—To a Jew the most dreadful calamity that could happen, the one against which they fought with the desperation of fanaticism, came to pass, and the prophecy in its terrible completeness was fulfilled.

What do these prophecies and their fulfilment say to us? *That sin will bring punishment.*—All these calamities were the result of sin. For generations the God of Israel had borne with the people; they were the wicked husbandmen of the parable; and now that they were about to kill the Son, the only, the beloved Son, the cup of their iniquity would be full, and the sentence of justice must be fulfilled. So now. The Lord is merciful and gracious, but there will come a time when mercy will cease to plead, and only judgment be heard. Teach that "this is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation." Teach also that so sure as these prophecies were fulfilled, the greater fulfilment will, is, taking place; there is to be an end of the world, a "coming" of the Lord Jesus. Let us teach our scholars so to live that when He cometh they may meet Him with joy and not with sorrow. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

There may be an outward appearance of prosperity and beauty while the within is loathsome.

Christ tells us all of the future that is needful for our warning.

Great sins bring down great judgments.

Terrible is the end of the ungodly.—Rom. 2: 8, 9.

Persecuted but not forsaken, the portion of Christ's disciples.—2 Cor. 4: 8, 9.

Unbelief transforms our dearest friends into our bitterest enemies.—Matt. 10: 21.

There is a way of escape—only one—from the great judgments of God.—Heb. 2: 3.

If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?—1 Peter 4: 18.

Main Lesson.—To endeavour, by God's help, that our country shall be better because we have lived.—Matt. 5: 16; John 15: 8; 2 Thess. 1: 12; 1 Peter 2: 12.