

THE Roman Catholics in Europe are at their usual work of gathering "Peter's-pence." The twenty-fifth anniversary of the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is to be celebrated this year by pilgrimages, the formation of unions of prayer to the Virgin, the solemnization of December 8, and the collection of Peter's-pence.

THE Church at Acton, Middlesex, England, Rev. W. F. Adney, pastor, received thirty members last year. The Clifton Church, Peckham, added fifty; Whitefield Tabernacle, London, Rev. John Morgan, pastor, received forty-two; the Highcombe Church, Wiltshire, Rev. Thomas Joy, pastor, doubled its membership. Roby Church, Manchester, in ten years, received 283 new members.

POMARE, the Queen of Tahiti and Moorea, died last September, in the seventy-first year of her age. When she was born, missionaries had just come to the South Sea Islands, but not a single convert had been won to Christ. When Pomare died she had been many years a faithful Christian, more than 300 islands had become wholly Christianized, and on nearly all the rest Christian workers are making known the Gospel.

THE triumphs of the Gospel on the Island of Samoa should fix their impress on every heart. Only thirty-six years ago the people were barbarous, without a written language. The whole population 34,000—are now professed Christians, church-going, Bible-reading, earnest in prayer and effort, sending the Gospel and missionaries to other islands, with sixty students in their Theological Seminary, from which they send out some twenty yearly, and in their poverty give more than \$5,000 a year.

Official Notices.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of the following sums for the Congregational Provident Fund, since October last, and should be glad to hear from the churches generally with subscriptions for either, or both branches.

I may say that the Retiring Ministers' Fund branch is in great need of funds, and we can make good use of money if only the churches will let us have it. Hoping to have a response from each church, I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

CHAS. R. BLACK,

Sec. and Acting-Treas. C.P.F.S.

THE RETIRING MINISTERS' FUND BRANCH.

Lanark Village Church...	\$ 3 00
Zion Church, Toronto...	10 00
Cobourg Church...	5 60
First Church, Kingston...	35 15
Donation, G. S. Fenwick, Kingston...	10 00
do A. Spaulding, Montreal...	10 00

\$73 75

FOR WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND BRANCH.

Lanark Village Church...	\$ 3 00
Sherbrooke Church...	5 75
Lemoville Church...	4 50
First Church, Kingston...	35 15

\$48 43

Total.....\$122 18

THE Guelph Association will (D.V.) meet at Listowel, on the first Tuesday of March, according to resolution of last meeting. The Rev. Wm. Manchee will preach the sermon in the evening, after which the Association will be organized. The following are the subjects appointed for the meeting: "The best evidences of genuine revival," by the Rev. Archibald McGregor, B.A.; "How far are we justified in urging people to unite with the Church?" by Rev. W. Manchee; and "A discussion on the best methods of entertaining the young so as to preserve good morals and lead to correct habits," opened by Mr. Peter Martin of Garafraxa. We hope all the churches associated will be careful to send delegates, as a full and good meeting is expected.

CHARLES DUFF, Secretary.

Speedside, Feb. 15th, 1879.

THE Western Association will hold its next meeting in Listowel, on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 4th and 5th. Live topics will be discussed, and important business transacted. Will the members of the Association accept this intimation of the meeting, and be present in large force?

R. W. WALLACE, Secretary.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON X.

March 9. } THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS. } Ps. xxxii. 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psalm xxxii. 1.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Rom. iv. 1-12. Iniquities forgiven.
 1. Ps. lxxxv. 1-13. Sin covered.
 W. 2 Cor. v. 14-21. Trespasses not imputed.
 Th. Psalm ciii. 1-22. Transgressions removed.
 F. Rom. iii. 20-31. The law established.
 S. Rom. v. 1-21. Grace abounding.
 S. Ps. xxxii. 1-11. The joy of forgiveness.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Our study of this psalm follows very appropriately after the 51st. The latter contains the confession of David's great sin and his prayer for forgiveness. This is the record of the confession made, the forgiveness obtained, and the restoration to favour in which the penitent rejoices. As has been well said, David now carries out the resolve of Ps. li. 13, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways."

Sin is here described under its three aspects as departure from God, failure in duty, and guilt (see the notes on last lesson). The three-fold blessedness of forgiveness is set forth (see again last lesson). Transgressions are forgiven, the burden taken away. How? Jesus bore the burden; "our iniquities were laid upon him;" He was "made sin for us;" suffered for us, the just for the unjust, Ex. xxxiv. 7; Luke i. 29; Isa. liii. 6; sin is covered, hidden from punishment, Ps. lxxxv. 2; Isa. xxxviii. 17; xlii. 25; xlv. 22. Iniquity is not imputed. God no longer reckons it against us, but instead He reckons to us the righteousness of Christ, which is unto all and upon all them that believe, Rom. iii. 22; Isaiah vi. 10. Such is the free, full gracious pardon which God bestows. Is there no condition required in the penitent? Just one, He must be one in whose spirit there is no guile, no deception towards himself, no dissembling towards God. He must be honest with himself, harbouring no sin, cherishing no evil, renouncing and forsaking all entirely and thoroughly. He must be open and frank towards God, no concealment in his confession, no reservation in his surrender. Jesus found such a one in Nathaniel, a man of guileless spirit and simplicity of heart and purpose. John i. 45. The same condition is stated in another form in 1 John i. 9—"If we confess our sins, etc." Having thus described the condition of this man whom he pronounced blessed, the psalmist proceeds to paint and illustrate the joy and happiness of forgiveness from his own experience.

1. He describes the joy and blessedness of forgiveness by a contrast with the misery and distress he suffered so long as he kept back the confession of his sin, vers. 3, 4. He had kept silence. He was afraid to acknowledge his sin to himself, or to confess it to God. He tried to excuse himself, to silence conscience, to shake off his fears and self-reproaches. But it was no use. The sense of guilt was like a smouldering fire within. He had no rest. His very bones grew old through his inward groaning (roaring), the suppressed cry of heart anguish, which he cannot stifle. Day brought no relief, night no rest. God's hand is heavy upon him. Remorse consumes him. The very moisture of his body is dried up by the burning fever; strength and vigour are departed. Such is the curse of sin, the horrible torment of guilt unrepented and unconfessed. What a contrast between the misery of the past and the joy of the present, which is so wonderfully enhanced by the comparison!

2. The psalmist next tells how he found relief, verse 5. As long as he tried to fly from God the darkness became deeper, the misery more insupportable. But now he will fly to God. He has come to himself; and like the prodigal he will arise and go to his Father. He records his resolution. I said, I will confess my transgressions. He tried to hide them and they haunted him. Now he brings them to the light, and God himself hides them. They can no longer accuse or torment. Why? Because, and look with what emphasis he says it—Thou forgavest. There is no forgiveness like God's, so full, so complete, so reassuring and comforting.

3. David now presents his own experience as an encouragement to others, vers. 6-11. For this, that is, on this account, because of what God has done for me, others will seek the same refuge. Every godly one, who seeks God and godliness, to be near Him and to be like Him will pray unto Thee. So St. Paul tells us, 1st Tim. i. 16; that in showing mercy to him, the chief of sinners, the Saviour has illustrated the extent of His long suffering, proved what He is able and what He is willing to do, that none may despair. Verse 6 contains a solemn warning,—a time when thou mayest be found. There will come a time when He cannot be found, Isaiah lv. 6; Prov. i. 28; when the door is shut and the sad "too late," will fill the sinner with dismay. But he that calls upon God in the acceptable time ("Now," Heb. iii. 7.) will be lifted up above the floods and the storm, safely planted upon the rock. Ps. xl. 2.

And even while he speaks to others, the psalmist cannot refrain from the expression of his joy, he turns in happy trustfulness to God. Thou art my hiding place, from guilt, from temptation, from remorse and wrath.

God is a refuge for us. Ps. ix. 9. He who abides in Him is safe. The clefts of the Rock of Ages are a safe refuge. It.

Our life is hid with Christ in God. Col. iii. 3. God compasses the happy sinner about with songs of deliverance. God is the author as well as the subject of his praise, and gives him, whichever way he turns, abundant cause for gratitude and gladness.

Again the psalmist turns to those he would instruct. (Note 1.) I will instruct thee, Luke xxii. 32. His own painful experience has brought him many rich lessons, which he would impress upon others. I will guide thee with mine eye. This is gentle guidance by a look, very different from the bit and bridle which mulish and stubborn natures require. The low grovelling nature of sin, as well as its irrational folly, make those who love it and live in it, like the beasts.

This comparison leads the psalmist to the great contrast between the ungodly and the righteous, which sums up all that has been said. One is surrounded with sorrows, the other with mercies. He that trusteth in the Lord, may well be glad in the Lord. The experience of every sinner is, that his sin brings misery. These are invariably connected. The wages of sin is death.

The experience of every penitent sinner is, that confession of sin and forgiveness lifted the burden from his heart, the gloom from his life, and opened fountains of joy.

The first experience warns, the second encourages. The first is a beacon like Lot's wife. The second is a blessed voice of encouragement and direction. In this way every Christian is to be an example and a help to others in the way of life.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

I will instruct thee. Most of the old interpreters represent these two verses as spoken by God; but the more recent scholars refer them to David, who from his own experience now gives counsel to others.

IS IT YOUR BOY?

We have before us as we write, a dozen or so of those periodicals which fill our news-stands and are thrust into our faces in the cars, weekly papers intended mainly for the perusal of young men and boys. They are for the most part very coarsely printed, are illustrated with pictures most roughly done, and are in exterior almost as unattractive to any person of taste as their contents are impure and debasing.

The staple contents of most of these papers are the stories. These vary in character, of course, according to the audience supposed to be reached. Sometimes they are of border adventures, Indians, herdsmen—ruffians of every grade taking prominent parts. Sometimes they are stories of pirates and mutineers, sometimes of train-wreckers. Thieves, bandits, cut-throats, figure largely in these tales. There is generally some hapless maiden to be rescued, and superhuman feats of strength and daring are done that she may be released or saved from peril. If a boy is the hero of the story, he has a sagacity perfectly wonderful in one so young; he has a courage that never falters; he has endurance that never gives way; he has a versatility of gifts that fits him for every emergency. He always comes out best.

Such utterable improbable stories as are here told are bad enough, in the sadly distorted and wretchedly untrue views of life and the objects of living which they present. A mind nourished on this sort of food soon becomes diseased—all fine and noble and pure sentiments blunted. But stories are not the worst features of many of these papers. They pander to lust. They are not so openly obscene as to be actionable. But they do go just as near the border as they dare. And unquestionably they suggest, even if they do not give expression to lustful thoughts, and so lead to lustful deeds. They are not papers that any young man in our families would want that his mothers or sisters should see. They are not papers that any young man can himself read and not be defiled. Crimes against purity are often illustrated, with a show of indignation, to be sure, against the perpetrator. But the effect is of course, to suggest scenes of impurity to the imagination, and when it gets to work in this direction it runs riot. When such crimes have been perpetrated, it is necessary that the officers of the law be made cognizant of them. Fathers and mothers should know what perils are about their children, that being forewarned they may be forearmed. But so far from their being the slightest need that young men and boys should know anything about these revolting crimes, it is to be deplored that such occurrences are given even the inconspicuous paragraph in the daily newspaper. How much worse is it when, with picture and all possible detail, such crimes are spread before the eyes of this class! The effect can be only disastrous.—N. Y. Christian Week.

Extremes are to be avoided. A great many persons talk more than they ought to. There are superintendents who overdo the talking business before their schools. There are prayer-meeting talkers who never let a chance slip for getting in a word. And oh! how many persons there are who wish that that one unfortunate remark of theirs had been left unsaid! But there is such a thing as not talking enough. Here comes the story, from one direction, of a woman in Georgia who did not speak a word for twenty years; and from another direction, of a man in Northern New York who spoke only twice in fifty years. "The tongue is an unruly member," but it is hardly fair to give it no play at any time. It is better to have it trained than tied. Almost anybody ought to think of something worth saying as often as once in five or ten years; and after due deliberation they should say it.