

congregations of Storrington and Pittsburgh, was granted. Messrs. Smith and McCuaig were charged with the duty of carrying this into effect. There were read communications from the Conveners of the Assembly's committees on Home Missions, and Sabbath Schools. The following committees were appointed, namely, on Sabbath Schools, Messrs. Burton (Convener), Maclean, Coulthard, and Stuart, ministers, and Messrs. Mackenzie, Northrup, and Wood, Elders, and on the state of religion, Professor Mowat (convener), Principal Grant, Messrs. McCuaig, Gracey, and Chambers, Ministers; and Messrs. Coverdale, Ovens, and Dexter, Elders. Sessions were instructed to make their returns to these committees not later than the first week in March.

In the case of Mr. Beattie a committee was appointed, of which Mr. McCuaig is Convener, to examine the papers connected therewith, confer with the parties concerned, and report at next meeting. At the next quarterly meeting commissioners to the General Assembly are to be appointed, and the remits from the Assembly to be considered. Messrs. Maclean and Burton addressed the Court, advocating increased contributions, the former in the interests of the Foreign Missions of the Church, and the Theological Department of Queen's College, and the latter in the interests of Knox College.—THOMAS S. CHAMBERS, *Pres. Clerk*.

**PRESBYTERY OF CHATHAM.**—The Presbytery of Chatham met at Chatham on the 7th Dec. Tilbury West and Comber was raised to the status of a vacant charge, and Rev. William King was authorized to moderate in a call when asked by the people to do so. Rev. D. L. McKechnie read the report of the committee appointed at last meeting to visit the congregation in Dawn. After hearing commissions from Florence and Dawn, and after careful deliberation, it was agreed on motion, that the clerk of the Presbytery be empowered to procure supply for the dissatisfied Gaelic speaking people in Dawn as often as he can, with the express understanding that they are to pay all expenses in connection such services. With this deliverance all parties, i.e., the commissioners from Dawn and from Florence and Dawn expressed themselves satisfied. Notes were read from the Presbyteries of Stratford and Brockville that they purposed to apply to the General Assembly for leave to receive as ministers of the Church, Rev. John Kay and Rev. George Blair, respectively. A circular was read from Dr. Cochrane on the financial state of the Home Mission fund. On motion it was agreed to urge our people at the annual missionary meeting to contribute with greater liberality than usual; also to urge them to special prayer to God that He would pour out a spirit of greater liberality upon the Church. The clerk reported on behalf of the committee appointed to correspond with the Presbytery of London concerning certain changes in the bounds of the Presbytery. The committee was reappointed with instructions to watch over the interests of the Presbytery in the matter. Rev. Mr. Gray brought the claim of the Foreign Mission fund before the Presbytery and urged that its pressing necessity be remembered. Mr. McKechnie reported the expenses of the delegates from the Presbytery to the General Assembly had been paid, and that there remained in his hands a small balance. He was instructed to put the balance to the credit of the fund for next year. A circular was read from Dr. Reid concerning the Assembly fund. Mr. King and the clerk were appointed to audit the treasurer's books and to bring in a statement to the Presbytery at next meeting. A circular was read from Rev. J. McEwen, on Sabbath Schools. Rev. W. C. Armstrong was appointed to take charge of the schedules, to get them filled up, and to frame a report on the Sabbath School work carried on within the bounds of the Presbytery, for next meeting. It was agreed to have the next regular meeting of Presbytery on Tuesday, 18th March, 1879, at Chatham, and within St. Andrew's Church there at 11 o'clock a.m. Rev. Mr. Gray was appointed to receive the return of the various congregations on the state of religion, and to frame a report thereon to be laid before the Presbytery at its next meeting. A petition was presented from Sombra, praying that Mr. Adam Moffat be re-appointed to labour there. The prayer of the petition was granted, and Mr. Moffat was instructed to remain in Sombra till the end of March next. Wallaceburg was raised to the status of a vacant congregation, and a supply of probationers granted.—W. WALKER, *Pres. Clerk*.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### LESSON IV.

Jan. 26, 1879. **THE BUILDERS INTERRUPTED.** [Neh. iv. 1-23.]

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God and set a watch against them day and night, because of them." Neh. iv. 9.

#### HOME STUDIES.

M. Neh. iii. 1-32. The building of the wall.  
L. Neh. iv. 1-23. The hostile plot.  
W. Ps. lxx. 1-17. Deliverance sought.  
Th. Neh. iv. 13-23. The successful defence.  
F. Ps. cxxv. 1-5. The Lord round about His people.  
S. Zech. vii. 1-23. Enlargement promised.  
S. Ps. cxxiv. 1-8. Escape from the snare.

#### HELPS TO STUDY.

Nehemiah, with a royal "firman," or safe conduct, and a retinue, journeyed at once to Jerusalem. His arrival, as he was aware, at once awakened suspicion, but he kept his own counsel. After three days rest, he made secretly a survey of the ruins of the walls, and arranged his plans.

Then he assembled his countrymen, pointed out the danger of their defenceless state, and urged the speedy rebuilding of the walls of the city. All hearts were fired by his words, so that the response was hearty and unanimous—Let us arise and build.

With wonderful tact Nehemiah arranged and portioned out the work. Every class and every man had his own share assigned him. It was so arranged that most of the people of the city built a portion of wall opposite or nearest to his own house. This created a strong personal feeling in the work, and united public and private interests; a plan which might still be followed with advantage in municipal affairs. Every one went to work except the nobles of Ikkab, who, doubtless, thought the natural labor beneath them (Neh. iii. 5.) Nehemiah inspired every one with his own courage and enthusiasm. He had brought no new forces nor discovered resources which were previously unknown. But he had aroused the people to a sense of their duty, and stirred up their sleeping energies. So there are walls to be built, works for Christ to be accomplished: that which hinders is simply a lack of interest and energy. The Churches need to be aroused.

The opposition increased as the work went on. All kinds of scoffs and insults were heaped upon the undertaking. But Nehemiah's only answer was prayer, while the people laboured on with ceaseless energy, completing the whole wall up to half its intended height, because they had a mind to work. How much can be done, when there is a mind to do it. A single-hearted purpose will accomplish great things.

#### I. THE WICKED CONSPIRACY.—Vers. 7, 8.

When the enemies of the Jews (Note 1) found that, notwithstanding all their mockery, the wall was being built, they determined upon more serious measures. Their allies were summoned, counsel was taken, and a conspiracy was formed to fight against Jerusalem and hinder the work. But thus they determined to do, not in open warfare, but by stealth suddenly to surprise the builders and destroy their work.

There are always enemies to oppose every good work; very many and very crafty.

Opposition to truth and righteousness unites for a time those who otherwise are at war with one another.

There have been many such conspiracies, and there will be many more. Compare the conspiracy of the brethren of Joseph against him; of Absalom against David—2 Sam. xv. 12; of the wicked prophets—Exek. xxii. 25; of the Pharisees and Herodians against Christ—Matt. xxii. 15-18.

#### II. THE CONSPIRACY DETECTED.—Vers. 9-12.

No movement of the enemy escaped the vigilance of Nehemiah. He discovered their plot and took measures to defeat it. These were two. The first was prayer, by which he sought help from God. The second was a watch, which he set by day and night over against (not "because of them") his adversaries. True prayer never slackens energy, but, on the contrary, redoubles zeal and activity. Through these means God sends answers to prayer—"Watch and pray,"—this is the way to overcome all opposition—Matt. xiii. 33; Eph. vi. 18.

Three special difficulties are noted which tended greatly to hinder Nehemiah and strengthen his enemies. (1.) The magnitude of the work discouraged many feeble-hearted ones—ver. 10. The burden-bearers began to fail. The novelty had worn off, and actual work had chilled enthusiasm. Actual service tests zeal, and much that promised well fails. (5.) The threats of the enemy worked upon the fears of the timid (ver. 11), who dreaded lest at any moment they should be surprised and slain. (3.) Those who lived in the towns near the Samaritans endeavoured to recall those of their own people who were helping to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem—v. 12. (Note 2.) Thus they did ten times. These people lived near the enemy, and far away from the sanctuary; it is no wonder they were so fearful. Those who live near God, and learn from his promise and strength to estimate aright the strength of the enemy, are bold to fight and speak for the truth. Timid friends are even worse than open foes.

#### III. THE CONSPIRACY DEFEATED.—Vers. 13-18.

Nehemiah was only moved by all these plottings without, and fears within, to take renewed precautions. He set guards beside the low and exposed parts of the wall. (Note 3.) He exhorted the people to remember the Lord. Their strength and hope were in Him who was greater than all who were against them. Josh. xxiii. 10; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 8; Rom. viii. 31.

The work was then resumed, but the precautions were not relaxed. The retirement of the enemies did not throw

Nehemiah off his guard. He knew that although baffled, they were unchanged, and only waited an opportunity to re-commence their machinations. While one half worked, the other half, with bow and shield, and coats of mail (Note 4) were ready for action. Even the labourers went about armed. Thus they worked with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Against sin in the life, evil in the world, error in the Church, there must be maintained ceaseless watch.

The Christian is a worker, even a co-worker with God in the upbuilding of the walls of the Jerusalem which is above. But the city is being built in troublous times—Dan. ix. 25. The Christian, therefore, is called also to be a soldier, and to maintain the warfare against sin under his Captain—Eph. vi. 13-18.

We must be prepared for conflicts, and expect difficulties and opposition.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Sanballat. A native of Horonaim, beyond the Jordan (ch. ii. 10), and probably also a Moabitish chief, whom, probably from old national hatred, we find united in council with the Samaritans. Whether he held any public office as governor over the Moabites, or over the Samaritans, the record does not state.—*Kittó*. He was probably satrap or pacha of Samaria under the Persians, and Tobiah was his vizier, or chief adviser.—*Croby*. Tobiah is a Jewish name (Ec. ii. 60). He was probably a renegade Jew, who had become a slave among the Ammonites, and by his talents and cunning had risen into prominence, and was now chief adviser of Sanballat; hence the epithet, which probably his enemies had fastened on him, "Tobiah the slave."—*Croby*. The Arabians. The Arabians referred to here are those taken captive by Sargon, king of Assyria, who were carried by him to Samaria, and settled there; for an account of which consult Rawlinson's Ancient Monarchies, vol. i., p. 146. Ammonites. Descendants of Ammon, half brother of Moab, and son of Lot. Unlike Moab, the precise position of the Ammonites is not ascertainable. It has been suggested, that, as the Jews were also subject to Persia, the great body of these people would hardly dare go to war with them, and that "the allusion," is probably to a band composed largely of Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites, which Sanballat maintained as a guard to his person, and which formed a portion of the army of Samaria mentioned in v. 2. Ashdodites. Ashdod, or Azotus, was a Philistine city about 30 miles from the southern frontier of Palestine, three from the Mediterranean Sea, and about half way between Gaza and Joppa. The Philistines were always hostile to Israel.

2. From all places whence he shall return unto us. Perhaps the best rendering of this difficult passage is that of Beetham,—"They said unto us ten times from all the places (from which they came), that you must return to us."—*Cook*.

3. On the higher places. This is a mistaken rendering. The word means a dry or bare place, and hence, by a metaphorical use, an exposed part of the wall. The "lowest parts," and the "exposed parts," are in apposition. For "and," read "even."—*Croby*.

4. Habergeons. Old English for coat-of-mail, from "halo," (neck) and "hergen" (to protect). Coats-of-mail were common in Assyria from the ninth century B. C., and in Egypt even earlier. They were made of thin laminae of bronze or iron sewn upon leather or linen, and overlapping one another.—*Cook*.

CHRIST has entrusted me as a steward, therefore what I have and need not He shall have in His members who need and have not.

We may lose heaven by neutrality, as well as by hostility; by wanting oil to our lamps, as well as by taking poison. The unprofitable servant will as surely be punished as the disobedient and rebellious servant. Undone duty will undo the soul.—*Borer*.

THE need of this country is a revival of New Testament preaching, and New Testament devotion, and New Testament power. God will think more of you as a great preacher of the Gospel than as a little preacher of anything else. Preach what you know.—*Christian Advocate*.

#### MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

PETERBOROUGH.—In St. Paul's Church, Peterborough, on the third Tuesday of January.

LANARK AND RENFREW.—On third Tuesday of January, 1879, at half-past one, p.m.

BARRIE.—On Tuesday, 25th January, 1879.

GUELPH.—In Knox Church, Galt, on the third Tuesday of January, 1879, at 10 o'clock a.m.

MONTREAL.—This Presbytery meets in St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on Tuesday, 21st January, 1879.

TORONTO.—On the second Tuesday of January, 1879, at 11 o'clock a.m.

OTTAWA.—In Bank Street Church, Ottawa, on the 1st Tuesday of February, at 3 p.m.

QUEBEC.—In Melbourne, on Wednesday, January 15th, 1879.

HAMILTON.—The next stated meeting will be held in Central Church, Hamilton, on the third Tuesday of January at 10 o'clock a.m.

LONDON.—Adjourned meeting in North Westminster Church, on 2nd January, 1879, at 11 a.m.—Next regular meeting in First Presbyterian Church, London, on the third Monday in March, at 2 p.m.

WHITBY.—In St. Andrew's Church, Whitby, on the 3rd Tuesday of January, at 11 o'clock a.m.

WHITBY.—This Presbytery meets in St. Andrew's Church, Whitby, on the third Tuesday of January at 11 o'clock a.m.

KINGSTON.—In Chalmers' Church, Kingston, on Tuesday, March 25th, 1879, at three o'clock, p.m.

GLENGARRY.—At Cornwall, within St. John's Church, on Tuesday, 21st inst., at 1 o'clock p.m.