

Sabbath was fine and cool, and the Presbyterian Church was filled by an interested audience, who listened with closest attention as Mr. Robertson told his story of the labours, and dangers, and successes of mission work in the far off South Seas. How eloquent facts are! Such visits from our missionaries arouse the interest of our people in the work of the Church as nothing else can. We see their faces, hear their voices, and listen to their wondrous story, and what we have read about, and thought about, and wondered about, and may be sometimes doubted about becomes to us a living, grand reality. It is a good plan, too, for the missionaries to have their wives with them, so that the people may not forget the dear, brave women who have dared so much, and done so much for the Master's cause. But what, to devoted Christians, is present toil or hardship, in view of future glory? for like the Great Apostle, they "reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us ward." In the afternoon they went to Lunenburg in time to speak a few words to the Sabbath School. In the evening Mr. Robertson addressed a very large congregation, and made a most favourable impression. On Monday evening a very pleasant gathering spent an enjoyable and profitable "at home" with the missionaries at Mr. Millar's. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday Mr. Robertson spent at LaHave, New Dublin, and Bridgewater, and returned to Halifax by coach on Friday.

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AN important and sensational trial has just been concluded after occupying several days at Carlsruhe, in Baden. The accused was a money lender named Housman, who had a terrible reputation for usurious practice and cruelty toward those who were in his power. There were seventy witnesses who testified to his unjust extortions of money, and almost all of them were debtors who had been gradually stripped of all their possessions by him. The public prosecutor in his address to the jury said that the prisoner had been a curse to the country, and had been shown to be without a trace of humanity. Housman was found guilty and was sentenced to pay a fine of 8,000 marks, to be imprisoned for six years, and to be deprived of civil rights for five years thereafter.

THE Free Church of Scotland is giving more and more encouragement to the Ladies' Society for Missions. At home the society has gained fuller recognition by the General Assembly, which has sent forth a recommendation to "Ministers and office-bearers to aid in the formation of auxiliaries in those Presbyteries and congregations where they do not exist." The efforts of the Presbyterian women of Scotland for the increase of female education in India have brought forth fruit. Mr. T. M. Russell, formerly of Calcutta, and, therefore, well acquainted with the wants of India, has made a donation of \$17,500 in furtherance of this department of missionary labour. European residents in India appreciate the advantages of female physicians there in reaching the people. The United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions has recently received an offer from Mrs. Beynon, who, with her husband, General Beynon, resided many years in Jeypore, to provide a fully-qualified lady doctor and a nurse for that city.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Sept. 7,
1884.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

{ Ps. 27:
1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear?"—Ver. 1.

TIME.—Uncertain. But evidently a time of trouble. Some writers place it at the time when Doge the Edomite spake against David, others during the rebellion of Absalom, before the decisive battle.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.—Ver. 1. David speaks of God Jehovah, as being three things to him, and in view of that fact he asks "Whom should I fear?" God is "light," amidst the darkness of the circumstances that surround the

Psalmist; darkness signifies sorrow, stumbling, death; hence, light is the very opposite of these, it is knowledge, peace, safety, "Salvation," deliverance.—Prov. 11:8; Job 5:19. "Strength of my life," or "stronghold of my life"—Prov. 18:10, and Ps. 18:10.

Ver. 2. "Wicked—eat up my flesh:" remembering the beasts of prey of his early days and comparing these to those:—Ps. 14:4. "Stumbled—fell:" as they had expected I should do, but God was with me, so the man that is on the rock Christ Jesus shall see the waves of angry sinners dash themselves upon the rock, to overwhelm him, but be cast back broken and helpless from the strength of God.

Ver. 3. "An host:" it is the soldier who is speaking and contemplating the greatest possible danger that could arise—perhaps in his thoughts was Saul and his army, or the great host that Absalom had gathered together to crush his father; in this "will I be confident:" desperate though it may appear to men even in that my confidence shall not fail.

Ver. 4. "One thing:" whatever else may come to me or whatever may be my position, "desired—seek after," that's the true spiritual and common sense way "Desire" pray for blessings from God, and then strive to work in the line of your prayers, rarely then will you pray in vain, but desiring without seeking, when seeking is possible, is a mockery and a snare. "Dwell in the House of the Lord." to the Psalmist the work of the Priests, constantly ministering in holy things, was the holiest and the happiest lot; "all the days:" he would be there as at home, the sanctuary his constant resort; "beauty of the Lord," that is, to behold in the outward symbols all the gracious attitudes of God "Faith," or "contemplate," with delight; "temple:" the ark was still in the tent, but the original idea is not of a building, but of a place, separated from other places and devoted to God.

Ver. 5. "Hide me:" spiritual safety is now the thought, "pavilion" or "booth:" a figurative expression, as are the others in this verse; "secret—tabernacle:" as if he had said, "Were there no other place God would hide me even in the Holy of Holies:" "on a rock," as in Notes on Ver. 2.

Ver. 6. "Head lifted up:" the token of deliverance and honour—Gen. 40:14. David expected deliverance from his enemies. "Offer in His tabernacle," not quietly in my palace but publicly in the place of worship; "sacrifices of joy," or, as in Margin, "shouting," the shout of exultation; "sing"—sing praises; "these will be the sacrificing joys."

Ver. 7. As in the Psalm of the last lesson, and many others, we have a sudden transition of thought: the Psalmist now breaks out into a prayer and a cry for mercy. The pendulum of spirituality swings from prayer to praise, and from praise to prayer.

Ver. 8. "Seek my face:" to seek the face of a King is to seek his favour and protection—Esther 5:1-3. "My heart saith" or "is saying"—constantly answering to the gracious invitation of God. When God speaks to us we must faithfully respond.

Ver. 9. I am seeking, therefore "hide not thy face" the word *far* is supplied by the translators and should be omitted. David did not write "far;" he knew that the least hiding of God's face would bring darkness and sorrow. The first step of the Lord's displeasure; "passed not away," the second step: the plea of the prayer is "I am thy servant," and the servant should be where his Lord is, so "put me not away"—John 12:26. "Thou hast been," art "my help," so, leave not, neither forsake; "how strong the plea of "my salvation," or better, "my salvation God;" that is what God is to him—his salvation.

Ver. 10. "My father and mother:" Parental love is the highest type of earthly affection, yet it is as nothing to the love of God. "Take me up" as a little child in a tender parent's arms—"father and mother" may "forsake," but the everlasting Father, never!

Ver. 11. "Thy way,"—the way thou knowest to be the right and safe one; "plain path:" a straight and even path—Psalm. 26:12—that he might not stumble. "Enemies:" who were ready to take advantage of any fall. David asks, not only to be shewn the way, but to be guided in it.

Ver. 12. "Will of mine enemies:" which was his destruction; if the enemies of the people of God had their way there would not be many left in the world. "False witnesses:" the weapon of the enemies of the people of God in all ages, as of their Master who could not be condemned without that resort. How rarely you find an unbeliever who can speak with candour and truthfulness of religion and its professors; false witness either from ignorance or by design, is almost universal with them. "Breathe out cruelty:" a very vivid expression; his enemies were so filled with malice and hatred that their very breath was tainted with it.—Acts 9:1.

Ver. 13. "I had fainted," the original is abrupt, and these words were supplied by the translators, to make the connection, but as has been well observed "perished"—is more the idea as in opposition to "the land of the living," i. e., this life, in which he believed "to see the goodness of the Lord,"—a continuance of the goodness he had experienced, and as in previous verse, deliverance from the wrath of his enemies, and such as "breathe out cruelty."

Ver. 14. "Wait:" (twice repeated, has the sense of hope; trust in the Lord, but beyond that it carries the idea of a duty, and answers to the N. T. "Watch:" "of good courage:" David's faith to David's fears; so Ps. 42:5-11; and 43:5: "he shall strengthen." This had been his experience and his constant assurance: Ps. 31:24.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Confidence in God is the theme of our lesson, and following the excellent arrangement of the Homily in "Half-hours With the Lesson," we would consider the subject under three topical heads. (1) Occasions of confidence. (2) Grounds of confidence. (3) Fruits of confidence.

On the first topic, an occasion is *in time of peril*. Such peril David was often placed in during his chequered life, peril by wild beasts in the wilderness, by the enemies of Israel and Israel's God, by the malice and persecution of

Saul, by the rebellion of his son, and in many other ways; but in the midst of it all he could keep his faith and trust firmly on the Lord, and say: "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me;" like also the great apostle of the Gentiles, who, speaking of the perils to which they were exposed could exclaim: "In all these things we are more than conquerors"—Rom. 8:27.

Times of Privation: Whenever this Psalm was written, it is evident that David was shut out from the privileges of God's House. "One thing," he says, "I have desired, that will I seek after;" and in Ps. 84 he seems to envy the very birds that made their nests in the sanctuary, while he could not draw near to it; and there are times of deprivation which fall upon all men, times of disease, of poverty, and of suffering; but in all such times they can take up the utterances of David and say to their sorrowing soul: "Hope thou in God, He is the health of my countenance and my God." **Times of Desertion:** David experienced what many a good man has since David's day, that the closest friends are not always to be depended upon, and that some who have been "familiar" friends, even as a "brother," fall away and join the ranks of enemies. In all such times we can have the confidence in God that David had. He cannot be unfaithful; He cannot betray the trust reposed in Him. "In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what man can do unto me"—Ps. 56:4. **Times of Calumny:** Those who strive to serve God and are in opposition to the world have always found, that there is nothing too bad for the world to say respecting them. The amount of calumny and misrepresentation directed against believers would be amazing if we did not remember that it has been the same in all ages and in every land, and that even the incarnate Lord, who was goodness and purity itself, was spoken against, accused of being a wine-bibber, a traitor, a blasphemer, of being in league with Satan, and of not being worthy to live. If these things were done in the green tree, "what shall be done in the dry?" Will not the world that maligned the Master, malign his followers? Well, in all such times those who are God's children may say as David did: "He shall save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up"—Ps. 57:3; and can take to themselves the comforting words of the Saviour: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake"—Matt. 9:11. **Times of Temptation:** When the enemy comes in like a flood, when we feel our strength failing, our feet well nigh slipping; then is the time to feel that God can help us and God alone, that he can save us from the evil one, and deliver us in the time of temptation. Well would it have been for David if he had always felt thus and trusted thus; how different would have been the latter part of his life; how much sorrow and darkness he would have been saved.

On the second topic the grounds of confidence are so many that we can do little more than enumerate them. We have confidence in God because of His *Almighty Power*. Whatever we need He can do, read Isa. 40:15-22; and feel that He who can do all this is our God, our Father and our Friend; what then have we to fear? Again His *knowledge of our needs and weakness*, inspires trust in Him, for this knowledge is joined to infinite love and kindness, He knows our wants and He is willing and ready to supply them all. Then there is the *remembrance of past mercies*. The Psalmist found such a remembrance in ver. 2 of our lesson, and it was that which inspired him with confidence to go against the Philistine Goliath—1 Sam. 17:37. Who has not at some time or other felt the good hand of the Lord in blessing and saving; let this be a ground of confidence for the future. And have we not *The Promises of God*, exceedingly sweet and precious to rely upon; promises which never were, and never can be broken—for Scripture illustrations of this, see *Main Lesson* below. David said in ver. 13 that he "had fainted unless" he "had believed," not simply hoped, but had the confidence of faith "to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

On the third topic, we may teach that one fruit is *Deliverance from fear*, as here David says: "Whom shall I fear?" ver. 1. "My heart shall not fear," ver. 3; and so in the face of all the evils that come against him of men and devils the Christian can say "of whom shall I be afraid?" *Safety from harm*, that is from all spiritual and eternal harm. God may see fit to let the wicked prevail against the temporal well being, even the life of his people, though even in that there appear to be, at times, wonderful interpositions, but be that as it may, the soul is invulnerable to all the attacks of the wicked, and no evil of that kind shall come nigh them that trust in the Lord. Finally there is, "*Peace and joy*," in ver. 6. David would "offer sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will give praises unto the Lord," and in the darkest hour as well as in the brightest, in sufferings, in loss, in whatever outward circumstances come, the Christian has peace; "great peace have they that love Thy law," to them God "will speak peace," Ps. 85:8; and in His "name shall they rejoice all the day," Ps. 89:16.

INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

Light in the darkness of the soul, salvation for the sin of the soul, the great need of man.

Light on the way home, the privilege of believers.

Their final and complete salvation, is also assured.

Conscious helplessness and danger, should draw us near to God.

Where God is, there is His Temple, those who abide in Him abide in His House.

In time of trouble there is none to flee to like God.

Happy the heart that responds to the voice of God.

Earthly friends may fail us, the Lord never will.

Those who wait on the Lord, shall be helped in His own right time.

The past has a voice to the future, telling of trust and confidence in God.

Main Lesson.—The great ground of our confidence, the faithfulness of God—Deut. 7:9; Num. 23:19; Josh. 23:14; Ps. 114:89, 90; Matt. 24:35, 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 6:18; 10:23.