

Jerusalem after dark, and if any were out they had to hasten back as soon as the sun set, for at that time all the gates were closed, and not reopened until sunrise. What has taken place during these last few years? The Jews have been returning in thousands to their native land. They are settling not only in Jerusalem, but also outside the city walls. There was not room enough inside the city for all the houses needed. I remember the time, when I was a boy, when there were not more than two or three houses outside the wall. To-day there are quite as many houses outside as inside. Jerusalem has grown by leaps and bounds. To-day you find large districts—houses, shops, synagogues, etc.,—outside the wall, where ten or twelve years ago there was nothing but fields.

I remember the first time when the gates were left open night and day. To-day they are all left open at all times. I sometimes call to mind that passage in Zachariah ii., "Run speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." This is already beginning to be fulfilled. There are 43,000 Jews in Jerusalem alone. Ten years ago there were not more than 10,000 or 12,000 Jews in the city. The population has also enormously increased in the country itself. I believe there are now over 100,000 Jews in Palestine. Ten years ago there were supposed to be only 30,000. You see how the Jews have been restored within the last few years. Do you not think we are right when we say that the restoration has already commenced?

In the second chapter of Ezra, the ancient restoration of the Jews from Babylon is recorded to have included forty and two thousand, three hundred and three score Jews. In addition to this there were the servants and singing men, the women and priests and Levites, etc. All told, about 48,000 were restored from Babylon at that time. In our own day, more than 70,000 Jews have returned within a few years.

Not only has the land been in a very unfertile and uninviting condition, but the Turks did all they could to stop immigration to Palestine. They made it almost impossible for the Jews to return. They are very jealous of the Jews. They believe that when the Jews go back in large numbers, they themselves will have to leave the country. I remember, only four or five years ago, when the Jews came to Palestine, they had to smuggle themselves in. They had to bribe the officials to allow them to enter. Many a time the emigrants have arrived at Jaffa, and because of the presence of a Pasha, the local officials dare not take the bribe, so the poor people were kept tossing on the rough and stormy waters, within sight of land, and yet refused entrance. Such scenes as these were most heart-rending. But the objections of Turkish authorities have been removed within the last few years. The Jews now return and buy land and settle on it. Thus another stumbling-block to their restoration has been removed by God's power.

There is another improbability from a human point of view. The Jews are not accustomed to till the soil. They have not been allowed to possess land for the last eighteen hundred years. People frequently ask me if the Jews can now become farmers? I could best answer that question by taking you over the twenty or twenty-five colonies which exist in Palestine alone. You would be simply astonished at the wonderful sights you would see. There are now towns, villages, hamlets, farmhouses, etc., which had no existence ten years ago, owned and worked entirely by Jews, and most of them by Jews who were not accustomed to the land, and who were traders or shop-keepers, or tailors in Russia and other places from whence they came. They are cultivating tens of thousands of acres.

I am often asked, "What about the ten or twelve million Jews? Will they return, and can they settle in the Holy Land?" In connection with this subject is a point we

often forget. We look upon the Promised Land as the land having its borders in the North at Dan and in the South at Beer-sheba. We make a great mistake when we limit the land to these narrow regions. The land which was promised by God to Abraham stretches North-east to the Euphrates, and on the South-west to the borders of Egypt. It is as large as ten Palestines, if not larger, so that when the Jews return there will be room for them and to spare. Therefore, that difficulty vanishes. The Jews all over the world are becoming immensely rich. It is true there are many poor Jews, but there are also many rich ones. They are spoiling the Egyptians, the Russians; they are accumulating wealth in Germany, Austria, England, America, and in almost every part of the world. I solemnly believe the Jews are going to be the great missionaries of the world. When they do become so, all this vast accumulated treasure will flow in the coffers of God. Look how the Lord's work languishes in our day simply for want of funds and men to go forth. The money which the Jews will take back to Palestine will not be used on themselves, but for the glory of God.

The Jews spoiled the Egyptians when they left Egypt. I once heard a sceptical lecturer say that the Lord was teaching the Jews to swindle. But he forgot that the Jews served the Egyptians without receiving a single day's wages. And what did God do? He said, "You are going out of Egypt, but you are not going empty-handed. The Egyptians must pay you for the work you have done."

God simply made the Egyptians pay wages for the generations of hard labor. For countless centuries Christians robbed the Jews. God is practically using the same language as of old, "You shall not go back empty-handed; you shall spoil your spoilers; you shall go back with plenty of wealth. When you go back you are to become a nation of missionaries, and you will want this money for My work, just as the money was wanted when the Israelites left Egypt."

Compare the manner in which they will spend this wealth to the way it is now spent in this Christian country. Christian England spent in 1892 £140,000,000 on drink, £16,000,000 on tobacco, something like £80,000,000 on other luxuries, such as jewellery and other things. So you see that nearly £230,000,000 was spent in that most Christian country in needless luxuries. How much did England spend last year on foreign missions? £1,000,000. Let the Jews accumulate wealth. I see a grand time approaching when they will become Christians, and when they will reverse these figures, and when they will spend and be spent in the Master's service. No longer will the Lord's work languish. You will have a nation of missionaries spending their wealth on evangelizing the world. Shall we not pray earnestly for the time when all Israel shall be saved?

THE BILLETING SYSTEM.

MR. EDITOR,—The motion on this subject which was before the General Assembly will probably make the subject of Billeting commissioners a live question for some little time to come. I am not altogether with you in the remark you make, editorially, when you say, "The system has not only become a nuisance—it has become positively degrading to religion in general and to ministers of the gospel in particular." This is strong language and may in some measure be correct, but I for one do not feel it to be so. Not the use but the abuse of the billeting system is at fault, and ministers are to blame chiefly for the abuse.

There was some amount of difficulty in securing billets for all the commissioners at the General Assembly at London. Why? For several reasons. First that ministers to the extent of from 40 to 50 who were not commissioners anticipated the billeting committee and by writing to their friends and

acquaintances secured homes for themselves thus creating difficulty for the billeting committee. For commissioners this does not look much like the system being considered by ministers themselves as "particularly degrading." Second: The system is abused by some ministers, who, not content with being billeted themselves, when they put in an appearance at the home to which they have been appointed, are accompanied by their wives, daughters, etc. Hence I have met with cases in which families would say: Well I don't mind taking a delegate, if I was sure he would come alone. For a commissioner to come and bring his whole family along with him is certainly too much of a good thing, and this prevails to a greater extent than many people think. A third abuse of the billeting system is that some delegates are somewhat fastidious and if the home assigned to them does not come up to their idea, or, if it is too far away, they have not the courtesy to communicate with their would be hosts. All things suitable they would accept the billet—otherwise they make other arrangements.

A further abuse of the question is that so many commissioners come who create the impression that they are not much interested in the proceedings of the Assembly, and hence they hang about their temporary homes too much and thus prevent the "housework" going along as it ought to. They also create the impression that they are on a holiday trip and so spend their time in the city and in visiting the suburbs, etc.

This is further confirmed by the votes taken on the motions submitted. There were from 350 to 400 commissioners present in London. For several days I watched the voting and in no instance was there more than about 200 votes cast. Supposing we add say 50 for those engaged doing committee work we get then only 250. Where then is the balance? Certainly not in the Assembly. Then there are delegates who stay too long, extending their visit beyond the necessary time.

From my personal knowledge and observation I am sure our people are not anxious to abolish the billeting system. Where not abused the people consider it a privilege to entertain God's servants who come to do His work. No doubt the court is too large and a smaller number of delegates would do the work of the Church more efficiently. Cut it down and let commissioners use, and not abuse, the billeting system, and it would be a means of grace—for hospitality is a Christian grace—and not a source of annoyance and difficulty.

VERAX.

June 20th, 1895.

KNOX COLLEGE AND ITS EARLY PROFESSORS.

MR. EDITOR,—It is now over 50 years since the writer of this took part in promoting the commencement of Knox College, under the Rev. Henry Esson, of Montreal, and Rev. Wm. Rintoul, of Streetsville, who came in weekly to give lectures. The house in which they met was on James Street, and afterwards when the Rev. Mr. Gale came from Hamilton to start the Toronto Academy it was removed to Mrs. Dick's Building, now the Queen's Hotel. These were the days of small things, and at this period all the officers gave their time gratuitously, until John Burns was brought in from Streetsville as the first treasurer and secular official. The writer of this was connected with Knox Church here under Rev. Dr. Burns, and was made treasurer of the Synod Fund, also of the Presbytery of Toronto, and devoted his attention to supply the students who went out to preach on the Sabbaths at York Mills, Scaboro, Weston, etc., when Rev. John Scott, Dr. Ure and others were at college. Shortly after this the Rev. Wm. King joined the Church and from the Southern States brought his property in slaves and freed them. He bought land from the Government to locate them at Buxton in the county of Kent, where they became useful free citizens of Canada.

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July 14th. } THE GOLDEN CALF. { Exod. xxxii. 1895. } 1-8, 10-35.

GOLDEN TEXT.—1. John i. 21.

MEMORY VERSES.—7, 8.

CATECHISM.—Q. 28.

Home readings.—M. Deut. v. 22-33. Tu. Ex. xxiv. 1-11. W. Ex. xxiv. 12-18. Th. Ex. xxxii. 1-14. F. Ex. xxxii. 15-35. S. Is. xlv. 10-22. Su. Ps. cxv. 1-18.

The people were so terrified at the voice of the Lord uttering the ten commandments, that they besought Moses to act as their mediator so that they might not hear God speak any more. Accordingly Moses went up unto the mountain, and received from God directions as to how the law of the ten commandments was to be applied to the affairs of Israel as a nation. Moses returned, and, writing down these directions, read them in the hearing of the people, together with the Moral Law on which they are based. Solemnly the people assented to these enactments, and agreed to take them as the guide of their conduct. Then Moses, with Aaron and his sons and seventy elders representing the people, went up unto the mount, and there the covenant was ratified with blood. Moses was called to go again into the very presence of God to receive the ceremonial law, and directions as to the national worship. During the forty days of this absence, occurred the event of the golden calf. Let us consider the sin and its expiation.

I. The Sin.—Discouraged by the long absence of the leader who had only been among them for a short time, and forgetting the covenant to which they had just subscribed a few days before, the people came to Aaron with a demand that he should make some tangible representation of God about which they could rally as a centre, seeing that "the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt" has disappeared. That their panic was great is clear from the fact that they did not hesitate to give the golden ornaments that they had "asked" (as backsheesh) from the Egyptians when they came out of that land. Then Aaron took their gold, and after carving the image of a calf—perhaps an imitation of the sacred bulls they were accustomed to see in Egypt—he overlaid it with plates of gold into which he had melted the ornaments. The commandment violated was clearly the second, for Aaron's proclamation was for "a feast unto Jehovah." To this the people gladly came with their burnt offerings, which were wholly consumed upon the altar Aaron had erected before the calf, and peace offerings, of which only certain portions were burnt and the remainder returned to the offerer, that he and his friends might partake of it. A royal time they had feasting and drinking; and then what more natural than that they should commence an idolatrous dance, such as they had often witnessed in their captivity! Not one thought of their hearts had been hidden from God, who now commanded Moses to return to the camp, telling him what the people had done, and threatening to destroy them therefore, but saying His hand at the earnest entreaty of His servant, based upon his zeal for God's name.

II. The Expiation.—Moses' anger with the people was great, so that he dashed from him the stone tables upon which were written the ten words of the law as soon as the image of the calf and the people's conduct were seen by him. Then the calf was destroyed and the gold, which doubtless contained sufficient alloy used in manufacturing the jewellery of which the plates had been formed, to cause it to be friable, ground to powder, it was scattered upon the stream whence the people drew their supplies of drinking water. Aaron was called to account for what he had done and made a very lame excuse. Volunteers were called for to destroy the ringleaders of the idolatrous dance, who continued their lewdness in spite of Moses' presence, and these to the number of three thousand were slain. Then after a solemn day of consecration and search for blessing, Moses, who had before besought God for His own name's sake to spare the people, repaired again to Mount Sinai to effect, if possible, a reconciliation between God and Israel. First he asked God in His mercy to forgive the people their sin, whose enormity he does not attempt to bide, or, if the offence must be punished, then he prays that the people may be spared and be blotted out of God's book. Mighty love I just such as is required of Christians—"that ye love one another, as I have loved you," is our new commandment from Him who loved even unto death. God was pleased to hear Moses' prayer and to forgive for His own name's sake. He will not cast off His people but His angel will continue with Moses as he leads the people to the land of promise; however those who have sinned must be made to know that sin brings sorrow, and a plague of some kind was therefore sent upon Israel.