

Never, perhaps, during the fifty years of the church's existence has there been a meeting more marked by mutual kindness and pleasant, rational enjoyment; every one was glad to be there and glad to see others there. The pleasing interest and profit of the occasion were largely due to our genial pastor, who is surely and not slowly growing in the confidence and affection of the people. He has been with us only one year, but even this brief time has been long enough to bind the hearts of people and pastor together, and the church feels, as we hope the pastor also feels, that nothing but death shall part us. May every year lessen his trials and add more and more to his comfort and joy in seeing the work of the Lord prosper in his hands.

OTTAWA.—The annual meeting of this congregation was held on the evening of the 14th inst., the pastor in the chair. After devotional exercises, the Treasurer, Mr. James Jarvis, read the report of the Finance Committee, and the statement of receipts and expenditure for the past year, from which it appeared that the ordinary income of the church had been \$1,294 19, and the expenditure \$1,290 40, leaving a balance in hand of \$3 79. The mortgage held by the Sparks estate being about to mature, the committee had, with the consent of the congregation, borrowed \$1,200, with which to pay it off, and cancel all claims of any kind against the church. A special subscription list fully provides for the interest as it accrues. Altogether the financial exhibit was felt to be a very satisfactory one. The pastor reported having enjoyed uninterrupted health, and great pleasure in his work, throughout the year. He had preached 152 sermons, had paid 327 visits, had baptized 6 children, and attended 4 funerals. Two fortnightly services are held, one in New Edinburgh, and the other in Stewarton. The prayer meetings had been well sustained, but the additions to the church had been few, and had been outnumbered by the removals from the roll. The Sunday school numbered 81 scholars and 24 teachers. Average attendance, 64. Bible class, 24 scholars; average 18; collections, \$72.55. The Sunday School Missionary Society has held four meetings during the year; collections \$28.34. The Sunday School Temperance Society had now 132 names on its roll. The ladies' visiting committee had worked faithfully and done good service. The reports were, on motion, adopted, and the thanks of the congregation were voted to the Treasurer, his assistant and the Finance Committee. The meeting closed with the doxology.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON VI.

Feb. 8, } THE TRULY RIGHTEOUS. { Matt. v. 1880. } 17-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts."—Ps. li. 6.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Matt. v. 17-26.....Truly Righteous.
- T. Ps. li. 1-17.....Truth in the Inward Parts.
- W. Rom. iii. 21-31.....The Law Established.
- Th. 1 John iii. 9-18.....Love and Hate.
- F. Prov. xxv. 1-11.....Strife to be Avoided.
- S. Ps. xxxii. 1-11.....Confession brings Ease.
- Sab. Isa. lv. 1-13.....Seeking the Lord.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The present lesson requires little or no introduction, as its subject is the continuation of the "Sermon on the Mount," commenced in last lesson.

The Saviour here describes "righteousness" under the Gospel dispensation as consisting in willing and cheerful obedience to the moral law, in its letter and in its spirit, as a rule of life; brings the substance of the Old Testament teachings into the new code; and shews that Christian liberty is not a liberty to sin.

The following divisions will be found distinctly marked: (1) Permanence of the Law, (2) Spiritual Nature of the Law, (3) Practical Nature of the Law, (4) Wisdom of Speedy Agreement with the Law.

I. PERMANENCE OF THE LAW. Vers. 17-20. If the man who said, "the four Gospels are Bible enough for me," had studied these same four Gospels with sufficient attention, he would have discovered his mistake. All inspired Scripture is of equal authority. Christ Himself frequently

emph' yed the assertion "It is written" as final and unanswerable. And here He says:

Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. It was only by its fulfilment in Christ that even the Ceremonial Law came to an end, but the reference here is to the whole of the Old Testament writings, which are often called "the Law and the Prophets," and especially to the Moral Law, or ten commandments.

It is by faith in the efficacy of the finished work of Christ—His sufferings and His obedience—that the believer is justified; but the ten commandments are as binding upon modern Christians as they ever were upon ancient Israel—not in either case as a means of salvation, but as a rule of life, an evidence of justification, a fruit of salvation—and the true believer would not have it otherwise.

Till heaven and earth pass. That is only another way of saying (Gal. 3:12). The law has been put into a form suitable to the circumstances of this life; but its nature is of universal and eternal obligation, and obedience to it constitutes the holiness of the perfect saints in heaven; what more can they do than love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their strength, and with all their mind, and love their neighbours as themselves? and is not this the substance of the much despised ten commandments?

One jot or one tittle: We are to neglect nothing that is commanded, we are to do nothing that is forbidden, even if it should be apparently of no greater importance than the dotting of an *i* or the crossing of a *t* in writing. *Jot* is the name of the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and *tittle* is a small point used to distinguish one letter from another.

It was not for their outward observance of the law that the Pharisees were condemned, but for their want of inward purity and rectitude; in both respects the righteousness of Christians is expected to exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. It is found to be so in fact. A willing obedience arising from love, is likely to excel a slavish obedience arising from fear; and the righteousness of those who hold the doctrine of salvation by grace exceeds that of those who rest their salvation on their own merits. The acceptance of the doctrine of justification by faith has never diminished, but always increased, good works.

II. SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE LAW.—Vers. 21, 22. Those superficial religionists who say that they have got beyond the moral law, and left it far beneath them, are entirely mistaken. They have only begun to obey the law in its length and breadth and height of spirituality. The Saviour here takes the sixth commandment as an example, and shews that it applies to our inmost thoughts as well as to our outward actions.

Raca: Vain, or worthless—a term of intense insult and reproach in use amongst Jews at the time. Fool: in the scripture sense, implying depravity and wickedness (Psalm xiv. 1; Josh. vii. 15). The feeling of hatred, which sometimes leads to murder, is a breach of the sixth commandment, whether it manifest itself in inflicting the death-blow or in calling hard names, or even if it be merely entertained in the heart, without any outward manifestation; so also with the crimes forbidden in the other commandments.

In the wording of the commandments it is always the worst way of breaking them that is mentioned; and the meaning is, not only that we are not to commit the crime, but that we are not to take a single step in the direction of it, nor even to indulge the feeling that leads to it. It must not, however, be forgotten that the actual commission of the crime, whatever crime it may be, is a terrible aggravation of the offence.

III. PRACTICAL NATURE OF THE LAW.—Vers. 23, 24. The spirit of the law cannot be magnified at the expense of the letter; and it is a fool's boast to disregard practical morality under pretence of high spirituality and attention to religious observances. Both are necessary.

We cannot say that we are doing our duty to God if we are not doing our duty to man; the former includes the latter; and Christ here tells those who come to worship God to go and do their duty to man first, and then come back to present their offerings.

IV. WISDOM OF SPEEDY AGREEMENT WITH THE LAW.—Vers. 25, 26. We are naturally at variance with God's law. We regard it as our adversary although it is not so in reality, for obedience to it would be conducive even to our worldly prosperity. As long as we have not Christ as our Saviour we are exposed to all the demands of the law as a covenant of works.

If we wish to be reconciled to God, we must be reconciled to God's law. The law sends sinners to Christ; and when they become believers Christ brings them to the law. He brings them into agreement with it. What formerly seemed their adversary is now seen to be their friend. The work of the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier is to bring men up to the standard of the moral law; higher than that even He cannot bring them.

If we remain upon our own shoulders the debt under which we are to God's law, we cannot do anything towards paying it, for even if we were perfect we could only satisfy present demands. This being the case we can easily understand the aw' import of the words—which would never have been uttered by the gentle Saviour if they did not express the sad, sad truth—thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

In Holland there are 2,000,000 members of the Reformed Church, 70,000 Lutherans, 42,000 Mennonites, 6,000 Remonstrants or Arminians, 400 Moravians, and 80,000 Separatists or Old Reformed.

PAID IN YOUR OWN COIN.

GRANDMOTHER, I hate to go away from you; you like me, and nobody else does. Last night George Bedin and I had a quarrel. I struck him and he struck me. Nobody likes me."

Peter Jones said this as he was sitting on his trunk ready to start for home.

"He only paid you in your own coin," said grandmother. "people generally do—a hate for a blow, cross words for cross words, blow for hate."

"I don't know; but it is so," said Peter, looking very sorry, "but it is a poor sort of coin."

"How different it would be if your pockets were full of the right sort of coin," said grandmother.

"What kind?" asked Peter. "The coin of kindness," said grandmother. "If the great pockets of your heart were full of that sort of coin, the more you paid away the more you'd get back, for you are generally paid in your own coin, you know; then how happy you would be."

"The coin of kindness," repeated Peter, slowly; "that is a good coin, isn't it? I wish my pockets were full of it, grandmother. If I'd be kind to the boys, they'd be kind to me."

"Just so," said grandmother.

Peter's own mother had died. After that he was sent to grandmother's, for he had a quarrelsome, fretful temper, and his aunt could not manage him with the other children. His grandmother dealt kindly and patiently with him, and helped him to improve himself. Peter now had a new mother, and his father had sent for him to come home. Peter did not want to go. He felt sure he should not like his new mother, and that she would not like him.

"That depends upon yourself, Peter," said grandmother; "carry love and kindness in your pocket and you'll find no difficulty."

The idea struck the boy's mind. "I wish I could," he said.

"And the best of it is," said grandmother, "if you once begin paying it out, your pockets will never be empty, for you'll be paid in your own coin. Be kind, and you'll be treated kindly; love, and you'll be loved."

All the way home he more or less thought of it. I do not know about his welcome home, or what his father or new mother said to him.

The next morning he arose early, as he was used to at grandmother's, and came down stairs, where, everything being new, he felt strange and lonely.

"I know I shan't be contented here," he said to himself; "I know I shan't, I'm afraid there's not a bit of love in my pocket."

However, in a little while his new mother came down, when Peter went up to her and said,

"Mother, what can I do to help you?"

"My dear boy," she said, kissing him on the forehead, "how thoughtful you are. I thank you for your kind offer; and what can I do to help you? for I am afraid you will be lonely here at first, coming from your dear good grandmother."

What a sweet kiss was that! it made him so happy. "That's paying me in more than my own coin," thought Peter. Then he knew he should love his new mother; and from that good hour Peter's pockets began to fill with the beautiful bright coin of kindness, which is the best "small change" in the world. Keep your pockets full of it, boys and girls, and you will never be in want.