

union. Standing committees for the current year were appointed. The clerk was instructed to correspond with congregations who had not come up to the amount expected of them in regard to salary. The next meeting of Presbytery was appointed to be held in the Presbyterian Church, Mount Forest, on the 22nd day of September next, at eleven a. m.—S. YOUNG, *Fres. Clerk*.

**PRESBYTERY OF MANITOBA.**—The Presbytery of Manitoba met on the 8th inst. in Knox Church. C. P. Pitblado, Moderator. Rev. D. B. Whimster was appointed to act as clerk. Elders' commissions were received. Mr. Robertson, the superintendent, reported that he had moderated in a call at Rat Portage, and that the same had been unanimous of Mr. J. Campbell Tibb. The matter was referred to the Synod. He also reported that he had moderated in a call at Regina, which had been unanimous and in favour of Mr. Alex. Urquhart. The conduct of the superintendent sustained, and the report referred to the Synod. The superintendent further reported that the committee appointed had visited Cadurcis and associated stations as instructed. The report was received and transmitted to the Synod. The superintendent reported that Prof. Hart and he had considered the case of Mr. Dugald McGregor, and granted him his Presbyterial papers. The report of the committee was sustained, and the name of Mr. McGregor was accordingly ordered to be removed from the roll. Rev. Mr. Robertson presented a report of the Home Mission Committee. It was agreed that the same should be transmitted to the Synod. On motion of Mr. McKellar, Rev. Mr. Williams, of the Presbytery of Pembina, being present, was invited to sit as corresponding member. Rev. Mr. Robertson stated that he had received a telegram from Mr. McWilliams signifying his acceptance of the call to Prince Albert. Rev. Mr. Robertson reported that he had in company with Mr. Urquhart, visited a district north of Regina, where there was an important settlement, and that a congregation had been organized, though there was yet no session. Rev. Mr. Douglas reported having presided at the induction and installation of Mr. McKenzie into the charge of the congregation at Carberry and Petrel. Rev. D. McRae reported the induction of Mr. Todd at Burnside as having taken place according to the appointment of the Presbytery. Rev. Dr. Bryce brought up the matter of the application of the congregation of Port Arthur, to be transferred from the Presbytery of Bruce, and connected with the Presbytery of Winnipeg. It was agreed that the Rev. Mr. Herald's name should be added to the roll of the Presbytery. Rev. Messrs. Matheson, Gordon, Davidson, Dr. Bryce, Mr. Robertson and the Moderator gave verbal reports of their visit as commissioners to the General Assembly. On motion the reports were received, and the commissioners thanked for their diligence. The election of elders was reported by Mr. McRae, at Neepawa, Mr. Hodnett at Birtle, Mr. Campbell at Stonewall and Grassmere, and Mr. Wellwood at Minnedosa. The reports were received, except that of Mr. Campbell, which was referred to the Synod. Rev. Dr. Bryce brought up a petition from Campbellville, asking to be allowed to have services fortnightly by a student in Sharon. Referred to the Synod. A request for moderation in a call to Sunnyside was received and ordered to be transmitted to the Synod. Rev. Mr. McKellar, reported on behalf of a deputation appointed in connection with the case of Rev. Mr. Mullins. A request from Mr. John Ferris for a Presbyterian certificate was read by Rev. Mr. Robertson and transmitted to the Synod. Rev. D. G. Cameron brought up the matter of an indebtedness of the congregation of Nelson to the Presbytery. It was transmitted to the Synod. A request from Mr. Angus Sillar for the return of his Presbyterial certificate was presented, and it was agreed that the same should be handed him. A report of a committee appointed to visit Pilot Mound, ancient Mr. Bothwick's case, was transmitted to the Synod. On motion of Rev. Mr. Stalker, seconded by Rev. Mr. McKellar, the Presbytery adjourned until next morning for the formal closing with devotional exercises, and fraternal expressions and historical reminiscences appropriate to the occasion.

**MOURNING** after an absent God is an evidence of love as strong as is rejoicing in a present one. *F. W. Robertson.*

ONE great cause of our insensibility to the goodness of our Creator is the very extensiveness of His bounty. —*Paley.*

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### ABSALOM'S DOOM.

Aug. 17, 1884.

Sam. 18: 24-33.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Whoso curseth father or mother let him die the death."—Mark 7: 10.

**TIME.**—Shortly after the last lesson.

**PLACE.**—Mahanaim (two hosts), so called by Jacob when he had divided his people into two hosts on his return from Syria.

**INTRODUCTION.**—Read carefully the incidents between the flight of David as narrated at the close of the last lesson, and the tidings of the battle in the woods of Ephraim as we have in this lesson, note the spirit of David in the matter of the cursing of Shimei, the encouragements he received in the warm attachment of so many to his cause, Joab and his brother Abishai, Hushai, Zadok, the priest, and his son Ahimaaz, and not least, Ittai the Gittite who though an alien could show a noble devotion to the fallen King; and again he had encouragement in the sympathy and assistance of so many who were able to give it, as detailed in Chap. 17: 27-29; these things must have strengthened David's faith, and been to him an assurance that although the Lord was chastening, He would not cast him off for ever. Then follows the story of the battle, with the death of Absalom, slain by Joab against the express command of David. As our lesson opens David is waiting news of the battle.

**Notes and Comments.**—Ver 24. "Sat between the gates:" the outer and inner gate of the fortified city wall, between which there was a small court. His overpowering anxiety fastens him to the spot where his troops left him in the morning; all day long he has been waiting and watching and it is safe to say that his thoughts have been all of concern for Absalom. "To the roof:" the top of one of the towers of the outer gate; it was a suitable place for a watchman. "A man running alone:" swift runners was the ancient method of obtaining news, two messengers had left the scene of battle, but one, Ahimaaz, had outrun the other, Cushai.

Vers. 25, 26. "If he be alone—tidings:" that is, of victory. David as a warrior knew well enough that a defeat would have brought on a large number of fugitives. "The porter:" whose business it was to attend to the opening and shutting of the gate, and who being below could inform David. "Another:" and only one, so the King would be confirmed in his previous opinion as to the result of the battle.

Ver. 27. At first a mere speck on the horizon, only visible, perhaps, to the practised eye of the watchman, the form of the runner and his gait as he drew near were familiar. It was "Ahimaaz the son of Zadok:" David knowing his loyalty and attachment at once said, "He is a good man and bringeth good tidings." He had borne good tidings before at the rejection of the counsel of Ahithophel. (Chap. 17: 14-17) There are some people who appear to delight in bearing evil tidings; Ahimaaz was not one of these.

Vers. 28, 29, 30. Full of his message he scarcely waits to reach the King but calls out, "All is well;" lit., "Shalom," peace, or "Hail." "Blessed be the Lord:" Ahimaaz did not forget, as some too often are apt to do, from whom our mercies come. "Delivered:" lit., "Shut up." (See 1 Sam. 17: 46 margin.) The idea is of confining our enemy and not giving him the liberty to work evil. There is one thing, however, about which the King is more anxious than victory. "Is—Absalom safe?" Oh, the power of a loving heart! The son who had deceived him, rebelled against him, and would have taken his life, yet his first thoughts are for that son's safety! Ahimaaz seeing the heart of the King in his question, and remembering the charge of the morning, gives an evasive answer, and would have him think that he had been sent before Absalom's fate was known. He was willing to be the bearer of good news, but afraid to announce the bad. "Turned aside and stood still:" tired as he would be after his long run of several miles, he could not sit down in the presence of the King.

Vers. 31, 32. "Cushai:" we are not sure if this was the proper name of an Israelite, or whether he was a descendant of Cush, a son of Ham. (Gen. 10: 6, 7, 8.) If so, he was a Canaanitish slave of Joab. Cushai brings the same news of victory as Ahimaaz, "The Lord hath avenged thee," and he is met by the same question, "Is the young man—safe?" Note how David dwells upon the thought of the youth of Absalom, as if that were an excuse for his crimes, although he was really over forty years old. Delicately, yet unmistakably, does Cushai give the reply, "The enemies—be as that young man is." It carries the dreaded news to the heart of David.

Ver. 33. "The King was much moved:" hope that had lingered with him had fled, the dreadful calamity was there—Absalom was dead. With kingly pride he will not show his grief, but goes up into the chamber over the gate weeping, mourning, and lamenting for his slain son. "Would God:" so Moses would have died if the people could have been saved (Ex. 32: 32); and so Paul "could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren" (Rom. 9: 3), and how are we reminded of Him who, when He beheld the city, wept over it, knowing so well the sore trouble that was coming upon it. (Luke 19: 41.)

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

**PRELIMINARY.**—This lesson is the fitting completion of the last. David was troubled once at the prosperity of the wicked and their success in life; it appeared to him as if God let things take very much their own course, that the plotting, the devices and schemes of the wicked were not interfered with and that in the full harvest of his works the door of evil could look around him and despise the power and providence of God. The Psalmist learned in "the sanctuary" that he had made a mistake, and that the course of the wicked was held as by a bridle in the

hands of Jehovah. "He sets them in slippery places, casts them down to destruction, brought them into desolation in a moment and utterly consumed them with terrors." No more striking illustration of this truth is to be found in the whole range of Bible narrative than the story of Absalom! Everything up to the commencement of our lesson gave promise of the ultimate and complete success of his scheme. His plans were well and carefully laid, he had won the hearts of a large number of the people, had secured the services of brave, wise and faithful men. The circumstances of the country and of the court favoured his cause. It is more than likely that David's sin, of which we have had the story, had alienated a large number of the people; it is certain that the King had withdrawn from his active duties of attending, either personally or by deputy, to the interests of his subjects, he had shut himself up and forgotten what he owed to the nation, and if as *Psalm* supposes, the numbering of the people, and the plague by which it was punished, came before this, we have an additional element of disaffection. The country, if not actually ripe for revolt, was not, at any rate, unwilling to try the experiment of a new and younger King, seeing that the old one was apparently worse than useless. Absalom had, too, that rare virtue in a conspirator, *he could wait*; he would not risk anything by precipitating his actions, but plotted patiently on for years. The time came and the opportunity and without striking a blow he leaped into the royal position; there it appeared as if he was King beyond peradventure, as if nothing could supplant him, and he was safe for life; but "The Lord reigneth" a fact Absalom had forgotten, and although He permitted chastisement for sin to fall upon David, He did not intend that the penitent should be destroyed, nor that wickedness should triumph. Let us then teach this great lesson, that although to-day, as then, wickedness may appear to succeed, and the wicked to triumph, yet all are in the hands of God, and only so far as it serves the wise purposes of His counsel will He permit the success of evil, and even if we do not see here the reward of the wicked we may be sure that it will come in that after life which is but the development and completion of this.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

**Topical Analysis.**—(1) Waiting for the tidings 24-27; (2) the tidings received 28-33.

On the *first* topic, picture the intense anxiety of the king as he sat waiting there to hear the result of the battle that was to decide his fate and the fate of the kingdom. It would appear that he had little doubt as to the issue; as a soldier he knew his men and had confidence in them; perhaps he had the assurance from God that so far his afflictions would go, but no farther. Sure of victory, there was another care upon his heart; that was Absalom. He feared, too truly as it proved, that his son would perish in the battle, and this foreboding hung heavy upon his heart. Recall another waiting for tidings, which we studied in the fourth quarter of last year, poor old Eli, sitting trembling by the wayside, not so much for the result of the battle, or even for the fate of his two sons, but for the Ark of God. Refer also to that picture, if you have seen it, so expressive, so touching, "Waiting for the Verdict," the old father and mother sitting just outside the court while their son is being tried within. Oh, the deep and bitter sorrow and anxiety of their hearts as the life, or life-long liberty, of their dear boy trembles in the balance! These show that this is one, and a perfectly natural result of disobedience to parents, disregard of parental authority, and that in Absalom's case, as in many others, the end thereof was death.

On the *second* topic, in noticing the sorrows of David we may speak of one or two things that made it deep and intense. *Absalom was David's favourite son.* This is evident right through the history; handsome, graceful, winning in his manners, he held foremost place in the king's heart, and there was truth in Joab's rough words: "I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all we had died this day it had pleased thee well." Chap. 19: 5-6. The grief of David, not wrong in itself, was wrong in its excess, and in the discouragement it gave those who had risked their lives for his sake. Might not one element of his sorrow be, that *his own sin was the beginning of the evil*. How had he appeared to that son; what example had he set? Could he wonder that this son should sin ever as he had done, and was it not a part of the chastisement of his sin? Who can tell how much the consciousness of neglect of parental duty and of the evil effects of a bad example help to make that cup of sorrow so bitter. Perhaps "bitterest of all" was the *hopelessness of Absalom's death*. "he could not say now, 'I shall go to him,' as he had done once before, that hope was lost forever; the sun of Absalom had gone down at noon in eternal darkness. Some one has said that every such instance of tender love should stand in our hearts as a type of His love who left His Father's throne for us. Let the human affection interpret the Divine.

**Supplementary.**—Picture in a few words that solitary grave heaped over with stones, in the wood of Ephraim, a grave upon which the passing Jew for generations after cast a stone with an execration of the sin of Absalom, and show that in some way or other sin will bring punishment, sure and terrible, for, "the wages of sin is death."

#### INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

While there is life there is hope, but hope ends with death. We sometimes fail to see the blessing that comes as a sorrow and weep as though it were a curse.

We cannot redeem another nor offer a ransom for him. Christ alone could do this. *Psa. 49: 7.*

There are graves over which no ray of light from the eternal world falls. Pray that no scholar of yours may fill such a grave.

He that will live for another may never have with bitterness to desire to die for him.

Sometimes the objects of our pride are the instruments of our destruction.

**Main Lesson.**—Death. Temporal, Spiritual, Eternal, the result of sin—*Psa. 9: 17, Prov. 2: 22, 11: 5, 21; Isa. 57: 20; Ez. 18: 4, 23; Rom. 5: 12, 21, 6: 23, Jas. 1: 15.*