

this country, and traced its developments from its first planting up to the present time. Messrs. Gordon, Whimster and Pringle, Fairbairn, Ross and A. H. Cameron, Bell, Wellwood and McRae, were appointed Members of the Synod's Home Mission Committee. Mr. Robertson, the Superintendent of Missions, was appointed Convener, and Mr. D. B. Whimster, the Synod Clerk, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Synod's Home Mission Committee. Standing Committees were appointed with the following conveners: Temperance, Rev. D. Stalker; Sabbath Observance, Rev. C. B. Pitblado; Sabbath Schools, Rev. W. D. Russell; Finance and Statistics, Rev. John Pringle; State of Religion, Rev. H. McKellar; Church Law and Property and Vital Statistics, Rev. Dr. Bryce; Convener, Maintenance of Theological Department of Manitoba College, Rev. D. M. Gordon; Foreign Missions, Prof. Hart. After various votes of thanks and devotional exercises, the Synod adjourned to meet at Brandon on the third Tuesday in May, 1885.

OBITUARY.

MR. WARREN DEBECK.

The following is from an address written by the Rev. R. Jamieson, St. Andrew's Church, New Westminster, B.C., who has been seriously ill for a lengthened period, and was read at the close of the funeral sermon by the Rev. A. Dunn, Langley. It has since been printed for private circulation by request:

I believe Mr. Debeck was always of a serious turn of mind, and religiously disposed, but he did not come out decidedly and professedly on the side of Christ until June 19th, 1870—just fourteen years ago.

The special circumstances leading to that important step, were the awfully sudden death of his father at Burrard Inlet a few weeks before; and the funeral and other services conducted by myself on that long to be remembered occasion. He was more than ordinarily devoted and attached to his father—as indeed he has been to his widowed mother—and the blow then struck, and the impressions made were never forgotten by him. On the date mentioned he was baptised by me in this church, and admitted as a member in full communion with the congregation.

On the 25th day of March, 1878, our deceased friend was ordained a ruling elder in the church, an office which he not only held, but adorned until his last hour on earth. As a son, a brother, a husband, and a parent, he was always what a good man should be among his fellow men. He was kind, affectionate, self-denying, unselfish, and ever considerate of the feelings of others. As a private member of the church, as one of the committee of management, as a Sabbath school teacher, and as an elder, he was likewise all that a good man should be among his fellow-men. He was humble, unassuming, yet zealous and earnest, prudent, patient, consistent, faithful, and not easily offended.

He was thoroughly loyal to the church of his choice and his minister. He was this in an eminent degree, and yet there was not a particle of bigotry or narrow-minded, unchristian sectarianism in his whole frame. When his own church was open for services of any kind he would no more think of absenting himself, if it were possible to be present, or of leaving it for another, than he would think of renouncing his profession of religion. And yet no one was more ready to pray with, or work with, or give of his means to the support of others of any or all denominations of Christians who were earnest in Christ's work. But he was thoroughly loyal to his own. He considered, and justly so, that his own church had the first claims on his prayers, his presence, his time, his labours, his contributions, and his example.

Another marked characteristic of our lamented friend was his conscientious regard for the sacredness of the Lord's day. And that too in circumstances where it is difficult to do so; and where I am sorry to say it is not often done. A right regard for the Sabbath has very much to do, not only with the glory and honour of our Divine Lord and Master, but with the whole tone and growth of our own religious life,—indeed with its very existence.

Not long before his end, and on one occasion when he thought his end very near, I reminded him of the very peculiar trials and struggles he once had to maintain his integrity, and asked him what he now thought of them all, (as we often talked over them wondering what was best to be done), and if it were not better to endure and be true, though what he had endured for

Christ's sake and the Gospel's was too much for mere human strength. "Oh yes!" he said, "there was nothing he was more thankful to God for now in view of his death, than that he was able by His grace to be faithful to Him. And that not only for his own sake, but because he believed it had been the means of good, very great good to others in the end, and would be when he was dead and gone."

The address concludes with an expression of consolation and sympathy for the bereaved relatives.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Aug. 24. } THE PLAGUE STAYED { Sam. 24
1884. } 15-25.

GOLDEN TEXT—"So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."—2 Sam. 24: 25.

TIME.—B.C., 1017. Six years after last lesson.

It is right however to note, that although placed after the rebellion of Absalom some think that this occurred before that time. The narrative is not always as we know, strictly chronological.

PLACE.—Jerusalem, and the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, on Mount Moriah, the site of Solomon's Temple.

PARALLEL.—1 Chron. 21: 1-30.

Introduction.—Questions will arise about this lesson, or rather about the circumstances that led to it, which the wise teacher will do well thoroughly to consider and be prepared, so far as he can, to answer, just as "What was the plague sent for?" "For numbering the people." "But where was the wrong of that, had not Israel been numbered before, and even by the express direction of God?" "Yes, and we are not told where the sin lay, but we may be sure that there was sin in what appeared an innocent act. We saw in the death of Uzzah, that a thoughtless, irreverent act, although the act of a good impulse, may be displeasing to God, and bring down punishment: so, here, there was doubtless in the motives to the act, pride and vain glory; perhaps, as one of the results told the number of fighting men, David might have been contemplating an aggressive war to bring some of the surrounding nations beneath his sway, a thing displeasing to God; most likely the sins of pride and ambition were at the root of the action. Another question may be, "why should the innocent people suffer for the sin of the king?" Let us note that the innocent do suffer for the sin of others, to-day, every day; an engineer takes too much liquor and his innocent passengers are hurried to a terrible death; a lookout on an ocean steamer is careless, a swift collision occurs, and both vessels, it may be, go down into the deep, leaving but few to tell the tale; and so is this law under which we live illustrated in a thousand forms. But beyond this it is evident from the first verse of this chapter that the people were not innocent, they had shared doubtless in the pride and vain-glory of their king, and they had to be punished for their sin, for "the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." Teach, however, that if we knew nothing and could see no reason for the act, we may rest assured that the Judge of all the earth will do right. He who tries the heart and reins knoweth what is in man and judgeth as He knows. David was offered from Jehovah, by the prophet Gad, the choice of three things, seven years of famine, three months' flight before his enemies, or three days' pestilence. Well might David say "I am in a great strait," and devout was his choice; "let us fall now into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are great." Here our lesson opens.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 15, "a pestilence." lit. "a death" while natural causes were likely employed, such as the gathering of large numbers to certain centres for the census, and the spreading of the death among them with frightful rapidity; yet we need not look beyond the fact that it was the very hand of God. Time appointed. This would be the morning of the third day, but as the plague was mercifully cut short (see next verse) it has been rendered "until the time of the assembly," that is the hour of evening sacrifice, about three o'clock in the afternoon. This was also the hour of Christ's death, the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. "Dan Beer sheba," the first on the extreme north, the other on the southern frontier of the land, 150 miles apart "seventy thousand men, an enormous mortality, and nothing is said of women and children, we may not suppose that they were exempt, and if the usual proportion held, then it was the most frightful plague in Biblical or secular history.

Ver. 16. "The angel"; angels are God's ministers to execute His judgments.—2 Kings 19: 35; Acts 12: 23. The Lord repented Him. We can only measure the mind and will of God by our imperfect human thought, and express them in human language. In one sense there can be no repentance with God, but there can be and is, a change in His feelings towards man when he repents. "Threshing place," these were generally on high, open places for the advantage of having the wind to carry away the chaff. "Araunah the Jebusite," of whom we know nothing, certainly, beyond the narrative, he was evidently a man of wealth and consideration, possibly had been so in the old Jebusite city, and most likely from his actions, was a convert to Judaism. Tradition has plenty to say about him, but all is uncertain.

Ver. 17. "When he saw the angel:" there was a visible manifestation of the destroyer as was said at other times, notably during the first siege of Jerusalem. "I have sinned—done wickedly." True penitence will acknowledge and take the blame of sin. Where penitence is not, the sinner will try to throw the blame on others, as Adam and Eve, "What have they done?" Much evil, but the magni-

tude of his own sin hid theirs from his view; "against me:" feeling that he was the sinner he would receive the punishment.

Vers. 18, 19. "Gad came." It was he who brought the message of punishment to David, now he brings one of mercy. In the parallel account, 1 Chron. 21: 18, we find that it was by command of the angel that Gad took that message. Gad was an old friend of David, having been with him in the cave of Adullam, 1 Sam. 22: 5, but his name has not been in the narrative since, until this pestilence. "David went up" promptly and in deep humility.

Ver. 20. "Araunah—saw the king." Araunah and his four sons had also seen the destroying angel, the sons had hid themselves in fear, but the father went forth to meet the king, "bowed himself" with true oriental courtesy; both were deeply interested in the fate of the city, which as Dean Stanley says (on the old tradition of Araunah having been its king before the conquest by David); "in different senses belonged to each."

Vers. 21, 22, 23. Two grand, unselfish men have met, at this threshing floor. Araunah asks why David has come to him, and then David replies, "to buy the threshing floor that the plague may be stayed." Araunah at once with noble liberality says, "take—what seemeth good," and not only does he offer the place, but he hastens to add, take also "oxen for burnt sacrifice—and instruments of the oxen for wood:" and it has come down to us, and will go down to the ends of the world that he did it "as a king," with a kingly heart and a kingly spirit; the "threshing instruments and instruments of the oxen" were made principally of wood, although the teeth or spikes of the former would be of iron for the purpose of bruising the ears of corn.

Ver. 24. The nobility of Araunah is matched by the unselfishness of David, there was all that he needed, and for nothing, but; "Nay," said he, "I will surely buy it of thee," and he adds as a reason a true principle "neither will I offer—of that which doth cost me nothing." So the king bought threshing floor and oxen for "fifty shekels of gold," about twenty-five dollars, but in 1 Chron. 21: 25, we are told that David gave 600 shekels of gold for the place, about \$5,250. We agree with the explanation that the writer in Chronicles is giving information additional to that in our portion, and that the larger sum represents a larger purchase, that is the fifty shekels of silver bought the threshing floor, a comparatively small space, and that David later on, perhaps in thankful recognition of the staying of the plague on the spot, purchased the whole hill, the homestead of Araunah as the site of the temple.

Ver. 25 "Built—an altar, as rapidly as possible, we are sure; "burnt offerings," expiatory; "peace offerings;" thanksgiving for Divine mercies, and so "the plague was stayed."

HINTS TO TEACHERS.

Topical Analysis. (1) The pestilence 15: 16. (2) The repentant king, 17. (3) The merciful Jehovah, 18. (4) The accepted sacrifice—19: 25.

On the first topic we must show that sin never goes unpunished. We may not see the punishment, but punished it will be, for there is a God that judgeth righteously in the earth. Then the innocent are often involved in the punishment that falls upon the guilty. We have dwelt upon this in the introduction, so we need only reflect that broken law is no respecter of persons innocent or guilty it must take its course, although, as we have said the people were joined in the sin, yet amongst them there would be many innocent, children and others, but they would suffer with the rest. How terrible, therefore, the responsibility of those who set in action a power which they cannot stay, and which may involve many in common suffering.

On the second topic show that the way of penitence is the way of mercy. David truly repented of his sin, not simply because of the pestilence, for before it was sent he confessed: "I have sinned greatly," neither did he seek to palliate his sin, or fix the guilt upon others. Nay, so far did he go in that direction as to be blind to the share that the people had in the sin, and to exclaim "these sheep, what have they done?" How different to the oft repeated repentances of Saul, wrung from him by judgments, but which were only like the morning cloud and the early dew.

On the third topic point out how merciful and gracious our Heavenly Father is, though he chastises he will not utterly destroy. For David he provided a way of acceptance. It was on the line of the dispensation in which David lived, an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah and the offering up of the appointed sacrifices, and for as there is a way, the way of Salvation, by the cross of Jesus Christ, and the penitent soul that seeks pardon and salvation in that appointed way, shall not miss it. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

On the fourth topic we may see how obedience brings blessing. God commanded, David hastened to obey and in obedience he found the pardon for which he so earnestly sought. We must not omit to point out in this connection the noble conduct of Araunah. He had the opportunity in the extremity of the king to drive a hard bargain, but he was above it. His heart was not fettered by shekels, and, as a king, he would give to David freely all that he needed for sacrifice—threshing floor, oxen, and instruments of wood, so to-day he stands out grandly on the sacred page a noble pattern to us of unselfish liberality.

INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

We are never safe from temptations. Watch and pray. We may deceive others and ourselves as to our motive. We cannot deceive God.

The spirit of vain glorious pride is hateful to God, and will be punished by Him.

The heaviest chastisements for sin fall upon the children of God.

Main Lesson.—"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." 1 John 1: 9; 2 Chron. 7: 14; Psa. 32: 5; Pro. 28: 13; Isa. 55: 7; Jer. 3: 12, 13; Luke 15: 21, 22.