

Pastor and People.

BETWEEN THE LIGHTS.

A little pause in life, while daylight lingers,
Between the sunset and the pale moonrise,
When daily labour slips from weary fingers,
And soft, gray shadows veil the aching eyes.

Peace, peace—the Lord of earth and heaven knoweth
The human soul in all its heat and strife;
Out of His throne no stream of lethe floweth,
But the clear river of eternal life.

Serve Him in daily work and earnest living,
And faith shall lift thee to His sunlit heights,
Then shall a psalm of gladness and thanksgiving
Fill the calm hour that comes between the lights.
—Sunday Magazine.

ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF SOLOMON.

BY MISS J. GIBSON, OTTAWA.

(Concluded)

The great event in the religious life of the nation was the erection of the Temple of Jehovah, the pride and glory of Israel. To Solomon was given the honour of building the "House of the Lord." At the beginning of his reign Solomon, in obedience to the charge of his father, resolved to undertake this sacred task. The people, realizing the importance of having one religious centre in the kingdom, heartily co-operated with the king. The materials were gathered together and immense levies of men were sent to work in the quarries and the forests of Lebanon. All the stone was prepared in the quarry so that there would be "neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." Thus "Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric sprung." The interior was lined with cedar, carved with figures of palm-trees, flowers and cherubim, and all overlaid with pure gold. Both Jews and Gentiles were engaged in building the temple. The superintendent of all the fine work was Hiram, the son of an Israelite and a Gentile. He was "skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen and in crimson." All the things of brass, including the two magnificent pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which were at the entrance of the porch, were cast "in the plain of Jordan," "in the clay ground between Succoth and Garthan." The temple was about twice the size of the tabernacle and of the same general plan. Compared with any of the religious buildings of the surrounding nations, the architecture of the temple might seem insignificant. The exterior was strikingly plain, but the value of the materials employed exceeds anything told us of contemporary temples. Reverence for the God of Israel was marked throughout the entire building. In the Holy of Holies "the pure spirituality of Jehovah was sublimely indicated by the absence of any symbol of His presence." The temple occupied seven years in building. For the first time since the Exodus the months and years are recorded. Great were the preparations for the dedication of the temple. It was the time for the national Feast of Tabernacles, and the two solemnities were joined. From the utmost extremities of the kingdom the people flocked. Two great processions advanced towards the capital amidst loud and universal rejoicings. Reverently the priests carried the ark into the dark room where the golden cherubim alone waited to receive it. The king in grand state, followed by his officers and attendants, entered the court and took his seat on the brazen scaffold which was erected for the special occasion. As the priests came out the multitude of musicians and singers burst forth into the joyful refrain, "For He is good, and His mercy endureth forever." At the same instant the symbol of the Divine presence was recognized. "The house was filled with a cloud," "for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." At this supreme moment Solomon arose and blessed the whole congregation of Israel standing before him. He then went forward to the altar, and kneeling down, with his hands stretched forth unto heaven, gave utterance to one of the most sublime prayers that ever ascended to God. The numerous ceremonies connected with the consecration of the sanctuary to God were performed by Solomon himself. The priests are only mentioned as being the bearers of the ark. Solomon on this occasion united the two offices of priest and king.

We can but faintly imagine what a sacred joy the temple, thus dedicated to God, must have been to all the Jews. Year by year as they thronged to Jerusalem at the great feasts, they would rejoice in the ever-increasing beauty of the Holy City, and their hearts would be stirred with loyal and patriotic emotions. The splendid ritual of the temple service would quicken their religious feelings and send them home rejoicing in the worship of the true God, the Jehovah of their fathers.

Side by side with the material prosperity and religious zeal of the nation, there was also a corresponding advance in literary development. As frequently illustrated in history, a period of peace in a nation's history is always favourable to culture, and intercourse with foreign countries widens the intellectual range. So it was in the reign of Solomon. There was a distinct rise of historical and poetical literature, to which Solomon contributed largely. "He spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five." Most of his songs were lost, but in his Song of Songs we

have a beautiful example of his poetical style. He left no region of knowledge unexplored. "He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon to the moss that springs out of the wall," and also "of beasts and of fowl and of creeping things and of fishes." The wave of poetical feeling, begun in David's reign, was carried onward in Solomon's time, and many poets and singers arose in Israel. Historians also began to keep regular chronicles of the kingdom.

But there is a darker side to the picture. Solomon, the representative of the splendours of monarchy, was to be the cause of its ruin and downfall. To gratify his passion for luxury he forced labour and cruel burdens on the people. Their time and work and money were extorted in order that he might carry out his expensive projects.

"It came to pass when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods." He who in his early piety built the "House of the Lord," "in his latter days" built altars for strange gods. Polygamy was one of his fatal errors. These "strange wives" from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Phœnicia turned away his heart, and influenced him to set up an idolatrous worship. This demoralization of the pure and spiritual religion of Jehovah did not tend to make the king increase in favour with his subjects. Already clouds were looming up over the horizon of a glad and peaceful reign. It would seem that in his latter days Solomon was more of a despot than ever. "The heavy yoke," "the grievous service," "the chastisement of whips," could not be submitted to without rebellion. The end of Solomon's reign is disappointing and sad. The seeds of disruption were already sown, and the people were ripening for revolt. Though this was the period of Israel's highest glory, it was also the beginning of its sad decline. The history of the divided kingdom in the following reign is but the outburst of the storm of rebellion which had been indicated by the gathering clouds of discontent in the latter days of Solomon. Israel, God's chosen people, were scattered never again to be united under an earthly king. The promise, "Thy kingdom shall be established forever," given to David so recently seemed entirely frustrated. But the nation has still the hope of a glorious future, when David's Greater Son shall reign over the once again united kingdom, and the glorious words of prophecy shall be fulfilled: Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation, in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. (Ezek. xxxvii. 15-22.)

BEING HAPPY.

It is by no means impossible to imagine a world where existence would be constant suffering, the conditions now brought about by disease the normal ones, the body such that every sense should be an avenue for pain, and every nerve a string to vibrate with agony. We might be as painfully conscious of all the involuntary working of the vital organs as we are now blissfully unconscious of it; every breath might give us a twinge, and every beat of the heart thrill us with anguish. But so attractive is mere existence made that we always think of an animal's life as joyous; and the higher the creature the more intense we suppose the joy to be. Not unnaturally, then, it is assumed that God meant human life to be accompanied with the greatest pleasure; and the search for happiness has a perfectly reasonable basis.

The animals to which we attribute the greatest enjoyment are not such as the sponge or the oyster, but those like the birds or butterflies. Not indolence and sluggishness, but tireless activity is the ideal of pleasure, and the pleasure is thought of as proportioned to the action in the allotted sphere. We find no evidence of cravings destined to remain ungratified; and even pain appears as a merciful warning from wrong courses. So it is ordered of God that happiness comes in the discharge of duty; our unsatisfied longings only prompt us to seek that which can fill them; and the frequent disappointments and vexations only tell us that we are wandering from the right path and warn us against going further astray. The wants of the humblest human being can be met by nothing less than God; they point to a blessedness that is higher than happiness, and is itself only a prophecy of future bliss. Whatever the man of the world may gain, whatever Christians may lack, the one must remain in darkness that can be felt, the others have in their dwellings the true Light.

The question how to be happy is no new one. Centuries ago men were seeking an answer to it; some found it, as they thought, in deadening the heart until there should be an utter indifference to pleasure and to pain; others, in the enjoyment of everything that could gratify the lower nature. The philosophers that tried the one course cut a sorry figure in history, the ruler of the world at that period had everything that he desired, and the men of his day represented him as by common consent the most wretched of men. It was at that time that a despised sect, in an obscure province, without comforts and in peril of their lives, found the coveted secret, and lived and died happy because of the love of a Saviour in whose name they were telling others the same secret. How much improvement on their method has the world been able to offer since then?—Golden Rule.

SABBATH SCHOOL STATISTICS.

The following statistics for the United States and British American provinces were presented to the Sixth International Convention, by Mr. E. Payson Porter, Statistical secretary:

United States	Sabbath Schools.	Teachers & Officers.	Scholars.	Total.
Alabama.....	3,573	22,340	193,825	216 165
Alaska Territory....	14	52	1,100	1,152
Arizona Territory....	32	222	1,369	1,591
Arkansas.....	1,712	11,995	94,395	106 270
California.....	803	7,863	71,687	79 550
Colorado.....	423	4,084	32 141	36 225
Connecticut.....	1,112	19,284	149 990	169 283
Delaware.....	217	2,913	22,766	25 619
District of Columbia ..	194	4,634	44 970	49,604
Florida.....	1,080	6,158	59 591	62,752
Georgia.....	6,748	55,338	298 498	351 836
Idaho Territory.....	43	390	3,223	3 619
Illinois.....	6,908	77,213	582,750	659,960
Indiana Territory.....	260	1,333	10,455	11,788
Indiana.....	5 508	45,109	374,185	419 294
Iowa.....	5,112	41,295	319,128	365 423
Kansas.....	8,544	32,132	214 422	246 554
Kentucky.....	2,647	31,600	225 801	257 407
Louisiana.....	522	4,131	32 017	39,748
Maine.....	1,336	11,625	92,875	104 500
Maryland.....	2,120	26,005	200,190	232 201
Massachusetts.....	1,790	33 923	237 593	271 516
Michigan.....	3 500	37,800	277,200	315 000
Minnesota.....	1,504	15,014	133 784	148 798
Mississippi.....	1,014	11,767	84,077	96 444
Missouri.....	3,955	37,284	280 922	318 206
Montana.....	122	745	5 883	6,628
Nebraska.....	2,314	23 324	101 14	184,338
Nevada.....	30	812	2,600	2 872
New Hampshire.....	510	6,040	49 335	55 975
New Jersey.....	2,000	33,709	247,048	281 357
New Mexico Territory ..	45	225	1 345	1,570
New York.....	7,193	108,272	979,415	1,087 687
North Carolina.....	4,273	32,172	255,013	287,185
North Dakota.....	500	2 760	2 420	23 000
Ohio.....	6,760	88,401	620 107	708 568
Oklahoma Territory ..	45	300	2 340	2 710
Oregon.....	290	2,531	20,749	23 280
Pennsylvania.....	8,729	123,484	904,599	1,088,083
Rhode Island.....	319	5 178	49,422	54,600
South Carolina.....	1,667	13 054	103,315	116 369
South Dakota.....	800	6 300	40,700	47 000
Tennessee.....	4 224	38 016	274,500	312,576
Texas.....	3,007	23,101	190,025	213,786
Utah Territory.....	93	554	6,741	7,295
Vermont.....	632	7,390	53,809	61 199
Virginia.....	3,907	43 531	283 330	320,867
Washington.....	732	4,210	29,475	33 685
West Virginia.....	1,888	19 212	120,811	140,023
Wisconsin.....	1,610	15,211	114 569	130,070
Wyoming Territory.....	69	332	2,816	3,148
Total for United States..	108,252	1,143,190	8,643,255	9 786,445
Canada.....				
Ontario.....	3,901	37,876	320,013	358 480
Quebec.....	707	4 639	40,428	44,767
Nova Scotia.....	804	6,195	55 487	61,682
New Brunswick.....	867	5,290	41,414	46,711
Prince Edward Island..	189	1,051	9,551	10 605
Manitoba.....	150	600	5,000	5 600
British Columbia.....	11	57	427	484
Total for Canada.....	6 689	55,700	472 023	528,329
Newfoundland and Labrador.....	314	2,162	22,817	24 979
Total for United States and British American Provinces.....	115,255	1,201,058	9,138,695	10,330,753

HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE.

It is impossible to carry on the work of the Lord without money. There are various branches of that work which would suffer materially were Christians to withdraw their aid. The Home and Foreign missionary must be supplied with the means of subsistence, the pastor must have his hire, and the various benevolent operations of the Church can be carried on only by the contributions of God's people. But the important question with the Church is, "How shall this money be obtained?" Various are the modes by which this money is made to drop out of the hands of the people into the treasury of the Lord. Fairs, festivals, suppers, concerts and numerous other questionable means are made use of to accomplish the desired end. The argument generally advanced in support of the above modes is that they bring aid from such as are outside of the Church, and which would otherwise not be received, and in this way the world is inveigled into supporting the cause of Christ. This certainly is questionable work. It is getting money by delusion, and it is doubtful whether God looks with favour upon any of these modes. If we were a missionary on home or foreign ground we should feel very badly were we aware of the fact that the money sent for our support had been squeezed out of the people at an oyster supper or church festival. Besides, this is not by any means benevolence. It is nothing more than bartering. So much money for so much supper, or so much for a chance at the fish pond, and the profit is given to the Lord. How different this is from the injunction, "Let each man give as the Lord hath prospered him," and how can the expression, "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver" be applied to such benevolence?

The only proper way for the churches to raise money to carry on the various branches of the Lord's work is by voluntary contributions from the part of the members. The money may come in slowly at first, but when once the people understand fully that this is the way the money is to be raised, it will be done, and with more ease than by the other questionable modes. It may require training to bring people to that point, but what grander work can be done by our ministers than to teach men and women to give gracefully and freely? It is the only true way to raise money for sacred purposes. Let it be thrown directly into the treasury of the Lord, and in such proportion as the Lord hath prospered us, and let it never be measured by the size of the oyster stew or the dish of ice cream.—Mid-Continent.