

Their valleys, plains and mountains,
May, in all coming days,
With rivers, lakes, and oceans,
Re-echo with God's praise.

The following appears in the "Free Church Record" for June:—

THE COLONIAL FIELD.—ANNUAL COLLECTION.

The history of the British Colonies during this nineteenth century has been a remarkable one indeed. Some of them, such as Canada and South Africa, have within that period received a vast accession of territory and population; while others in the southern hemisphere have, Minerva-like, sprung into existence fully equipped, with laws and parliaments of their own. Looking at the wide extent of this Colonial Empire, the variety of its climate, its mineral riches, its indefinite capabilities of production, and above all the energy of its people, we cannot doubt that it has a great future before it. These colonies must one day become great nations—confederated, let us hope, with the mother country, yet independent of it—exercising a powerful influence on the destinies of the human race.

If this be so, how loud and urgent is the call addressed in Providence to the Home Churches to see that these great countries are impregnated from the very outset with the seeds of Gospel truth! We do not grudge to send forth missionaries of the Cross to win souls to Christ from among the members of some feeble and rapidly-decaying race. How much more earnest should we be in seeking to awaken and increase spiritual life among the colonies of our own kinsmen in the West and in the South, which are so full of intense vitality, and so sure to prove important factors in the history of the world. Now, the first years of a colony are for this purpose the most important, upon the principle implied in the words—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Let the Church but seize the propitious moment, and she will gain for herself a place in that young community which she will ever afterwards retain. Let her neglect to follow her expatriated children promptly with the means of grace, and she will lose an opportunity that may never again arise. Of this we have an illustration in the position of Puritanism in New England and Presbyterianism in Otago, where the first emigrants went forth with their respected pastors at their head, as compared with the state of religion in some other colonies that were too tardily cared for by the Church at home.

It is true that in most of the large colonies the Presbyterian Churches, having consolidated their strength by happily consummated unions, are organizing schools of theology, and doing everything in their power to provide a native ministry for themselves. But with so vast a home mission field to overtake, and so many emigrants from the mother country pouring in upon them every year, they must still look to us in great measure for the men and the means to enable them to accomplish the work which God in his providence has given them to do. It has been the aim and endeavor of the Committee to give them this assistance, and at the same time to maintain a number of isolated but most important stations in Europe, in the East and West Indies, and elsewhere, which are not in connection with any Colonial Church. So far as pecuniary support is concerned, they are thankful to say that the liberality of the Church has enabled them to render some material help in various parts of the field, especially to the Canadian Church in connection with the territory of Manitoba, and to the small but energetic Church of Queensland. They regret, however, to have to report that, notwithstanding all their efforts, they have not succeeded in sending out so many agents to the colonies this year as they did last year. They wish they could persuade young men to give themselves in large numbers to a field at once so necessitous and hopeful. And they wish they could so impress the membership of the Church with a sense of its importance as to lead parents to point their sons to it as a suitable and honest sphere of labor.

If young women are not honest and wholesome clean through, and if young women will not train themselves to the finest and sturdiest womanhood possible to their nature; if they will not eat brown bread, and work in the garden—if they have one—with some more grip than a bird scratching, and quit reading novels in a hot room, and devouring sweetmeats; if they dare not face the sun and wind, and try to outwalk, ay, and outrun their brothers, and let our wise mother, Nature, buckle their belt,—they had not better say, Amen, when the stalwart young husband cries, "Mercifully ordain that we may grow aged together."—*Kilbuck Collyer.*

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XXVIII.

July 14. } *THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.* { Luke ii. 1873. } 40-52.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."—Verse 52.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Luke ii. 25-39. The presentation in the temple.
T. Isa. xlii. 1-17. "A light to the Gentiles."
W. Matt. ii. 1-12. The visit of the wise men.
Th. Isa. lx. 1-10. Gold and incense brought.
F. Matt. ii. 13-23. The flight into Egypt.
S. Luke ii. 40-52. In the midst of the doctors.
S. John ix. 2-12. "The works of Him that sent Me."

HELPS TO STUDY.

In the first thirty years of the life of Jesus there is just one incident recorded. In connection with it, let us notice—

I. HIS CHARACTER—VERS. 40, 52.

What does the Bible say of other children? see Prov. xvii. 25; xix. 13; Ps. lxxiii. 3; Job xix. 18—do we not all know how true these words are? Even the goodness of good children so imperfect, a meek boy generally weak, a resolute boy rough. But Jesus "strong in spirit," and yet a pattern of gentleness (Isa. xlii. 2). Nobody could see anything in Him which might have been altered for the better.

He was—
Strong in spirit—how often boys strong enough in body, yet weak when tempted, no control over temper, can't bear pain or disappointment. How much He had to bear—how painful to Him the sin around Him! (Comp. 1 Pet. ii. 18.)

Filled with wisdom (Isa. xi. 2-5)—then no room for folly—how many have no room for wisdom!

Increased in wisdom and stature—how many good and studious boys decrease in wisdom as they grow!

In favor with God and man—some do please men, but how often it is just by displeasing God—which of us pleases both? Where is the boy with whom God is always more and more "well pleased?"

See then next—

II. GOING TO THE PASSOVER—VERS. 47, 42.

Once a year Joseph and Mary go away from home for a week or two, leaving the child Jesus behind. Where do they go? why? Deut. xvi. 1-8; comp. 1 Sam. i. 3. Little children did not go, but at last Jesus old enough [Note 1]. Now can become a "son of the law"—be admitted to all the privileges of God's chosen nation.

Two things appointed for Jews as signs of God's covenant with them; one of being brought into covenant—Circumcision; one of keeping in it—Passover; both indispensable, Gen. xvii. 14; Exod. xii. 14; Num. ix. 13. What did Circumcision mean? What did keeping the Passover mean?—commemorating Israel's deliverance from slavery and death, through their believing and obeying God about eating the lamb and sprinkling its blood.

So we have two great ordinances: Baptism, sign of entrance into Christ's Church; the Lord's Supper, of keeping in it (commemorating deliverance through the Lamb of God, feeding by faith—so life sustained, etc.)

Think of Him on the road—companies of people journeying from all parts of Jerusalem (Ps. xlii. 4; lv. 14; cxvii. 1-4)—many boys going for the first time, all eager to see the holy city they have read and heard of. Think of Jesus there, seeing David's royal city, Temple and worshippers (had been there when an infant, not since)—then the great night of the feast—solemn meeting—the lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened cakes—the hymns, etc., etc. How wonderful to look back and think *when this first done!*—and to think of one of the young "sons of the law" being Himself the true "Passover" to whom all Passovers pointed, the very Lamb of God whose blood to be sprinkled on our hearts!

III. TARRYING IN THE TEMPLE—VERS. 43-50.

The week of solemn services over—companies [Note 4] journeying homeward—travelling all day—at evening the Child missed—how Mary and Joseph distressed, would think Jesus could not be absent of His own accord, so fond and dutiful always—perhaps kidnapped by His old enemies; how anxiously they seek Him, yet all in vain—then sadly back to the city, asking everywhere.

Where found at last? Room in Temple—great doctors sitting to teach and catechise—young students seated at their feet (Acts xxii. 3)—One learner there, "full of wisdom," giving bright, clear answers, modestly asking questions in his turn, but such questions! The doctors amazed—never such a scholar seen before (Ps. cxix. 99, 100). (Note 2.) See Mary—no thought of who else there—enough that He is found—what does she say?—too sad not to complain, too overjoyed to rebuke.

Look at that wonderful reply—"Why should they wonder where He was? Mary spoke of His Father—did they forget Who was His TRUE FATHER? Where could He be but in that Father's house, engaged in that Father's work? did they think it was a boyish prank to stay behind—that He was dazzled by the city's splendour? was He not acting a good Son's part? MUST He not do this? (Note 3.)

IV. SUBMITTING TO EARTHLY TIES—VER. 51.

Might Jesus have refused to go back? might He have then separated Himself for God's work? What was it that He did? Eighteen years yet before Messiah to be manifested. Was He, then, to go on getting all Jewish learning, sitting at the Doctors' feet for years (like St. Paul)? see John vii. 15. Then what to do? to be subject—was that being "about the Father's business?" see how pleased the Father was (ver. 52), more and more until that Voice came to say so—Matt. iii. 17.

ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS. So we ought all to be. How can we?

We can—(a) observe God's ordinances: Jesus kept the Passover, though needing not the redemption it spoke of. (b) Observe the ordinances of God's Church: the rules about becoming a "son of the law" not from Moses, but from the Rabbis, yet, being good ones, Jesus obeyed them. (c) Resort to God's house—Ps. xxvi. 8; lxxv. 4; lxxxiv. (d) Seek to learn more about God's Word: if Jesus studied it, under the appointed teachers, how much more should we! (e) Yet not neglect duties to earthly friends; submit to parents, etc.

But much more than all this in the word: "The locomotive engine very powerful—what heavy trains it draws!—but does not go of itself—something wanted to set it and keep it going—steam."

What then do we want? What was the secret of all Jesus did? He had the WILL—earnest desire and determination—to do God's will, Ps. xl. 7, 8. Having this will, He "MUST" be "about His Father's business"—could not help it—and did it not as hard duty—His delight, meat and drink to Him—John iv. 34.

Have we this will? Not naturally—all like to have "our own way," Isa. liii. 6—dislike God's, Rom. viii. 7, 8. How to be altered? Rom. viii. 9. Every day, every hour, at every turn, ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6). Then what is the promise? Matt. vi. 33.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. The Jewish custom of admitting boys to be "sons of the law" at the age of twelve (or thirteen: it is doubtful whether Jesus did not go up a year before the strict time) is well known. The following passages from the Rabbinical writings refer to it:—

"Let a man deal gently with his son till he come to be twelve years old, but from that time let him descend with him into his way of living: that is, let him diligently, and with severity (if need be), keep him close to that way, rule, or art, by which he may get his living." (Quoted in Lightfoot, *Hor. Hebr.*, on Luke ii.) "Up to the age of thirteen a father has to care for his son's fulfilment of the duties of religion. But on his thirteenth birthday he may say, Blessed be He who has made me free from the burden of my son's sins." (Quoted in Plumtree, *Christ and Christendom*, p. 98.)

2. "Found Him in the temple"—i.e., probably in one of the three rooms in which the members of the Sanhedrim used to receive their pupils. It is not impossible that one or both of the two famous Rabbis, Shammai and Hillel, may have been present, or (as young men) some of those named in Scripture, Gamaliel or Nicodemus, or (as a scholar) Saul of Tarsus.

The old idea that Jesus "disputed" with the doctors has no foundation in the narrative. We must regard Him simply as a learner. "Hearing them," "asking them questions," "His answers," are all named. The instruction given by the scribes was sharply catechetical in form, and clever answers were much thought of.

3. "About My Father's business" seems to imply active work; but the original (literally)—"in the things of My Father"—includes more passive occupations, as listening to instruction. Some would render it "in My Father's house," but the expression, though including this, comprehends much more. The word rendered "must" is the same so often used about our Lord's work: Matt. xxvi. 54; Mark viii. 31; Luke xxii. 37; xiv. 7, 44; John ix. 4; xx. 9.

4. Company, *ver. 42*. The Greek word strictly means a "company of travellers," and is only used in this place. Perhaps "caravan" is the best equivalent.

HOW DRINKING CAUSES APOPLEXY.

It is the essential nature of all wines and spirits to send an increased amount of blood to the brain. The first effect of taking a glass of wine or stronger form of alcohol is to send the blood there faster than common; hence the circulation that gives the red face. It increases the activity of the brain, and it works faster, and so does the tongue. But as the blood goes to the brain faster than common, it returns faster, and no special harm results. But suppose a man keeps on drinking, the blood is sent to the brain so fast in such large quantities that, in order to make room for it, the arteries have to enlarge themselves; they increase in size, and, in doing so, they press against the more yielding, flaccid veins which carry the blood out of the brain, and thus diminish their size, their pores, the result being that blood is not only carried to the arteries of the brain faster than is natural or healthful, but is prevented from leaving it as fast as usual; hence, a double set of causes of death are in operation. Hence, a man may drink enough of brandy or other spirits in a few hours, or even minutes, to bring on a fatal attack of apoplexy. This is literally, being dead drunk.—*Dr. Hall.*

MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

KINGSTON.—At Picton, on Tuesday, 9th July, at 10 a.m.

BARRIE.—At Barrie, first Tuesday of August, at 11 a.m.

GLENGARRY.—At Alexandria, on Tuesday, 9th July, at the usual hour.

MONTREAL.—In St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on Tuesday, 9th July, at 11 a.m.

HURON.—In Knox Church, Godwinch, on Tuesday, 9th July, at 11 a.m.

STRATFORD.—In St. Andrew's Church, Stratford, on Tuesday, 9th July, at 9.30 a.m.

LONDON.—In First Presbyterian Church, London, on Tuesday, 9th July, at 2 p.m.

QUEBEC.—In Morrin College, Quebec, on Wednesday, 17th July, at 10 a.m.

OTTAWA.—In Knox Church, Ottawa, on Tuesday, the 6th day of August, at 2 p.m.

SAUGREY.—At Mount Forest, in Knox Church, on the 2nd Tuesday of July, at 2 o'clock p.m.

HAMILTON.—The next stated meeting will be held in Central Church, Hamilton, on third Tuesday (16th) of July, at 11 o'clock a.m.