

sonary meetings this year. Mr. Patterson supplemented the report by a verbal statement. This report was received and the importance, extent, and variety of the work dwelt upon. Extracts were read from the General Assembly authorising the Presbytery to receive Mr. John Fraser as a minister of this Church and to take Mr. Elie F. Seylaz on trial for license. The Presbytery received Mr. Fraser accordingly, and authorised the clerk to transfer Mr. Seylaz to St. John Presbytery, if asked to do so. A minute relating to Mr. J. S. Black's resignation of his charge was reported and adopted. The Presbytery resolved to hold an adjourned meeting at Valleyfield, on Monday next at half past seven, p.m., to consider upon all matters bearing upon the welfare of that congregation. Mr. Morrison gave notice of motion in reference to the place of meeting. A letter was read from St. Hyacinthe, asking advice of Presbytery as to formation of session there. A deputation was appointed to visit St. Hyacinthe and report at next meeting. Mr. A. B. Cruchet applied for seven months leave of absence to visit Europe for study. The application was granted. Assessors were appointed to Lachine session. On application it was agreed to appoint Mr. Theodore A. Bochart to Rawdon till 1st October next. Standing committees for the current year were appointed. A petition from certain families at Lake View was presented, asking leave from the Presbytery to build a church on a site given by one of their number. Mr. R. Hamilton was appointed to visit the field and report. The Presbytery resolved that missionary meetings be held this year in all the congregations within the bounds, that sessions make arrangements for the meetings to be held in their own congregations during the current three months and report prior to 1st October through Mr. Campbell, convener of the Presbytery's City Mission committee, to whom collections should be sent. In the case of those congregations who do not report, the Presbytery will make arrangements for meetings at next quarterly meeting. The collections at the missionary meetings to be on behalf of the City Mission fund. Mr. R. H. Warden submitted a plan for the election of commissioners appointed by rotation to the General Assembly in future. Action was deferred till next meeting. Mr. Forbes, Huntingdon, was certified to the Presbyterian College, Montreal, as a student having the ministry in view. Messrs. J. McCaul, W. D. McLaren and Thomas Dryden, were appointed an interim session for West Farnham, and were instructed to advise with the people there as to the maintenance of ordinances and other matters. The committee appointed at the last meeting to select a field of labour for Mr. R. P. Duclos recommended that Mr. Duclos give a morning service at Laprairie, and open a French station at Hochelaga, and work the field there with a view to the organizing of a permanent congregation. It was recommended the Board of French Evangelization to make a grant to Hochelaga, so as to make Mr. Duclos' salary in all \$1000 a year. Mr. Heine was empowered to moderate in a call at Cote des Neiges, when deemed necessary. It was agreed to hold the next quarterly meeting in the David Morris Hall, on Tuesday, 7th October, at 10 a.m.—JAMES PATTERSON, Pres. Clerk.

A NOBLE and attractive every-day bearing comes of goodness, of sincerity, of refinement; and these are bred in years, not in moments.—F. D. Huntington.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Aug. 10, 1884. } **ABSALOM'S REBELLION.** { 2 Sam. 1:1-14.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—Ex. 20: 12.

**TIME.**—About twelve years after the last lesson. B.C., 1023. The 12 years are made up as follows. One year after David's sin came Amnon's crime. Two years later, Amnon was slain by Absalom, who thereupon fled to the court of his maternal grandfather at Geshur, where he remained three years; then two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king, and after the reconciliation, four years of intrigue and preparation for the rebellion.

**PLACES.**—Jerusalem and Hebron, this latter, like Damascus, one of the most early and most interesting cities in the world. Its original name was Kirjath-urba, it is also called Mamre, and is situated at a spot in the south highlands of

Judah, having the name of Macphelah, its present name is Khullil, so named after the Arabic title of Abraham.

**Introduction.**—Our last lesson was on David's repentance. Through the infinite mercy of God he was forgiven his great sin, the cloud rolled away and he could again look up and see the face of his Father in Heaven, but he was never again just the man that he had been. The remembrance of his sin is with him, and the sentence is still upon him. "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." He loses the exultant gladness of his early life, he is as one who goes down to his grave mourning, his active history is past, henceforth he is passive merely; his early life, not without many faults, has yet on the whole a noble and grand history; his later life, with much that is beautiful in it, develops more strongly the unworthy elements in his character. He is still a servant of God, a son, but how different is his service and feeling to what they had been—that one sin darkened his life. Our lesson is one of the incidents which most strikingly show the truth that: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap;" he had sown lust, deceit, treachery, murder, and this is a part of the harvest.

**Notes and Comments.**—Ver. 1. "Absalom:" his mother's name was Maachab, daughter of the king of Geshur; he was the third and favorite son of David. Beautiful in person, remarkable especially for his luxuriant hair, (Chap. 14: 25, 26.) his moral man was of the basest sort, he was ambitious, crafty, unscrupulous, and could play the hypocrite well, when it suited his purpose. "Chariots and horses:" he would bring himself into notice, so he affects the retinue and style of royalty. "Fifty men:" still further to the same end, great men were accompanied by running footmen. (1 Kings 1: 5)

Ver. 2. Having attracted notice, his next step is to win popularity. "Rose early:" it was his custom—a good one, but here with a bad purpose. "Geth," the place where the low business of the kingdom was transacted. Unhappily for himself, David, who should have sat there, had lately neglected the duty, nor had he appointed any one to perform it for him. "Controversy:" matter of complaint, law-suit—called "of that city," pretending an interest in his affairs.

Ver. 3, 4. "Good—right:" his object was to get favour, so he would not care for looking into the case, likely he said the same thing to both litigants. "I judge," and those thus flattered by him doubtless wished so too, for he had pronounced their causes good. "Justice the justice of a fratricide and a would-be parricide. Yet how plausible the king was neglecting the matters of his subjects to their great loss, and here was one, a prince too, ready to devote himself to their interests.

Ver. 5, 6. In these verses we have a still further bid for popularity, and that successfully. "Came nigh—obeisance—kissed him:" on approaching the king's son, the people would have done him the reverence given to a superior, but instead of allowing that, Absalom would draw the man to him, embrace him, and give him the kiss of friendship; no wonder that he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel," either deceived (as Gen. 31: 20, 26) or stole their affections, this latter we prefer.

Ver. 7, 8. "Forty years:" evidently an error of some later Jewish scribe; the Syriac and Arabic versions read *four years*. Josephus gives the same time, and it is without doubt the true reading; it would be four years after his restoration to the King's favour. "Vow:" undoubtedly a mere pretext—he would deceive the king as he had deceived the people. He well knew how the heart of his father would rejoice at this apparent piety of his favourite son. "Hebron:" his birthplace, and the old capital of the kingdom, doubtless there were many friends of his youth there, his companions ready to take his part; at the same time the wish would seem to the king very natural that Absalom should choose Hebron for the purpose.

Ver. 9. "Go in Peace:" poor David, he little thought of the kind of peace Absalom was preparing for him. But, it may be asked, was all this four years of intrigue unknown or unobserved by David or Joab, or any of the true friends round David? We can hardly think so, but in all probability the king refused to see any evil in the actions of Absalom; unsuspicious in the extreme, he thought that all was right; he would not believe anything to the contrary until the news of v. 13 reached him.

Ver. 10. "Spies:" secret messengers to sound the people, and if they found willing hearers to dwell on the evils of the present reign; the advantages of having a young and popular man like Absalom on the throne; that this was to be, and that its accomplishment was to be proclaimed by the "Sound of the trumpet;" which they could explain to their neighbours as meaning that "Absalom reigneth in Hebron," that it was not a rebellion but a revolution, that all was settled and the new king enthroned in his capital.

Ver. 11. "Two hundred men—called:" invited to the feast; most likely men of position and eminence, whose presence would, it was expected, be regarded as an approval of the movement; "simplicity"—sincerity—knew not—deceived—like the king.

Ver. 12. "Ahitophel:" David's most trusted counsellor. The importance that David attached to this defection may be judged from the prayer he offered when the fact was told him, v. 31, so in Ps. 41: "Yea, mine own familiar friend," etc.; again in Ps. 55: "It was not an enemy—thou my guide," etc. No doubt Absalom knew his man, and was sure of receiving his support; if, as is almost certain, he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, another reason may be supposed for his treachery. "Gilead:" was upon the mountains of Judah, to the S. or S.W. of Hebron.

Ver. 13. "Messenger:" some one from Hebron, friendly to David. Any way ill news flies apace, and such news as this would not take long to travel.

Ver. 14. "Arise—let us flee:" where is the faith and courage of David now? Alas! it is true that "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." He had said: "My sin is ever before me," and he would feel at once that this was a

part of the retributive justice of God. That there were military and social considerations likewise is certain, in the excitement of the first news and the exaggeration that would come with it, his cause would perhaps appear desperate; then he might not have enough troops to defend Jerusalem, uncertain also, as he was, of the loyalty of the people; further, he would not fight against his son if he could avoid it, in fact the impression left by the whole narrative is, that his first feeling was to accept the position, let Absalom reign and himself leave the kingdom. Worthier and more kingly resolves came with the fidelity and sympathy of those about him.

#### HINTS TO TEACHERS.

**Preliminary.**—Our last lesson in the last quarter was on "Obedience to Law;" we have here a striking lesson on Disobedience, for that was the seed that blossomed into murder and hypocrisy, and that fructified in a bloody death. Throughout the lesson don't lose sight of the fact that this was not only a rebellion against a king, but against a father. Among the black-hearted traitors of the Bible, Absalom takes place with Judas, Baiaam and Cain.

**Topical Analysis.** (1) Intrigue 1-6; (2) Hypocrisy 7-9; (3) Rebellion 10-14.

We give this arrangement for those who may feel it convenient to use it, but in this lesson we prefer just to look at some aspects of Absalom's character as seen in the light of the narrative and judged by the word of God.

The first thing we would point out and teach is that: "A very foul heart may dwell under a very fair exterior." This may seem a truth so well known as hardly to need repeating, yet all history tells us that it cannot be too often repeated and urged, upon the young especially. Here is a striking instance. What did the people of Israel know of the character of Absalom? Only evil; his record was of murder—murder of a brother, deliberate, long-plotted, committed under the guise of friendship and reconciliation. Then his conduct to Joab, so whom he was indebted for return from exile, was of the worst description; yet notwithstanding this record, the beautiful hair and the sweet looks, and the gracious, condescending, winning ways of the prince blinded them to it all, and he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Our scholars need to have this truth impressed upon them, a beautiful form is often a dangerous possession, it has been called "a fatal dower," and so it has proved to many; he or she who has it, needs great grace to prevent it becoming a snare, a stumbling block and ruin. Teach emphatically, that character alone should be the test. "Handsome is that handsome does."

A second truth is that: *great gifts may be perverted to the worst purposes.* Absalom had great gifts—gifts which, if used wisely and religiously, would have made him the greatest man next to the king, he would have been able to supply those things which his father lacked in the administration of the kingdom, and instead of dividing the people and bringing bloodshed in the land, would, by the blessing of God, have knit the people more firmly into one nation; healed tribal jealousies, bound them more firmly to his father's throne, been a wise help and counsellor to Solomon, and thus, in all probability, the rending of the kingdom might have been long averted, perhaps never have taken place. So to-day, we are called from time to time to hear of men of great natural ability and acquired learning, who use all without reference to God or man; it is for self they live, for self they work, and it matters not who suffer in the pursuit of their end. Swindlers, forgers, speculators with other people's money, and unscrupulous politicians, such are specimens of this class. Teach that abilities, mental gifts, knowledge, are all from God, and to Him and to fellow men should be dedicated. All are a trust from God, and of these, equally with wealth and opportunities, will he require an account at the last.

There is the further sad truth to impress, that a *pretended zeal for religion may be a cloak for evil deeds.* It was so here. Israel, as a nation was a religious nation. David was a religious king, and Absalom, to accomplish his purposes, had to appear religious. We are not told what pretence of religion he put on earlier in his career, but we may feel sure that he would not omit that attention to the services of the tabernacle which would impress the best portion of the community with the idea of his religiousness and therefore fitness for the high position to which he aspired. At last came what Absalom thought the opportune moment, his plans were laid, his emissaries had prepared the way, and to cover the last move more effectually, he pretended to wish to fulfil a vow made in Geshur. The reply of the unsuspecting father was "Go in peace;" and there, at Hebron, the mask was thrown off, and Absalom stood revealed in his native perfidy and blackness. Teach a strong detestation of hypocrisy, it is hateful alike to God and man. That there are hypocrites to-day, men, who, to serve their purposes, make a pretence of religion, there is too much reason to fear. Let your scholars see it so vile, that by the mercy of God they will avoid it forever.

#### INCIDENTAL TRUTHS AND TEACHINGS.

Punishment of sin sometimes comes in the love of the sin. In David's case, murder with murder, and the peril of his own life.

The sin of those in public positions, leads to sin in those beneath them.

Regard with suspicion those who profess a greater interest in your welfare than any one else has.

Reject, come from whom it may, familiarity that would make you a tool for selfish purposes.

Beware of the devil when he becomes very pious.

Man proposes, thinks he has accomplished, but God rules.

There are revelations of baseness and ingratitude that will unman, at times, the stoutest heart.

**Main Lessons.**—Filial obedience enjoined, disobedience to be punished—Ex. 20: 12; 21: 15; Lev. 20: 9; Deut. 27: 16; Prov. 10: 1; 20: 20; 35: 17; Mark 7: 10.