

It was moved in further amendment by Rev. John Scott, seconded by Mr. Anderson, to "sustain the protest and appeal, and reverse the decision of the Presbytery of Hamilton."

On the vote being taken, Mr. Thompson's amendment was carried by a majority against Mr. Scott's, and again unanimously as against the main motion of Mr. Cuthbertson. The Synod accordingly dismissed the appeal and sustained the finding of the Presbytery of Hamilton.

Parties having been recalled to the bar, the decision was intimated to them, whereupon Mr. Laing, on behalf of the appellant, protested and appealed to the ensuing General Assembly, and craved extracts. Rev. John Scott dissented from the decision of the Synod. Rev. Messrs. Thompson, McMullen, and Dr. Cochrane were appointed to defend the judgment of the Synod before the General Assembly. The Moderator formally cited all parties in the case to appear for their interests at the bar of the Assembly.

NEW PRESBYTERY.

A petition from members of the London Presbytery asking that a new Presbytery be erected, to be called the "Presbytery of Sarnia," was received, and ordered to be transmitted to the General Assembly.

WIDOWS' FUND—APPLICATION.

A petition from the London Presbytery asking that the General Assembly place as an annuitant on the Widows' and Orphans' Fund the widow of the late Rev. Robert Scott, formerly of Camlachie, and more recently of New York, U.S., was read, and on motion the Synod agreed to transmit the petition to the General Assembly.

REPORT ON TEMPERANCE.

Rev. Mr. Sieveright, of Goderich, read an interesting report on the subject of temperance, and the progress made during the year. On motion duly seconded, the following resolution was agreed to:—"That the Synod receive and adopt the report, regarding intemperance as one of the chief hindrances to the advancement of Christ's cause, recommend their members prayerfully to consider the question of personal abstinence from intoxicating drinks, express their sympathy with the provisions generally of the Permissive Bill now before Parliament, as pointing in the right direction, and urge upon all under their jurisdiction to endeavor both by moral and legislative means to suppress the evils of intemperance."

MEMORIAL OF REV. J. GAULD.

A memorial from the Rev. J. Gauld, regarding certain monies alleged to be due him from Mooretown, was read and ordered to be sent to the General Assembly.

REGISTRATION ACT.

Mr. Laing, from the Committee on the Registration Act, gave in a lengthy report containing the following recommendations, which were unanimously adopted:

1. That this Synod respectfully but firmly represent to the Government of Ontario, their great dissatisfaction with the clauses of the Act above specified, and request that the Act be amended by the removal of the provisions which are regarded by this Synod as infringing upon the unquestioned right of Christian men.

2. That a Deputation consisting of the moderator, Mr. Laing, and Dr. Cochrane, with Mr. Charlton, M.P., be appointed to wait on the Honorable the Premier of Ontario Government, and lay this matter before him in personal conference.

3. That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the other Synods of this Church and to the General Assembly, asking their co-operation in seeking the end contemplated by this Synod.

RECEPTION OF A LICENTIATE.

The committee appointed to consider the reception of Mr. Watson into the Church, by the London Presbytery, reported, that the Presbytery of London should be required to state to the Synod, the grounds on which Mr. Watson was received. The whole matter was referred to the General Assembly.

REPORT OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

Rev. Mungo Fraser, the convener of the committee on Sabbath schools, gave in the report for the year. On motion the report and its recommendations were received and adopted, and the thanks of the Synod tendered to the committee, and especially to the convener, for their diligence.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. Presbyterian conferences with the teachers.

2. Classes for training teachers.

3. Teachers' weekly meetings for the study of the lessons.

4. That hereafter that portion of the report on the state of religion, referring to Sabbath schools, be forwarded to the convener of the Sabbath school committee.

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS.

The report of the committee appointed to audit the treasurer's books, was read. The report stated that the books and accounts were carefully and correctly kept. The hearty thanks of the Synod were tendered Mr. James Walker for his faithful services as treasurer. He was instructed, should he see fit, to correspond with defaulting congregations and Presbyteries, in order that all arrears may speedily be liquidated.

SABBATH SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

The following were appointed as the Sabbath school committee for the year:—Mr. Mungo Fraser, convener, and Messrs. J. Thompson (Sarnia), McEwen, R. Hamilton and Thomas McGuire, ministers; and Messrs. A. I. Mackenzie, Peter Marshall and Dr. Wm. Nichol, elders.

COMMITTEE ON TEMPERANCE.

The committee on temperance was reappointed.

VOTES OF THANKS.

On motion of Dr. Cochrane, seconded by Mr. Straith, votes of thanks were passed to the minister and office-bearers of Knox Church, Stratford, for the ample arrangements to entertain the Synod, to the Christian friends in the town for their generous hospitality, and to the Great Western, Grand Trunk, and Port Dover and Lake Huron railways, for their kindness in granting reduced rates to the members.

ADJOURNMENT.

The business having been concluded, the Synod engaged in singing three verses of the 72nd Psalm, after which the moderator declared the Synod dissolved, to meet in St. Andrew's Church, London, on the second Tuesday of April, 1879, at half-past seven p.m., and closed the session by pronouncing the benediction.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XVII.

April 15. } THE RECHABITES. { Jer. xxxv. 1878. } 12-19.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord"—Verse 13.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Jer. xxxiv. 1-22. . . . Zedekiah's captivity foretold.
- T. 2 Kings x. 15-25. Jehonadab, the son of Rechab.
- W. Num. vi. 1-12. . . . The law of the Nazarite.
- Th. Jer. xxxv. 1-19. . . . The Rechabites.
- F. Prov. i. 20-33. . . . Counsel set at naught.
- S. Jer. vii. 21-34. . . . A disobedient people.
- S. Jer. xi. 1-14. . . . Vengeance denounced.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The remarkable incident which is the subject of this lesson is earlier in order of time than the imprisonment of Jeremiah noticed in the preceding lesson. It was during the final siege of Jerusalem that the prophet languished in prison. It was in the reign of Jehoiakim, probably in his fourth year, (seventeen years earlier,) that the obedience of the Rechabites was lauded to the Jews in contrast with their own rebellion. Let us now study the remarkable and instructive contrast.

1. OBEDIENCE AND ITS REWARD: Verses 12-14, 18, 19. The Rechabites were a branch of the Kenites, (1 Chron. ii. 55,) who dwell in Canaan as far back as Abraham's time, (Gen. xv. 19,) but who attached themselves to Israel and adopted the worship of Jehovah, (see Num. x. 29-32; Judges i. 16; iv. 11; 1 Sam. xv. 6,) retaining, nevertheless, their Arab mode of life, dwelling not in cities, but in their movable tents. (Judges iv. 11.) One of these Kenites was named Rechab, which means "the rider"—a name peculiarly suitable for an Arab chieftain; and it is curious to find his son (or descendant) Jonadab associated with Jehu, of whom it is said, "He driveth furiously."

This incident related in 2 Kings x. 15, 23, is very significant, as showing the character of Jonadab. When all Israel had, under Jezebel's influence, gone astray after Baal, he, with his wandering tribe, evidently remained faithful to Jehovah; and when Jehu was about to begin his crusade against Baal worship, it was Jonadab whom he sought as an ally. The man who took so active a part in the stern vengeance wreaked upon the devotees of Jezebel's idol was just the man to leave to his family the strict commands recorded in our chapter. Three things they were forbidden to do, (1) to dwell in fixed houses, (2) to possess lands, (3) to drink wine. They were to be always a separate people.

For two hundred and eighty years they faithfully kept the commandments of Jonadab; and then the testing time came. Many conquerors had marched through the land; Tiglath-pileser, and Salmanser, and Sennacherib, and Ezer-baddon, from the north, and Pharaoh Necho from the

south; and still they kept to the open fields, dwelling in tents; but a greater than all now appeared; and swept every thing before him; and for fear of Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldean army, they were compelled to take refuge within the walls of Jerusalem. (Verse 11.) Very likely they still actually dwelt in their tents; but a time when fear had driven them to a mode of life so different from their usual habits was just the time for a further and sorer test. That test the prophet Jeremiah by divine command now applied to them. It must have been a hard test. To refuse the invitation of one they no doubt revered as God's prophet, because of an injunction left to their tribe three centuries before, was no light thing to do. Yet they hesitated not; and their steadfastness brought on them the special blessing of God.

Two travellers in the present century (Dr. Wolff and Signor Pierotti) have found a people in Arabia who claim to be descended from the Rechabites, and to be faithfully observing the ancient ordinance of Jonadab. The latter found a Hebrew Old Testament among them; and they worshipped God at a Jewish tomb. This looks very much like a fulfilment of the promise of verse 19 before our eyes. (Note 1.)

Such is the wonderful object-lesson set before Israel; the living pattern of obedience. In marked contrast to it we have in Israel

II. DISOBEDIENCE AND ITS PUNISHMENT: Ver. 14-17.

I have spoken unto you.—God had given commandment to his people, as well as Jonadab to his family; yet with what different effect. There is a two-fold contrast here. The first contrast lies in the source and character of the two commands—the one from the God of Israel, the other from a man who was not even of Israel. (1.) One came from human authority, the other from divine. (2.) One was from a man long since dead, the other from a God ever-living. (3.) One was given once for all, the other had been repeated and urged again and again, by the lips of faithful messengers. (4.) One was without sanction or penalty, the other carried with it the crown of abundant reward, and the sword of stern punishment. (5.) One involved no moral obligation, but seemed in some respects harsh and unreasonable, the other required only what was just and right, God's honest due. The second contrast lies in the persons to whom the commands were given and from whom obedience was demanded. (1.) One was a wandering tribe of the desert—the other was the covenant people of God. (2.) One had had no opportunities except as they had become associated with the chosen worshippers of Jehovah—the others had had generations of instruction and communion with the Most High. (3.) One was a family from which little naturally could be expected—the others were a people from whom it was right to look for much. Yet, and therein lies the third terrible contrast, the Rechabites were more faithful to their father, than the Jews to their God. The human command was obeyed to the letter; the Divine law was scorned and despised.

The consequences of obedience and disobedience are as remarkably contrasted. While the Rechabites are to be rewarded for their fidelity, judgments are denounced against Judah.

I will bring upon Judah: Though the destruction came from the command of Nebuchadnezzar and the swords of the Chaldean legions, yet it was from the hand of God, who used their ambition and lust of power as the unconscious instruments of his will.—All the evil that I have pronounced: The sword had been so long threatened and so often sheathed, that the people had ceased to expect it. But eighteen years afterward it descended. The capital was burned, the State was blotted out, most of the population perished, and the remnant of Judah was carried afar to captivity beside the rivers of Babylon.

The Rechabites teach us the same lesson that they taught the Jews. We must be firm—steadfast servants of God. They did not break their vows, though wine was set before them. Perhaps hard for some of them to resist. But they did. Let us keep firm under temptation. Hard for us sometimes. But read 1 Cor. x. 13. The Evil one comes in many ways. Puts wicked thoughts into our minds. Says sometimes, "You need not be so particular." At other times, "Give it up, it's no use trying to be a good soldier of Christ." But we must resist the tempter (James iv. 7.) The oftener we resist the easier it is. [Illustr.—Blacksmith's arm, how strong!—continual use has strengthened it.] So continual fighting against sin strengthens our power against it. What brave men these Rechabites were! How straightforward! Could say, "No." [How many now not brave enough to say "no" even when they know it ought to be said.] We can imagine we hear them, "We cannot drink wine, for we are Rechabites." Let us be bold enough to say, "We cannot do this wrong thing, for we are Christians."

Turn to Isa. v. 11, 22, 25; Joel i. 5. What sad sights these texts call before our eyes! No doubt many such drunken revels in Jeremiah's time. But there was no Rechabite to be seen there. What a grievous sin—the sin of drunkenness! Yet how lightly some think of it!—laugh at it sometimes. How sad! Why, God's Word classes the drunkard with the thief! Look at 1 Cor. vi. 10: "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God!" What misery it causes! Every newspaper full of its work. Nearly every murder caused by it. Workhouses, gaols filled by it. This country's great sin. Let us all try to stop it. What a good thing if a great number of our boys and girls were like the Rechabites in this point! How few recover themselves who fall deeply into it! Take care of the beginnings of evil.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Benjamin of Tudela, in the twelfth century, mentions that, near El-Jubar, he found Jews who were named Rechabites. They tilled the ground, kept flocks and herds, abstained from wine and flesh, and gave tithes to teachers who devoted themselves to studying the law and weeping for Jerusalem. They were 100,000 in number.—Smith's Bible Dictionary.

THERE are hearts whose mere kindness sheds more rays than the love of others, as the moon of Naples shines with a softer splendour than many a sun.