

Light from the East

By Rev. James Ross, D.D., London, Ont.

THE KING—Mentioned in this Book, is generally identified with Xerxes, emperor of Persia 485-464 B.C., although no monumental or historical confirmation of any of the incidents mentioned here has as yet been discovered, except that the Feast of Purim celebrating the deliverance from Haman's plot (ch. 9 : 26-28) was observed by Jews in all parts of the world in the time of Josephus.

SHUSHAN—The Susa of the Greeks was originally the capital of Elam, and subsequently one of the capitals of the Persian empire. Wherever the name occurs except here, the phrase, "the palace," is added. This, no doubt, refers to the remarkable

audience room in the form of a Greek temple, with the throne in the place of the Divine Statue, where the emperor received the ambassadors from all countries of the world. The ruins cover about two and a half acres, and the porticoes and staircases opened upon a terrace forty-five acres in extent. Much of the beautiful frieze of enameled bricks, by which the walls were adorned, is now in the Louvre in Paris. The city was taken, after a desperate struggle, by Assurbanipal, its buildings destroyed, and all its treasures carried off to Assyria. Later, it was taken and plundered by Alexander the Great, who found \$60,000,000 in its treasures. After the Arab conquest of the East, its site was abandoned.

APPLICATION

By Rev. Clarence Mackinnon, B.D., Winnipeg

Again Esther spake, v. 10. The path of duty was the path of peril, and we are not surprised that the queen should hesitate.

Life had its charms and its comforts for one in so royal a position; and an action that would rashly exchange these for the grim presence of the executioner might well make one falter. Nevertheless, the true course is to do the right and leave the consequences to God. A clerk who had been requested by his employer to do something dishonest, consulted his minister. "I shall lose my place if I disobey," he argued. "Look to God first, and trust in Him," was the wise reply. "Do not think He will let you suffer, because out of regard to His commandment you have lost your place. Never!" The young man lost his situation, but maintained his character, and in doing that, laid the foundation of future prosperity. Not the fear of man, but the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom, and it always pays to serve Him.

Think not, thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews, v. 13. She belonged to the Jewish nation; that would be enough! The tempest would level the tall tree as well as its less lofty neighbor, so long as it was part of the forest. No one lives to himself. Each is part of the other, in a family, a com-

munity, a church, a nation. The individual suffers in the national calamity, even as he receives his ray of glory when the nation is honored. And, therefore, to give the thought a slightly different turn, every one is responsible for his neighbor's welfare. His goodness enriches his community, his dishonor brings shame upon it. It is a strong incentive to right living to recognize that our holiness is a contribution to the common good.

If thou altogether holdest thy peace, v. 14. There is a sinful silence. Men are still possessed of a "dumb devil." Churches are sometimes found like that fabled people who dwell on the banks of the Ganges, and who had no mouths, but fed only upon the smell of herbs and flowers. There is a fragrance of religious sentiment about their walls, but no voice to denounce fashionable vices, nor to preach righteousness and duty at any cost. Such churches are not indispensable. They stand self-condemned.

At this time, v. 14. Mr. Bart Kennedy, in his recent book, A Tramp through Spain, describes the average Spaniard in this fashion:

"The Spaniards are the most dignified loafers in the world. To-morrow is for them the day of days. On that day everything will come right." "Manana" (to-morrow), says the indolent Spaniard. Nor does he stand alone.

A People with
no Mouths

Cannot Live
to Oneself

Manana