

WHY should those who are able to be up betimes on Monday morning, and never miss "the train," find it so difficult to get to church promptly at half-past ten on Sunday?—*Examiner and Chronicle.*

It does not become us to exhibit elation because we have treated Providence penuriously, and at last have paid the debts into which we fell by lagging behind Almighty God. We are not to be ashamed of missions, for God evidently is not ashamed of them.—*Joseph Cook.*

THE fascination of the dance is not in the music, nor in the congenial company it brings together. These can be secured without the dance. The hidden power that diadems the dance with sovereignty may not be described, but on it rests the base of God.—*T. G. Addison, D.D.*

"LEARN, my brother, to know Christ—Christ crucified—Christ come down from heaven to dwell with sinners. Learn to sing the new song: 'Thou, Jesus, art my righteousness; I am Thy sin; Thou hast taken on Thyself what was mine; Thou hast given me what was Thine.'"

IN the intercourse of social life it is by little acts of watchful kindness recurring daily and hourly—and opportunities of doing kindness, if sought for, are forever starting up—it is by words, by tones, by gestures, by looks, affection is won and preserved.

MR. SPURGEON has just delivered himself of a very smart thing. He was preaching on the subject of "Confession." "Having searched the Bible all the way through," said he—"I can only find that one man therein mentioned ever confessed. That was Judas Iscariot, and you will remember, my brethren, that immediately he had confessed he went out and hanged himself."

IN reference to selecting Sunday school teachers Rev. Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., recently gave the following practical hints: "We should seek teachers, not among persons who are not Christians, nor among idle Christians, nor worldly Christians. Busy Christians make our best Sunday-school teachers. A sense of personal unfitness is no disqualification. Timidity in self is the compensation of boldness in Christ. The first grace of the true teacher is humility; the second, faith; the third, love; and the fourth consecration. A young Christian makes the best teacher for an infant class. A mature man, of many temptations, who knows what it is to wrestle with sin, makes the best teacher for boys. Let the loving disciple John teach the girls. Paul or Priscilla should have the Bible class."

PEACE WITH GOD—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. v. 1. "There is no peace, saith the Lord unto the wicked," Isa. xlviii. 22. An unpardoned sinner can have no peace with God. Until his conscience is awakened, he may be careless and secure; but as soon as his eyes are opened, and his heart is made to feel, he must be miserable, till God speak grace to his guilty soul. To be justified, is to be pardoned and accepted of God. Pardon and acceptance are to be obtained only by faith in Jesus Christ, as having atoned for sin by his precious blood. When it is given me to believe that Jesus Christ hath taken away my sins, there is nothing more to distress my conscience; then I have "peace with God." The distress of an awakened man arises from a guilty conscience and a sense of his sins. As soon, therefore, as the poor trembling sinner discovers that Christ died for such as he is; that Christ, being God, is able to save the chief of sinners; that this was his errand into the world; and that he has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37; as soon as the poor sinner believes this, he has peace with God; he can call God his Father; he can trust God for everything; he can think of death with comfort, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. There is no salvation without an interest in Christ. There is no peace with God but through Christ. Unless our sins are pardoned, our life must be unhappy, and our death the entrance on eternal misery. If I am looking unto Jesus as the only Saviour, and in self-despair have fled unto him for refuge, then God is no longer angry with me; my sins, which are many, are forgiven; my person is accepted; and if I die to-night, I shall go to God. O happy state, to have nothing to fear in life or death! To have God for our Friend, Christ for our Redeemer, the Holy Ghost for our Comforter, death our friend, heaven our home, and an eternity before us of peace and joy.

THE Old Testament Scriptures out of date. Not till the nature of things is. I rode once from a noon on the Dead Sea through a moon-light on the Mar Saba gorges to Bethlehem in the morning light; I passed through the scenes in which many of David's Psalms had their origin, so far as human causes brought them into existence. On horseback I climbed slowly and painfully out of that scorched, ghastly hollow in which the salt lake lies. I found myself, as I ascended, passing a gnarled, smitten, volcanic region, and often at the edge or in the depths of ravines deeper than that eloquent shaft yonder on Bunker Hill is high. At a place where, no doubt, David had often searched for his flocks, I found the famous Convent of Mar Saba clinging to the side of a stupendous ravine; and I lay down there and slept until the same sun arose which David saw. I looked northward from above Mar Saba, and saw Jerusalem above me, yet to the north, for I had been ascending from a spot greatly below the level of the Mediterranean. As I drew near Bethlehem, through brown wheat fields in which a woman called Ruth once gleaned, I opened and read the book which bears her name. Johnson, you remember, once read the book in London, and moved a parlor full of people to tears by it, who had curiosity enough to ask who was author of the beautiful pastoral! In my saddle there in Syria I was moved as Johnson's hearers were in London: but when I opened the Psalms, one by one, and looked back over the ravines towards the Dead Sea, and northward toward Jerusalem and upon the hill of Bethlehem, to which all nations, after a gaze of nineteen hundred years' duration, were looking yet, and at that season were sending pilgrims; when I remembered how that terraced hill of olive gardens had influenced human history as no other spot on earth had done, and that in God's government of this planet there are no accidents; when I took the astounding harp of Isaiah and turned through the list of the prophets to

find mysterious passage after passage predicting what would come and what has come; and when I thought of those critics under the western sky who would saw asunder the Old Testament and the New, and put into the shade those Scriptures which Goethe calls a unit in themselves, and which are doubly a unit when united with the New Testament; I remembered him who, on the way to Emmaus, opened the Old Testament Scriptures, and with them made men's hearts burn.—*Joseph Cook.*

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### LESSON XLIX.

Dec. 9.  
1877.

PAUL AT MELITA.

(Acts xxviii.  
1-10.)

GOLDEN TEXT:—"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."—Rom. i. 14.

#### HOME STUDIES.

M. Mark xvi. 9-20. . . . Miracles promised.  
T. Luke x. 17-28. . . . Power over serpents.  
W. 1 Pet. iii. 12-22. . . . Be not troubled.  
Th. Acts xxviii. 1-10. . . . The father of Publius healed.  
F. John iv. 46-54. . . . The nobleman's son healed.  
S. Matt. viii. 1-13. . . . The centurion's servant healed.  
S. Rom. i. 1-16. . . . Debtor to all.

#### HELPS TO STUDY.

Paul and every one of the ship's company, both passengers and crew, whom God had given to the apostle, were now safe to land, and they soon discovered that it was the island of Melita, Malta, where they were wrecked (Note 1). They were received with no little kindness by the barbarous people (Note 2).

I. THE GUEST SUSPECTED, Verses 3, 4.  
It was both wet and cold, and a fire was kindled. Paul cheerfully bore his part in every labor. He had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, when a viper, taken up no doubt with the sticks and suddenly aroused from its torpor by the heat, sprang forth and fastened on his hand. It may have been the common viper, which is deadly in warm climates, or the *viperina aspis*, the asp, whose bite is at once followed by sudden collapse and death. The islanders knew this well—see them eagerly watching Paul—no attempt to heal the bite—that perfectly useless—and besides, what do they suppose the reason of so strange a thing, a man escaping sea and then dying another way? verse 4. Were they right or wrong? Right in two things: (a) that 'accidents' come not by chance, but by God's will (Matt. x. 29), (b) that 'evil pursuing sinners' (Prov. xiii. 21). (Note 3.) But wrong in two things: (a) thinking calamities only come on the wicked (Heb. xii. 5-11; see Luke xiii. 1-5), (b) and therefore in thinking as they did of Paul.

II. THE GUEST HONORED, Verses 5-10.  
But the calamity expected does not come upon the apostle. God's promises of deliverance are again fulfilled: Ps. xci. 13-15; Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18. Not only deliverance, but honor—for what did the islanders think now? verse 6. That he was a god. But would Paul take that honor? What did he say when the Lystrians thought the same? Acts xiv. 11-15.

It is now the governor's turn to show kindness. His name is Publius, and he is called the chief man of the island (Note 4). Heathen as he was, he was fulfilling an apostolic injunction: Heb. xiii. 2; and if he did not literally, like Abraham (Gen. xviii. 2-10), entertain angels unawares, he did entertain a benefactor who was able to recompense him abundantly. His father was sick (Note 5), and Paul healed him. And others who had diseases came also and were healed. Thus did God reward the kindness of these Maltese. But these miracles had another purpose. They were signs. They were wrought by faith and prayer. They showed the people that Paul, though not a god, was God's messenger, and would lead them to listen to him when he told them of Christ.

Three months after the apostle departs loaded with honors and supplies for his wants.

Learn from Paul that man is immortal until his work is done. The apostle must go to Rome, and the Lord preserves him through all dangers.

Learn even from the barbarians the virtues of *sympathy, kindness, and hospitality*. Let us remember that when we entertain any one for Christ's sake, it is not merely a good man, nor even an angel, but the Christ Himself whom we entertain, the Master Himself in the person of His needy ones: Matt. xxv. 40; Luke xiv. 13; Rom. xii. 13, 20; 1 Tim. iii. 2; Heb. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. iv. 9. Christ will without fail remember and reward all that is done for Him: Matt. x. 41, 42; Luke xiv. 14; Phil. iv. 18, 19; 1 Tim. vi. 17-20; Heb. vi. 10.

#### SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

The island—modern name—size—history—controversy regarding—proofs in the case—the people—why called "barbarians"—their conduct—Paul's activity—mishap—opinion regarding him—how changed—the governor's name—courtesy—domestic affliction—how removed—the result—the feeling of the people and the lessons we may learn regarding—natural kindness—human fickleness—Christian benevolence and Christian obligations.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Malta is sixty miles from Cape Passero, the southern point of Sicily, and two hundred miles from the African coast. It is farther from the main land than any other island in the Mediterranean; it is seventeen miles in length, nine miles in its greatest breadth, and sixty miles in circumference; it is nearly equidistant between the two ends of the Mediterranean; its highest point is said to be six hundred feet above the level of the sea.

2. The inhabitants of Malta were of Phœnician origin, and came from the Phœnician colonies of North Africa (of which the famous Carthage was the most important). They would therefore speak a Punic dialect, and on this account would be called 'barbarians' (verses 1, 4); as the Greeks applied this term to all who did not use their own language or Latin (comp. Rom. i. 14; 1 Cor. xiv. 11; Col. iii. 11). It is worth noting that the part of Africa from which the Maltese came is still called *Barbary*.

3. These men misinterpreted natural law into vengeance; yet there is a proneness in man to judge so. We expect that nature will execute the chastisement of the spiritual world; hence all nature becomes to the imagination leagued against the transgressor. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera; the wall of Siloam falls on guilty men; the sea will not carry the criminal nor the plank bear him; the viper stings; everything is a minister of wrath. On this conviction nations construct their trial by ordeal. The guilty man's sword would fall in the duel, and the foot would strike and be burnt by the hot ploughshare. Some idea of this sort lurks in all our minds. We picture to ourselves the spectres of the past haunting the nightly bed of the tyrant; we take for granted there is an avenger making life miserable.

4. Tradition places the residence of Publius at Citta Vecchia, the Medina of the Saracens, which, though in the centre of Malta, is but a few miles from the coast. Publius is called first, or chief, because he was a Roman governor. Melita was first conquered by the Romans during the Punic wars, and in the time of Cicero was annexed to the praetorship of Sicily. The praetor of that island would naturally have a legate or deputy at this place. The title under which he is mentioned here, has been justly cited as a striking proof of Luke's accuracy. No other ancient writer happens to have given his official designation; but two inscriptions, one in Greek and the other in Latin, have been discovered in Malta, in which we meet with the same title employed by Luke in this passage. It is impossible to believe that Publius, or any other single individual, would be called the "first man" in the island except by way of official eminence.

5. The plural (in the original) is used with reference to the recurrent attacks or paroxysms of the fever. This is one of those expressions which indicate Luke's professional training as a physician. No other writer of the New Testament exhibits this sort of technical precision in speaking of diseases. The disorder with which the father of Publius was affected was dysentery combined with fever. It was formerly asserted that a dry climate like that of Malta would not produce such a disorder; but we have now the testimony of physicians resident in that island that it is by no means uncommon there at the present day.

#### TO CONSUMPTIVES.

The advertiser, a retired physician, having providentially discovered, while a Medical Missionary in Southern Asia, a very simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of consumption, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical specific for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, feels it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive he will cheerfully send, free of charge, to all who desire it, the recipe for preparing, and full directions for successfully using this providentially discovered remedy. Those who wish to avail themselves of the benefits of this discovery without cost, can do so by return mail, by addressing, with stamp, Dr. Charles P. Marshall, 33 Niagara Street, Buffalo, N.Y.

## Births, Marriages and Deaths.

NOT EXCEEDING FOUR LINES 25 CENTS.

#### DEATHS.

At Tamsui, Formosa, China, October 4th, of puerperal fever, Jane Eliza, daughter of Jacob Wells, Esq., Aurora, and wife of Rev. James B. Fraser, M.D., missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

In West Nissouri, on the 10th inst., Mr. Alexander Dunbar, in the 58th year of his age. He came to Canada in 1831, a native of Largo, Fif.hire, Scotland, and was for years a respected elder in the church of Nissouri.

#### MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

HAMILTON.—In Central Church, Hamilton, on Tuesday, Dec. 18th, at 11 o'clock a.m.

QUEBEC.—At Melbourne, on Wednesday, 19th December, at 10 a.m.

WHITBY.—In St. Andrew's Church, Whitby, on 3rd Tuesday of December, at 11 a.m.

SAUGEEN.—At Mount Forest, on the third Tuesday of December, at 2 o'clock p.m.

BARRIE.—At Barrie, on Tuesday, 4th December, at 11 o'clock.

OWEN SOUND.—In Division Street Church, Owen Sound, on Tuesday, 18th Dec., at 10 a.m.

MANITOBA.—In Knox Church, Winnipeg, on Wednesday, 12th Dec., at 10 a.m.

KINGSTON.—In St. Andrew's Hall, Kingston, on Tuesday, 8th Jan., 1878, at 3 p.m.

LINDSAY.—At Uxbridge, on 27th Nov.

PARIS.—At Tilsonburg, on Tuesday 18th Dec., at 7.30 p.m.

LONDON.—In first Presbyterian Church, London, on Tuesday 18th Dec., at 2 p.m.

TORONTO.—In Knox Church, Toronto, on Tuesday, 11th Dec., at 11 a.m.

OTTAWA.—In St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, on Monday, 5th February, at 3 p.m.

CHATHAM.—In Wellington Church, Chatham, on 18th December, at 11 a.m.