

selfishness could give, but from the impulse which Christianity gives—loving God, and therefore loving our fellow-man. He referred to a lady who had gone from his own congregation, leaving a noble position at home, called by Christian love. She had fallen, but not in vain. Victory was not to be achieved without wounds and death. Let each member of the Society think—what sacrifice am I making for this great cause? Let them not only give as they were able, but let them think of their sister on the field, and pray for her; and so in her distant work she would feel her heart uplifted and strengthened, at times without knowing why, by the prayers of those at home. He referred to the great mission work of the Church as a whole, beginning with the North-West and Formosa, where our gallant McKay has been laboring at the risk of his life—going on to India, where his dear friend and brother, Fraser Campbell, and Mr. Douglas and his family, with four ladies, were laboring in Indore—then on to the South Sea Islands and Trinidad, where we had a staff at work under Morton. Our Church should stand side by side with every other Church in the grandest work going on in the world; greater than architecture and art; political movements and philosophies—the unseen work of building up the temple of God in human hearts, bringing men into relationship with God; a work which will tell throughout eternity. There were two especial reasons why this work among the women of India was the special work of Christian women—1st. Because it was a work of great magnitude, which could be done only by women. Thirty years ago, indeed, even women would not have been allowed to do it. While the women could not be reached by the gospel, the work among the men was very much thrown away, so strong was their influence in favor of idolatry. Now the Zenanas are thrown open to the female missionary, and she should be made to feel strengthened by the enthusiasm of those at home, whose representative she is. 2nd. Because Christianity, which has brought such inexpressible blessings to all, has brought special blessings to women—has brought her moral, social and spiritual enfranchisement—and it would show a want of the commonest feelings of gratitude and of the love which is one of the special properties of woman, if she did not long to share this blessing with those who are still imprisoned in heathen darkness and degradation. He hoped that all his female hearers would enroll themselves in a Society which was engaged in promoting this noble work.

After the singing of a missionary hymn and the taking up of a collection the meeting was closed by the Rev. T. G. Smith. The Society had also hoped to secure the Rev. Dr. Fraser, from Formosa, for this meeting, but as his other engagements prevented him from visiting Kingston before April, it was determined not to postpone so far the annual meeting, but to call another specially to receive Dr. Fraser's address. The very interesting addresses of Mr. Millingen and Principal Grant were, however, listened to with deep attention by the large audience, composed chiefly of ladies, and it may be hoped that they will have a marked effect in stimulating the Society's future labors.

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

BORN.

At the manse, Ancaster, on the 22nd February, the wife of the Rev. John H. Ratcliff, of a son.

MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY.

WHITBY.—In Whitby, on the third Tuesday of March at 11 o'clock a.m.
TORONTO.—In usual place, on the 1st Monday of March.
LONDON.—Next regular meeting in 1st Presbyterian Church, London, on the third Tuesday in March, 1878.
MANITOBA.—In Knox Church, Winnipeg, 2nd Wednesday of March.
CHATHAM.—In St. Andrew's Church, Chatham, on Tuesday, 19th March, at 11 a.m.
GLENGARRY.—In St. John's Church, Cornwall, on Tuesday, 19th March, at the usual hour.
MONTREAL.—In St. Paul's Church, Montreal, on Tuesday, 7th April, at 11 a.m.
KINGSTON.—In Chalmers' Church, Kingston, on Tuesday, 26th March, at 3 p.m.
GUELPH.—In Chalmers' Church, Guelph, on the 12th March, at 10 a.m.
STRATFORD.—In St. Andrew's Church, Stratford, on Tuesday, 19th March, at 10 a.m.
BARRIE.—At Barrie, on 26th March, at 11 a.m.
QUEBEC.—At Scottstown, on 20th March, at 10 a.m.
HURON.—At Seaford, on 19th March, at 11 a.m.
PETERBORO.—In St. Andrew's Church, Peterboro, on Tuesday, 26th March, at 1.30 p.m.
BRUCE.—In Knox Church, Paisley, on 26th March.
OTTAWA.—At Bank Street Church, Ottawa, on the first Tuesday of May, at 2.30 p.m.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON X.

Mar. 10. } HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN. { 2 Chron. xxix. 1878. } 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"And in every work that he began he did it with all his heart, and prospered."—2 Chron. xxxi. 21.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Isa. ix. 1-21. Light in darkness.
T. 2 Chron. xxix. 1-19. . . . The temple opened and cleaned.
W. 2 Chron. xxix. 20-36. Sacrifices restored.
Th. 2 Chron. xxx. 1-27. . . . The Passover observed.
F. 2 Chron. xxi. 1-10. . . . The reforms completed.
S. Isa. xxxii. 1-20. . . . The righteous king.
S. Isa. xxxv. 1-10. . . . The prosperous kingdom.

HELPS TO STUDY.

1. THE TEMPLE OPENED: Verses 1-3.

From the darkest page in the annals of Judah, we turn to one of the brightest. Ahaz, the worst of monarchs, is succeeded by Hezekiah, the best, 2 Kings xviii. 5. There had been none like him since David. He raised the nation from a tributary province to an independent state, honoured and feared by all the surrounding kingdoms; he replenished the empty treasury, and rebuilt the ruined fortress; he led the people back from gross idolatry to an earnest, loyal worship of God. No king appeared in more evil times, none served God more thoroughly, and none accomplished so much for his land. And he was a young man, but twenty-five years old when he began to reign. A noble example to all young men. It is a surprise indeed that Hezekiah was so good a man. With a bad father, and all around him, everything that was corrupt and demoralizing, how did he escape contamination. The reason is probably hinted at here. He had a good mother, Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah, who was not improbably Uziah's counsellor, chap. xvi. 5, or the "faithful witness" whom Isaiah (viii. 2) mentions. But there were other good influences around him. Isaiah was his counsellor. But above all, he owed much to the prophet Micah whose faithful warnings aroused Hezekiah to his great work of Reformation. Jer. xvi. 18-19; Micah iii. 1-7, 11, 12.

He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He was true to God and to his conscience, and is reckoned one of the three perfect kings, 2 Kings xviii. 5; Eccles. xlix. 4. According to all—other kings had imitated in part the great example of their ancestors,—that David, the standard by which other kings were always measured, 1 Kings vi. 6; xv. 3, 11; 2 Kings xviii. 5, his father, i.e., ancestor did, Prov. iii. 5, 6. In the first year... first month. He began at once and began well.

In a neglected garden there are two things to be done: (1.) To clear away the rubbish and pull up the weeds; (2.) To sow good seed and plant good plants. And so it was in Judah. First there were the "high places and images and groves" to be removed—even the brazen serpent itself. 2 Kings xviii. 4. Then there were the old national institutions, civil and religious, to be restored. Hezekiah did both, and did them thoroughly. The repairing of the doors was but a beginning. (Note 1.) The very promptitude and vigor with which he set to work prevented opposition. "Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prospered the people; for the thing was done suddenly." (Verse 36.)

Let not untoward circumstances hinder us from serving God.—How often does a boy or girl whose heart is drawn toward the Saviour find an excuse for not being decided in the peculiarly hard circumstances in which he or she is placed. Now surely if any one might urge such a plea, Hezekiah might when he came to the throne. How easy to have acquiesced in the evils he found, and to have contented himself with good wishes!

Begin at once.—A boy will say, "I dare not be a Christian now; but when I go to a new situation, where I shall be a stranger, I will begin." No, you will not. When you get there you will say, "I must not offend others at first; I must be cautious, and come out as a Christian gradually." Be like Hezekiah. "In the first year of his reign, in the first month," he took the one great decided step; and all then was comparatively easy.

II. THE PRIESTS ASSEMBLED: Verses 4, 5.

He gathered together the priests and Levites in the East street. (Note 2.) The teachers of religion should certainly be the natural leaders in reform. If they lead, the people will follow. The king earnestly exhorts them to sanctify themselves first, and then the house of the Lord. The outward cleanliness was a sign of inward purity. True sanctification comes by "the washing of water by the Word," Eph. ii. 21, 22.

Only purified hands could purify the house. A pure gospel cannot be preached by impure lips. The great need of the world is a sanctified ministry and a sanctified church, Isa. lii. 11.

The priests seem to have been but half-hearted in the work, as would appear from Urijah's readiness to build the Syrian altar for Ahaz; but the thing was thoroughly done, for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." (Verse 34.)

III. THE SINS ACKNOWLEDGED: Verses 6-9.

Our fathers have trespassed, Ezra v. 12; Neh. ix. 26, 26; Lam. v. 7. To get at the cause of evil is a great step towards working a cure. Here all the public calamities are traced back to their real source—the sin by which they have forsaken God and turned their faces from His habitation, to which the Israelite always in devotion directed his face, 1 Kings viii. 35; Dan. vi. 10. It was regarded as an insult to Jehovah to pray with the face turned in any other

direction, Ezek. viii. 16. Christ is the true temple towards whom alone we must offer up our prayers.

Put out the lamps. The lamps of the golden candlestick. The light in these lamps was to be kept burning continually. Lev. xxiv. 2. Nor offered burnt offerings. Doubtless there had been offerings offered up upon the heathen altar of Ahaz' making, but that was only an offense in the sight of God, not an act that would secure His favor. Astonishment. The suddenness and the completeness of their ruin was a cause of amazement to themselves. They were on such a high pinnacle of prosperity, and, so instantly, to be hurled down to such a depth of woe kept them in a state of stupefaction. They could not understand how it could have been brought about. Hezekiah was the first, in his confession of the transgression of the people, to explain the real cause of their troubles.

Wherefore he hath delivered. Evil ever pursues the wrong-doer. As ye see. The results of God's wrath are everywhere manifest. Every eye which is not wilfully blind can see them! Every reader of history can trace them—Our fathers have fallen, etc. This was in the terrible war under Ahaz with the Syrians, Ephraimites, Philistines, Assyrians.

IV. THE COVENANT PROPOSED: Verses 10, 11.

Now it is in mine heart. The king was constrained by a grand and holy purpose. He renews his appeal—My sons, be not negligent.

The priests and Levites hastened to obey the king's injunction, though the Levites were more prompt than the priests. They began the work of purification on the first day of the month. One week was consumed in cleansing the temple proper, and another week was spent on the courts. All idolatrous objects and implements, and all the accumulations of filth during the idolatrous worship, were carried out of the city, and cast into the brook Kidron, to be washed away. On the sixteenth day the Levites reported that the work was done. The king and the people then re-established the worship of the temple, with all its sacrificial and musical rites.

Hezekiah's great Reformation culminated in the remarkable passover described in the thirtieth chapter. Commentators differ as to whether this took place in the first year of his reign, or after the sixth. The latter seems to me more likely. In the sixth year the northern kingdom of Israel was finally overthrown by Assyria, and the king, the nobles, and all the leading inhabitants led into captivity; and it would seem to have been after this that Hezekiah sent his messengers to the remnant of the ten tribes, the poor cultivators and others who had "escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria," (chap. xxx. 6,) and invited them to come to the holy city of their forefathers and keep a solemn passover. The result was most remarkable. Although many belonging to the nearer tribes "laughed them to scorn," a goodly number from the more remote "humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem;" and these very repentant prodigal ones were the most active in clearing the land of Judah of its idols, (Chap. xxxi. 1.)

Hezekiah's Reformation was thorough. He swept away every abomination, and every thing which might become an occasion of sin and idolatry. Even the brazen serpent which had been preserved for over 700 years, and which had become an object of idolatrous veneration to which the people were in the habit of offering incense, he broke in pieces, 2 Kings xviii. 4. "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

Thoroughness and persistence in godliness—that is what is wanted. "He that endureth to the end," said Jesus, "the same shall be saved."

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Opened the doors.—The temple proper, as distinct from its courts, was a building about ninety feet long by thirty wide, containing two apartments, the holy and the most holy places; and the only mode of entering it was by the doors hung in the ornamental porch in front of it (2 Chron. iii. 3, 4.) These were the doors which Ahaz had closed for the purpose of putting an end to the worship of Jehovah (chap. xxviii. 24.) There were two of these doors, and each door consisted of two leaves, folding doors. They were made of the wood of the fir-tree, and were covered with carvings representing cherubim, palm-trees, and flowers, and were overlaid with gold. Between the holy and most holy places, in addition to the rich veil, or curtain, there was a single door of two leaves, similarly decorated, but made of olive wood instead of fir (1 Kings vi. 31-35.) The repair of these doors at the time seems to have consisted chiefly in the re-covering them with gold (2 Kings xviii. 16.)

2. The East street.—The streets of Oriental cities are, and always have been, very narrow and usually crooked passages, unpaved, without sidewalks, having blank walls without windows on each side, and unlighted at night. The word which is here rendered "street," however, means rather broad place, that is, market-place, or open space. This east street was probably not one of the courts of the temple, but an open space east or south-east of the sacred enclosure. Compare Ezra x. 9; Neh. viii. 1, 3, 16.

KNOWLEDGE BY EXPERIENCE.—Practical sciences are not to be learned but in the way of action. It is experience that must give knowledge in the Christian profession, as well as in all others. And the knowledge drawn from experience is quite of another kind from that which flows from speculation or discourse. It is not the opinion, but the path of the just, that the wisest of men tells us shines more and more into a perfect day. The obedient, and the men of practice, are those sons of light that shall outgrow all their doubts and ignorances, that shall ride upon these clouds, and triumph over their present imperfections, till persuasion pass into knowledge and knowledge advance into assurance, and all come at length to be completed in the beatific vision and a full fruition of those joys which God has in reserve for them whom by His grace He shall prepare for glory.