

On motion it was agreed to ask the General Assembly to sanction the change.

An overture from the Presbytery of Whitby was read in favor of the preparation of a hymn book which would secure greater uniformity and efficiency than at present existed.

Rev. W. M. Roger, on behalf of the Presbytery, spoke in support of the overture, and moved its transmission to the General Assembly. Carried.

The following Special Committees were appointed by the Synod to act during the ensuing year:—

On Temperance—D. Fraser, Convener; Prof. Mowat, James Cleland, R. Chambers, J. L. Murray, R. Wallace, D. Macdonald, J. Somerville, Hugh Crozier, and James B. Middlemiss—ministers. Wm. Adamson, A. Macalister, and T. Dallas—elders.

On Sabbath Observance—A. Wilson, convener; John Hogg, Prof. Gregg, J. C. Smith, Donald Fraser, J. B. Mullen, and James Cameron—ministers. T. W. Taylor, T. McRae, and A. D. Fordice—elders.

On Sabbath Schools—J. M. Cameron, J. B. Mullen, R. Chambers, John Campbell, T. F. Fotheringham, W. M. Roger, M. W. McLean, and Jas. A. McConnell—ministers. G. L. Blaikie, W. J. Craig, Wm. Crawford, John Scott, J. C. Smith, and Jas. Scott—elders.

An overture was read from the Synod of Hamilton and London embodying explanations of the school law by the Minister of Education favorable to the general use of the Bible in the Public Schools, and resolutions passed by that Synod with the view of obtaining united action towards that end.

Rev. Prof. McLaren moved the following resolution, which was adopted:—

**Resolved**—First, That the Synod instruct the clerk to acknowledge with thanks the courtesy of the Synod of Hamilton and London in transmitting to them a copy of resolutions adopted by that Court anent the use of the Bible in the Public Schools of Ontario. Second, That the Synod express their satisfaction with the memorandum of the Hon. the Minister of Education accompanying the resolutions. Third, That as it appears from the memorandum of the Minister of Education that there is no hindrance to be apprehended from the school law, but that the Bible may be introduced into the Public Schools, and may be used as a text book, therefore this Synod recommends and enjoins as a Christian duty on all the office-bearers within its bounds, and on all Christian parents, earnestly and constantly to use their influence as individuals, citizens, school trustees, and teachers towards such use of the Bible by the pupils of our Public Schools, beseeching and urging them to do this, as the highest interests of future generations for time and eternity depend on their thorough acquaintance with God's revealed will. Fourth—That ministers and office-bearers, etc., be enjoined to give all due publicity to the existing state of the law, in order that advantage may be taken of it without delay to secure the general introduction of the Scriptures into the Public Schools.

A communication was read from the Synod of Hamilton and London embodying resolutions complaining against those provisions of the Ontario Registration Act which subject clergymen to fines and imprisonment in the event of their failure to comply with the requirements of the Act regarding funerals, and asking the co-operation of this Synod in the effort to obtain the repeal of the objectionable clauses.

Rev. John Hogg, of Oshawa, moved that the communication be received, that the Synod adopt the resolutions of the Synod of Hamilton and London, and that a committee be appointed to act with the committee of the latter Synod. He thought clergymen generally were willing to acquiesce in the law, but they were liable to fall into the hands of rings, and if they omitted to return the deaths Clerks or Town Councils were ready to pounce upon them with fines and penalties, and made things very unpleasant for them. He himself had been annoyed considerably.

Rev. F. McCuaig, of Kingston, thought the Government was exceeding its powers in interfering with their functions as ministers of the Gospel.

Rev. Prof. Gregg also looked upon the law as obnoxious. Rev. Principal Grant characterized it as outrageous and iniquitous, and as an unwarrantable interference with their rights.

Rev. A. Wilson, of Kingston, did not think the Government had a right to make men collectors of statistics without their consent, and without paying them for doing so.

Mr. McLellan, of Garafra, asked if some of the gentlemen who had spoken against the law could suggest anything better.

Rev. Principal Grant thought it was not their place to do so, although he could suggest. All they had to do was to point out their grievance and leave the Government to effect the remedy.

Several other speakers expressed their objections to the law, after which the following deputation was appointed to wait on the Ontario Government with a view of having the objectionable provisions repealed: The Moderator, the Clerk, Rev. Prof. Gregg, Rev. John Hogg, Hon. John Mc-Murich, and Mr. T. W. Taylor.

After passing the usual votes of thanks the Synod adjourned a few minutes before six to meet in St. Andrew's Church, Guelph, on the evening of the second Tuesday of May, 1879, and the Moderator pronounced the benediction.

#### SYNOD OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA.

The Synod held its annual meeting at Montreal, and in Erskine Church there, on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth days of May, 1878. The retiring Moderator, the Rev. William Bain, D.D., of Perth, opened the Synod by preaching an excellent gospel sermon on Eph. i. 22 and 23. The Rev. William Ross of Lochiel, was chosen as Moderator for the current year. Sixty-four members were marked on the roll as present, namely, forty-seven ministers and seventeen elders. There might have been a few more who did not answer to their names, or who were not observed by the clerk.

The evening of Wednesday, the second day of meeting, was occupied with the report on the State of Religion and conference thereupon. Part of next day was spent in further conference, issuing in the disposal of the report and the appointment of the same committee on State of Religion with one addition, for the current year. Three other matters engaged a considerable part of the Synod's attention, viz.: First, A protest and appeal of the Rev. John Mackenzie of Hampden, against a decision of the Presbytery of Quebec, touching certain money in the hand of the Rev. John McDonald, now of Scotstown, and lately of Winslow. The Synod's judgment sustaining Mr. Mackenzie's protest and appeal is likely to come before the General Assembly, Mr. Aeneas McMaster having protested and appealed against it. Second, The proposal to erect a Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew; this matter having been remitted to the Synod by the General Assembly. It was resolved by a very large majority, that a new Presbytery, bearing the name aforesaid, be erected, and that its first meeting be held at Carleton Place, and in St. Andrew's Church there, on the third Tuesday of August, at one o'clock in the afternoon; the Rev. Alexander Mann, D.D., to be Moderator. Third, Two communications from the Synod of Hamilton and London, bearing that the said Synod had taken action anent a certain Registration Act in the Province of Ontario, and also anent the use of the Bible in Public Schools. The Synod of Montreal and Ottawa expressed approval of the action taken by the sister-Synod.

A reference from the Presbytery of Quebec for adjudication on a question of arrears claimed by the Trustees of the Congregation of Winslow from the Congregation of Hampden, or members and adherents thereof, was disposed of by the appointment of a commission. An overture from the Presbytery of Ottawa, touching relief to the Church of the Waldenses, was adopted, and transmitted to the General Assembly.

The next annual meeting of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa was appointed to be held in Cornwall, and in St. John's Church there, on the second day of May, 1879, at half past seven o'clock in the evening.

Huntingdon, 20th May, 1878. JAMES WATSON, Clerk.

## SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

#### LESSON XXIII.

June 9, 1878. } DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN. { Dan. vi. 1-23.

GOLDEN TEXT:—"My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me"—Verse 22.

#### HOME STUDIES.

M. Heb. xi. 32-40.....The triumphs of faith.  
T. Acts iv. 13-31.....The apostles' boldness.  
W. Acts xii. 1-11.....Peter delivered.  
Th. Acts xvi. 25-40.....Paul and Silas in prison.  
F. Dan. vi. 1-14.....The wicked conspiracy.  
S. Dan. vi. 15-28.....Daniel in the lions' den.  
S. Ps. lvii. 1-11.....God a refuge.

#### HELPS TO STUDY.

The fall of Babylon was followed by the promotion of Daniel. He is made chief of all the officers appointed by King Darius. (Note 1.) This selection of Daniel is a striking proof of his fame. The Medes came from the far north-east and knew nothing of the Jews. The rare ability and integrity of Daniel must have been very conspicuous to have led a foreign conqueror to entrust him with power, and make him the head of the State.

The other officers of state and rulers are jealous of him, and conspire for his destruction. How closely they must have watched him. But all in vain. Daniel is so wise and faithful that they cannot find a single mistake or blemish to give them an occasion against him. Then they seek to make his religion the means of his overthrow, and in their very plot they count upon and unintentionally do honour to his steadfastness and immovable integrity. By appealing to the vanity of the weak king, they contrive to have a law enacted that none shall offer prayer to God or petition to man, save to the king himself for thirty days under penalty of death by the lions.

#### DANIEL DOOMED: Verses 14-17.

Daniel knew the law and knew the purpose—the foul plot which had been laid for his life. But he faltered not. Not in ostentation, but in steadfast devotion to duty he worshipped his God as he did aforetime, kneeling at his open window three times a day with his face towards Jerusalem. In triumph his watchful enemies make haste to bring their accusation against the man of prayer. They artfully begin by setting before the king the force of the decree which cannot be altered. They then set forth Daniel's offence as a personal disregard and defiance of taking himself. They thus seek again to work upon his well-known vanity and weakness.

The king was sore displeased, chagrined and ashamed of himself that he allowed himself to be caught in this snare. He now plainly sees the envious spirit of these men who had made him their dupe. He laboured to deliver Daniel, perhaps seeking some way in which the decree could be set aside, or trying to influence the conspirators. He set his heart upon this. There was something in Daniel which commanded respect and love even from the king. But all was in vain. The decree is unchangeable (Note 2) and the relentless accusers insist on its execution.

The king commanded and Daniel is cast into the den. Though a king the unhappy Darius is compelled to act against his inclination and against his conscience. Which is the more kingly,—the monarch who submits to, wrong, or his subject who stands firmly by the right?

Yet while the king thus gave up his servant to the lions, he cannot refrain from expressing his real feelings and his re-

markable confidence that Daniel's God would deliver him.

The den is closed and sealed. No escape is possible. The nobles, in evident distrust of Darius, add their own seals to the stone. But all these precautions serve only to make the deliverance more signal. Compare Matt. xxvii. 60, 66; Acts xvi. 24.

Do not make rash promises, and never keep a wicked promise, as did Herod. Think before you promise. Careless, thoughtless actions will surely be regretted.

#### II. DANIEL DELIVERED: Verses 18-23.

What a contrast that night between the king in the palace and the victim in the den. In the palace remorse and misery, and in the den, as afterwards was manifested, peace and safety. The king cannot sleep. He is tortured by remorse. For grief, he cannot eat; and music cannot comfort him. Very early he arose and went to the den. He even hoped to find Daniel alive; and with a lamentable voice he called out to him. And Daniel answered. He is alive and rejoicing. My God, he says as Thomas said, "My Lord and my God;" and St. Paul said, "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me" (2 Tim. i. 12; Heb. vii. 25) hath sent His angel, (Ps. xci. 11; Heb. i. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 17) and shut the lions' mouth. He asserts his innocence before God. His heart condemns him not: 1 John iii. 21.

He who opposes God will fail; he who obeys God is safe. God cares for those who walk in the path of duty.

There are three kinds of people in this story on whom our earnest attention should be fixed. There is the accused, strong in his goodness and faith; the accusers, strong in their wickedness and envy; the king, between them, weakness itself.

1. Now there are far more people who are weak than who are strong. Even strength in sin is not so common as *sinful weakness*. And Darius, therefore, is the type and representative of multitudes. "Why," says a child, "I would never have put a good man in the den of lions!" Well, it's rather hard to say what you would do if you were a king, and had a den of lions, and could put people there if you liked. But at all events you do this: you let yourself be led by others into wrong things which you would never have thought of alone; nay, not only led, but entrapped into them, and thus fall, not into the lions' den, but into the clutches of the "roaring lion that walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Many a boy's first great act of open sin comes about in this way. And there is no peace in that lion's grasp, such as Daniel experienced in the den. What a wretched night Darius passed! What a wretched night has many a boy and many a girl passed who has sinned through weakness! To have a good rest one needs a good conscience.

2. But some, like the princes, are *strong, fierce, persistent in their sin*. A significant word occurs three times in this chapter. It is the word "*assembled*," verses 6, 11, 15. It implies tumultuous haste, and is the same word used in Ps. ii.: "Why do the heathen rage?" What raging waves of wickedness we sometimes have even among our Sunday scholars! We can but look to Him who "stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." (Ps. lxxv. 7.) Take the very sin of these princes—*envy*. Matthew Henry well says that we see in this narrative "the cause of envy, and that is every thing that is good," for it was Daniel's goodness that provoked it, (see Eccles. iv. 4,) and "the effect of envy, and that is every thing that is bad." As Solomon says, "Who can stand before envy?" (Prov. xxvii. 4.)

3. Then we have *Daniel, strong in his goodness*, or rather in his God. Wonderful must have been his conduct. To quote Matthew Henry again: "If they could but have found the mote, the mole hill, of a mistake, it would have been improved to the beam, the mountain, of an unpardonable misdemeanor." Yet they found not even that! Let us seek to be "blameless and harmless, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." (Phil. ii. 15.) And then his faith! It was that, as Heb. xi. 33 tells us, which "stopped the mouths of the lions." Lord, increase our faith!

But how was his faith fed? What air is to our bodily life, regular prayer was to his spiritual life. As Cowper sings—

"Neglecting prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright."

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. Darius the Mede, then sixty-two years old, is one of the enigmas of sacred history. Till lately it was the fashion to identify him with the Cyaxares whom Xenophon introduces, in the "Cyropædia," as the son of Astyages. But in the great prophecy of Isaiah it is *Cyrus* that takes Babylon; and even in Daniel the *Persians* are the conquerors. Darius is too old to be identified with Xenophon's Cyaxares; and his father's name is *Ahasuerus*, which has no affinity with Astyages, but which is the very name of Cyaxares, the father of Astyages. This is but one of many arguments in favor of identifying Darius the Mede with Astyages himself. We know that Cyrus treated his dethroned predecessor with the greatest honor, which he may have carried so far as to yield him the outward rank of supreme king during his lifetime. The testimony of Herodotus, and indeed of his own fate, to the weak character of Astyages, agrees entirely with the impulsive and vacillating conduct of Darius toward Daniel and his enemies. Some chronological difficulties still remain; but, on the whole, it seems most probable that Cyrus committed the civil government, with the whole royal authority, to Astyages (Darius,) while he himself was completing his new conquest, for a period of two years (B.C. 538-536,) and that on the death of Darius he assumed the sole sovereignty (B.C. 536.)—William Smith.

2. In this two principles are involved: one, the existence of a settled law or rule by which the king himself, theoretically at any rate, is bound, and which he cannot alter; the other, the inclusion under this law or rule, of the irrevocability of a royal decree or promise. Both of these principles are recognized as Medo-Persic by profane writers. It was applied to Cambyses, one of the most despotic of the Persian monarchs (Herodotus iii. 31,) and Xerxes, son of Darius Hytaspes (Herodotus i. 109-111.)—Rawlinson.