

## The Christian Helper.

A BAPTIST MONTHLY JOURNAL.

"Not for that we have done over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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### THE "HOUSE OF GOD" UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

God is a Spirit, and can only be worshipped in spirit and in truth. But it is no infringement of the doctrine of the spirituality of the Divine Being to think of him as having always manifested himself to his feeble, dependent and fallen creatures, in a way adapted to their limited faculties. Though it be true that "he dwelleth not in temples made with hands," so as to be restricted in his presence or limited in his operations: yet there is a sense in which God has dwelt with men on earth. Though he may challenge all the sons of men, and say "What house will ye build for me?" his words to Moses in the mount that burned with fire can never fail to be realized while our world stands: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

God *did* dwell with his chosen people in the wilderness, and in Canaan, displaying himself to them in connection with the mystic symbols of the tabernacle and the temple. His "house" was the scene of his most gracious manifestations. There he gave forth his law; caused his name continually to be recorded; listened to the united prayers of the assembled tribes. There the mystic fires of the altar continued to burn day and night; there ministering priests and Levites performed their perpetual round of service; there the great festivals and memorials of the nation were solemnized; there the high-priest entered once a year into the most holy place with the blood of atonement; and there, too, did he come forth to bless the people who waited to receive his official and significant benediction. We can well understand, therefore, how the soul of a devout Jew should "long, yea, even faint, for the courts of the Lord."

This past dispensation we are expressly told was but "a shadow of good things to come." Where, then, under the present dispensation, when these symbols are all withdrawn, are we to look for the great realities which they were intended to prefigure? Is there not a sense in which we are still to search for them in "the house of God"? It is true that the mysteries of redemption are the grand antitypes of the ritual service of the tabernacle and temple; but where are we to learn these mysteries but in those hallowed scenes where the

living teacher stands up to unfold the lessons of the New Testament Church, and of which the omnipresent Redeemer speaks when he says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them?"

In the highest sense, indeed, the members of the spiritual church "are the temple of the living God"; but there is a sense—a most important one—in which the place of Christian assembly is still to be regarded as "the house of the Lord." True, we have no burdensome ritual to be performed by a Levitical priesthood; but we have instead, "a royal priesthood to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of their lips giving thanks to his name." We have no blood of bulls and of goats to pour out upon the altar of sacrifice; but we draw near to God by that one offering, by which our great High Priest, hath forever perfected them that are sanctified. The cloud of glory, the mercy seat, and the ark, are no more to be seen in the place of Christian worship; but in the promised and vouchsafed presence of our divine Lord, we have more than all that these mysteries contained. We have no passover feast, in memory of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage; but "Christ our passover is slain for us," and we are to "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." We have no train of priests of Aaron's line ministering to us by day and by night, but we have "pastors and teachers" given to us "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?"

The "house of God," then, is still in the midst of us. We recognize it in the scene of fervent united prayer; in the place of Christian instruction; in the hallowed enclosure where the disciples of the cross commemorate the love of their dying Lord. These sacred scenes, wherever realized—whether on the mountain's brow, or in the valley's depth—whether in the gorgeous temple, or the unpretending meeting-house are the habitation or dwelling-place of the Most High. We have no notions of sacerdotal benediction inconsistent with the great canon of the New Testament, that "in every place we may lift up holy hands to God, without wrath or doubting." But we can have no objection to that feeling—nay, we must greatly applaud and commend it—which would hallow every association connected with the Christian sanctuary; and which

would look on it and its appendages of worship, instruction and sacramental service, as "the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

### THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

Many stories have been told to illustrate the truth that kindness and love will often prevail where everything else proves worse than useless. We remember reading such a story some time ago, the substance of which was as follows:—A Christian father and mother had two sons—their only children—who had been brought up almost to manhood under their immediate care, yet who were not only destitute of all religion, but bold ringleaders in all iniquity in their neighborhood, and fearless scoffers at sacred things. In the course of time the father died, but no visible effect was produced by this event upon the minds of these wayward sons. But at length, to the astonishment of all who knew them, they both gave evidence of a change of heart, and, from being ringleaders in all wickedness, had become meek, gentle, and consistent disciples and followers of Christ the Saviour.

Christian friends were naturally curious to know what means had been owned of God to effect their conversion. The widowed mother, on being questioned, replied in substance, that she had been led to think that her anxiety for her sons in their unregenerate state, had frequently imparted a warmth to her manner in reproving them which she now believed savored more of fretfulness than of love, and she clearly saw that the effect upon them was wholly injurious. She pondered this thought in her heart, and, retiring to her closet sought the assistance of divine grace, to enable her to entirely change her spirit and manner towards her children. She came forth filled with the spirit of compassion and love. She approached her sons with a heart overflowing with pitying tenderness, and in due time observed a corresponding change in them, and ultimately their hearts yielded to the new spirit of the mother.

Such, very briefly, was the mother's account of the means that proved successful with her almost hopeless sons. We suspect many a parent, many a Sabbath School teacher, and many a minister of the Gospel, might derive from it a useful lesson. We risk nothing in saying that harshness, and bitterness of speech and manner, have caused many a young heart to recoil in disgust from the subject of religion, which might by wiser means have been led to reflection and repentance.

We are reminded here of a circumstance related by the naturalist, Audubon, as occurring within his knowledge, of a certain individual who for many years had led the fell

of a pirate. On one occasion, when cruising along the coast of Florida, he landed, and was lying in the shade on the bank of a creek, when his attention was arrested by the soft and mournful note of a Zenaida dove. As he listened, each repetition of the melancholy sound seemed to him the voice of pity. It seemed to him like a voice from the past—a message from childhood's innocent and happy hours; then it appeared like the voice of a deep, sad sorrow for him, the far-off wanderer, the self-ruined, guilty prodigal; and so thoroughly did it rouse him from his long sleep of sin, that there, on that lonely spot, he resolved to renounce his guilty life, and seek the mercy of God; a resolution which, we are assured by the narrator, he subsequently fulfilled.

There is in the human heart, that which responds to the voice of gentle pitying love, when all other agencies have lost their power; when all the thunder and lightning of Sinai itself might roll and flash in vain. Would that there were more among those desirous to do good who would make full proof of the omnipotence of kindness, love and mercy! The spirit of Jesus must be our spirit if we would be wise to win souls.

#### THE YEAR BOOK.

Our Denominational Annual now lies before us. In typographical execution and general appearance it is an improvement on all its predecessors; while in matter it is richer and more complete than any of them. Some very important features have been added this year—notably the names of the Church, Clerks and the Sunday School statistics of all the churches connected with the different Associations in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. These latter returns will no doubt be found defective in some respects, but they are quite as perfect as the statistical returns contained in the various associational records from which they are compiled. It will scarcely be credited that so careless are some of the Associations in collecting their statistics, that in two of them the Sunday school returns do not even give the number of scholars in the schools—the most important information a Sunday school report can contain.

We are somewhat pained at the number of churches that appear to have no Sunday school at all, or at least do not report any. In the *Western Association*, out of 25 churches only 14 report a Sunday school; *Middlesex and Lambton Association* with 23 churches reports 12 schools; *Elgin Association* with 21 churches reports 13 schools (one being a mission); *Grand River Association* with 41 churches reports 29 schools

(5 of them being missions); *Brant Association* with 22 churches reports 17 schools; *Midland Counties' Association* with 21 churches reports 16 schools; *Huron Association* with 37 churches reports 15 schools; *Niagara Association* with 19 churches reports 13 schools (3 of which are missions); *Toronto Association* with 23 churches reports 22 schools (of which 5 are missions); *East Ontario Association* with 26 churches reports 20 schools; and the *Amherstburgh* (coloured) Association out of 13 churches reports schools in 10 of them.

The Associations connected with the Eastern Convention reveal about the same state of things.

Of course, excuse may be made for some of these no-school churches that geographical situation or distance from centres of population is the barrier; but we believe that after all even this barrier might in many cases be surmounted if pastors and church members were sufficiently alive to the eternal interests of the young and rising generation about them.

There are other matters connected with the Year Book that may demand our attention on a future occasion; but in the meantime we recommend every Baptist who is loyal to the denomination and interested in its affairs to purchase this Annual, which is replete with information on all our enterprises both Home and Foreign. See advertisement as to price etc.

#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

**GRAND LIGNE MISSION.**—This noble enterprise has just entered the 43rd year of its existence. The 42nd annual meeting was held on the 30th of January, in the St. Catharines-st. Baptist church Montreal. Financially, the year past has been one of serious depression, and but for a timely legacy received from the estate of a warm friend in Hartford, Conn., the Society could scarcely have pulled through. But the Lord has provided for the mission in the time of its extremity. Now, more than ever before, the Grande Ligne Mission is dependent on the Baptist denomination for sympathy and support,—and it is *worthy*. The Agent, Rev. Theoph. Gough, is now canvassing Toronto and vicinity, and we trust he may be very successful in enlisting the sympathy and assistance of the Baptists of Ontario in aid of their brethren who are laboring among the French Roman Catholics of the Province of Quebec.

**JARVIS-ST. BAPTIST CHURCH.**—On Lord's Day, February 2nd, the Rev. Dr. Castle entered the seventh year of his pastorate over Jarvis-st. church in this city. With more

than usual fervour and eloquence he preached and prayed for the people of his charge. Before commencing the morning discourse, the following statistics furnished by the Church Clerk were read:—

Statistics of Jarvis-st. Church, from Feb. 1st 1878, to Feb. 1st 1879:

Increase.	Decrease.
By baptism.... 86	By letter..... 31
letter..... 31	death..... 8
experience... 9	erasure..... 1
restoration... 0	exclusion..... 2
126	42

The net increase during the year is 84, and the present membership of the church, 751.

The following figures represent the spiritual prosperity of the church during the six years since the present honored pastor's settlement:

Increase.	Decrease.
By baptism.... 420	By letter..... 186
letter..... 198	death..... 36
experience... 48	erasure.... 31
restoration... 2	exclusion... 16
668	269

The net increase in six years is 399, so that the membership has more than doubled, having been 352 on the 1st of February, 1873.

The Jarvis-st. church has been highly favoured of God in many ways, perhaps in none more than in having as its minister one so gifted and so kind as Dr. Castle. May he long be spared in health and vigor to adorn his present charge, and may he find all his people to be helpers of his joy in their loyal support, and their earnest service in the cause of Christ!

#### HOW TO BE CALM AND CONTENTED.—

An Italian bishop, having struggled through great difficulties without complaining, and met with much opposition in the discharge of his functions without ever betraying the least impatience, an intimate friend of his, who highly admired those virtues, one day asked the prelate if he could tell him the secret of being always at ease. "Yes," replied the old man, "I can teach you my method, and will do so very readily. It consists in nothing more than making great use of my eyes." His friend begged him to explain. "Most willingly," said the bishop: "in whatever sate I am, I first of all look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business here is to get there; I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind the space I shall shortly occupy in it; I then look abroad into the world, and observe what multitudes there are who in all respects have more cause to be unhappy than myself. Thus

I learn where true happiness is placed, where all our cares must end, and how very little reason I have to repine or complain."

## Communications.

FOR THE "HELPER."

### ANNIVERSARY AT ORILLIA.

On Sunday, February 9th, the Orillia Baptist Church held its first anniversary, when able and eloquent sermons were preached by the Rev. J. D. King, of Toronto, at 11 a.m. and at 6.30 p.m. A union service of the Orillia and Marchmont Sunday Schools was held at 2.30 p.m., when able and interesting addresses were given by the Rev. J. D. King, and H. E. Buchan, M.D., of Toronto. Notwithstanding the cold, and almost impossible state of the roads, on account of snow-drifts, the attendance was good at all the services. A very interesting feature in connection with the afternoon service was the reading of the following address to Dr. Buchan, in appreciation of the deep interest he has ever manifested in this church and Sunday school:—

ADDRESS.

Dr. H. E. Buchan:

DEAR SIR,—The teachers and scholars connected with the Baptist Church in Orillia, desire to convey to you an expression of their esteem and gratitude on this occasion, and their best wishes for your prosperity and happiness.

Your eminent abilities, which have been concentrated to the service of our Divine Master, call forth our highest admiration, and our devotion to the interests of His church, our unfeigned gratitude.

The lively interest which you have at all times manifested in the success of our church and Sabbath schools here, and your generous kindness in presenting to the Orillia school a large supply of Hymn Books, have laid us under deep and lasting obligations.

We fervently pray that you may be long spared to render in the future such services as have been richly blessed in the past, and that our Divine Master may continue to prosper your efforts to promote the interests of His church and people throughout this land, in connection with your literary labors, especially as the editor of "THE CHRISTIAN HELPER," which is highly prized among us, and other branches of Christian work, and that when He comes you may receive a rich reward in His heavenly kingdom.

Done by order and in behalf of the Orillia Baptist Sunday School.

JAMES E. MAYNARD,  
Superintendent.

The day's services, as usual with us, were begun and closed with a prayer-meeting. Bro. Henderson, of the Jarvis street Church, led the prayer-meeting in the evening.

On Monday evening a well-attended tea meeting was held. Great credit is due to the ladies for the excellence of the tea, the abundant supply of refreshments, and the taste manifested generally. The tea being over, Dr. Buchan was called to the chair, and at once proceeded with the programme. After singing by the choir, and prayer by the Rev. William Lambert, the Chairman gave an interesting, humorous and instructive address. A statement of the finances in connection with the building fund was read by the pastor, which, considering the

pressure of the times, was considered excellent.—Also in regard to the spiritual condition of the church the statement was as follows:—Baptized during the year sixteen, and eleven others have been received for baptism; by letter three, and by experience three; total membership eighty-seven. Able addresses were delivered by the Rev. John Gray, M.A. (pastor of the Orillia Presbyterian Church), and Rev. J. D. King. A vote of thanks to the speakers, choir and ladies was moved by Deacon Maynard, and seconded by Deacon Whipples. The pastor then closed with the benediction, and all retired feeling thankful to the Lord for the mercies and blessings of the year, and for this our most successful anniversary. Brethren, pray for us, that the Master may continue unto us the tokens of His favor and love!

E. D. SHERMAN, Pastor.

### FAREWELL TO MR. CHAS. A. COOK,

AT HENDON, ENGLAND.

The closing exercises at the Baptist Chapel Hendon, near London, in connection with the ministry of Mr. Charles A. Cook, formerly of Jarvis-st, church, Toronto, and late of the Pastors' College, took place on the evening of Jan. 6th. There was a large and enthusiastic gathering of friends, among whom were several from Canada. The chapel in which Mr. Cook commenced his labors proving quite too small, a neat iron structure has recently been erected and opened. The tea served in the earlier part of the evening was of a substantial character, such as Canadians are familiar with. After the tables were removed, several addresses were given; each speaker testifying to the great amount of good accomplished by Mr. Cook, and expressing hope for continued success in a new sphere at Kingston, Ont. Mr. Cook was made the recipient of several presents: an album, containing a number of photographs, a writing-desk, and other useful articles. At the close of the exercises, which were of great interest throughout, many of the young people escorted their departing friend to the railway station, and sang a number of hymns, as a farewell, in a touching manner.

London, January, 1879.

F. B.

### FROM MOUNT FOREST.

To the Editor of the "CHRISTIAN HELPER."

DEAR SIR,—Last Sunday (Jan. 19) was what may be termed a "gala" day for the Baptist church in Mount Forest. In the morning we had an able sermon from our new pastor, a former member of "old Bond Street." I have reference to Rev. E. Bosworth, late of Queenston, who, last Sunday commenced his labors as pastor of the Church here. He was assisted in the service by his predecessor, Rev. S. Cunningham. The sermon was founded on the 5th and 6th verses of the 137th Psalm, and was well considered. The speaker's object was to show that he had a commission to the people:—"If I forgot thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." After the members of the congregation had been dismissed the members of the church tarried, when Brother Bosworth's letter from the Queenston church was read, and the

right hand of fellowship given him by our late pastor. Several reports of committees on candidates for baptism were received and adopted, after which the church was dismissed.

In the evening the ordinance of believer's baptism was administered by Bro. Cunningham. The meeting-house was literally packed. You, Mr. Edson, and I, as I know, were inside the chapel here. A number of your readers, however have, and they can form an idea how the building was crowded when I state that there were over five hundred present to witness the ceremony. The writer stood at the door and counted five hundred and twenty-three persons pass out. It put me very much in mind of the first baptism in Canada by the worthy pastor of Jarvis Street, (then Bond Street), when the gallery nearly gave way. You, dear Bro., will remember the occasion, when several of your Bible class were immersed. Mr. Bosworth again addressed the meeting, taking for his text the words "Follow me," and impressed as forcibly as possible, the duty of all believers to follow Christ in His own appointed way. Mr. Cunningham also spoke a few words with reference to the ordinance, and then had the pleasure of immersing twelve persons in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The best of order prevailed throughout, and those present evinced much attention.

I might add that the converts above alluded to, are first-fruits of a gracious revival in what is known as the Millar settlement, a preaching station about four miles distant from this place. Previous to the death of Rev. W. Millar, on whose farm the chapel stands, Elder A. Stewart, of Durham, promised to pay the section a visit. Not being able to fulfil the promise while Bro. Millar was living, Elder Stewart did so after his death. The result of the visit was the holding of a series of meetings, the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the neighborhood and the salvation of about forty persons. Twelve of this number have, as above stated, followed in the footsteps of their Master; others will follow, while a number will connect themselves with other churches. The meetings are being continued, and a good feeling prevails. The friends in the neighborhood feel that "the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." May the gracious work continue, is the prayer of

Yours in Christ,

C.

Mount Forest, Jan. 23, 1879.

### FROM WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

DEAR EDITOR.—As your excellent little paper is devoted to Sabbath School interests in a great measure, and I rejoice that it is, I have thought that it might be interesting to your readers, to have a few items in reference to our Sabbath school in the western metropolis. On Thursday evening the 26th ult., we had our fourth anniversary concert. The evening was favourable, and the house was crowded to its utmost extent, some having to go away for want of room; the programme was long, varied, and interesting, the most of the scholars having had one exercise or more. At the close of the long programme, a very interesting time was spent in shaking the Christmas tree, and dispensing presents from the School, the teachers, and friends. After the closing address, given by one of the pupils, a collection of over twenty-two dollars was taken up towards the funds of the school, there having been no charge for entrance. In the Sunday school report which was given in a very interesting manner by five little girls, it was stated that the school began somewhat less than four years ago with five pupils and two teachers, without furniture, or appliances of any kind; during the year, out of 125 pupils on the roll there has been an average attendance of one hundred and ten; there are a dozen teachers and officers. Some 300 volumes are in the library, and during the year

three or four thousand copies of illustrated papers were distributed. Thousands of verses of the word of God were committed to memory, and what was better still, six persons professed "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We enter on the New Year feeling deeply that *more* should have been accomplished by us as Sunday school workers, but with renewed hopes, that He who has helped us in the past year, may enable us to accomplish much more by His grace in the coming year.

*Hooping, praying and selecting* your next and well managed little paper "THE CHRISTIAN HELPER" will prove to be a great help to thousands of Sabbath School workers in the Dominion and elsewhere, I am Yours in the noble Sunday school work.

A. M.C.D.

## S. S. Lesson Department.

### International Bible Lessons, 1879.

Prepared for the "Christian Helper" by the Rev. J. W. A. Stewart, B.A.

March 2.—The Prayer of the Penitent—  
Psalm 51: 1-13.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.—Ps. 51: 2.

#### INTRODUCTION.

The author of this psalm was David. It was written probably about the 20th year of his reign, B.C. 1034. The sin to which it refers was, the taking to himself of Bathsheba and causing her husband Uriah to be slain,—adultery and murder. The history of this sin is found in 2 Samuel, 11th and 12th chapters. David is thought to have remained in impentence for about a year after his sin. "And this man sins; his sin grievous sin. Self-indulgent he stays at home till his army is in the field. His moral nature, easily conquered. One sin drags on another. As self-indulgence opened the door for lust, so lust draws after it murder. The king is a traitor to his subjects, the soldier untrue to the chivalry of arms, the friend the betrayer of the friend. Nothing can be blacker than the whole story, and the Bible tells the shameful history in all its naked ugliness."—Maclaren.

#### EXPOSITION.

1. How completely the penitent here casts himself upon the character of God as his hope, and well he may. Everything in sin is only black and damning. If there is not something springing spontaneously from the heart of God which affords hope to the sinner, then he cannot hope. That something does spring spontaneously, and its name is MERCY.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,  
Upon the place beneath."

According to thy loving-kindness. Not only does he cry for mercy, but adds, "Let the manner and the measure of the display of Thy mercy be determined by Thy loving-kindness." According unto the multitude, or greatness. His only refuge from the greatness of his sin is the greatness of God's mercy. Blot out. A very strong expression to denote extermination, removal, the leaving of absolutely no trace. Not simply the marking of a debt as paid or cancelled, but blotting it out as from a slate, leaving no trace behind of the account having ever existed. For the same word see 2 Kings, 21: 13, "and I will wipe Jerusalem," &c. M.Y. Note the personality of sin. Transgressions. Sin, iniquity. There are different shades of meaning in these words. Think of God's law as (1) a bound or limit, (2) a mark or standard, (3) a straight line or path.

Transgression is breaking through that limitation, sin is missing that mark, coming short of that standard, iniquity is swerving from that right path.

"It is not the punishment he cried out against, but the sin. Many a murderer is more alarmed at the gallows than at the murder which brought him to it. The thief loves the plunder, though he fears the prison. Not so David; he is sick of sin as sin's hillest outcries are against the evil of his transgression, and not against the painful consequences of it."—Spurgeon. Washing is the means, cleansing the end effected.

Verses 3-5. The confession of his sin, see, 1 John 1: 9. What are the points of this confession? (1) That it was sin, transgression, iniquity, not weakness, misfortune, an accident, an imperfection, or anything to be passed over lightly, but sin, black, vile, guilty, damnable. (2) That it was his own sin, the result of his own voluntary act and not to be charged to any one but himself. (3) That he could not get it off his mind,—it haunted him day and night. (4) That it was sin against God. (5) That his very nature was sinful, that he was born into the world not pure but tainted with evil. These only. Of course David was not unmindful of the terrible wrongs he had done to individuals and to society. But in wronging these he had sinned against God; and against God only in this special sense, that God alone is our Moral Governor, i.e., the Author of moral law, the Creator of consciences, and the final Judge of all our sins. God sustains to us a relation so direct, so personal and so high above that of any creature that it is legitimate to say "against Thee only." Moreover, the individual in this psalm is now dealing with his Maker; his sin appears in God's sight as the absorbing thought, and filled with this thought he cries to the depth of his penitence "against Thee only." That thou mightest be justified, &c. Since he had sinned, God's condemnation and punishment of him would be just. Behold I am vile. See John 3: 3. The sinful human nature can only beget sinful human nature. Plato said that if children were born with no taint of evil it would only be necessary to shut them up in order to keep them pure. David utters this, not in excuse of his sin, but to confess how deeply rooted the evil is and how great his need of renewal and cleansing.

6. Inward parts... hidden part. These mean the same as we mean by "heart." Behold. This word in the preceding verse points out how deeply seated sin is; in this verse it points out by way of contrast what God's requirements are. "The second 'behold' is fitly set over against the first. How great the gulf that yawns between them."—Spurgeon. And in the hidden part, &c. Various interpretations are given of this clause. The following from Scott seems to me most natural: "If we read the clause in the future tense, as in our translation and as it stands in the Hebrew, it expresses the psalmist's hope and prayer, that the Lord would, notwithstanding his guilt and depravity, graciously and by His effectual inward teaching, communicate to him true wisdom and enable him to know and do what he required and delighted in."

7. A repetition of the prayer in verse 2. Hyssop. "The hyssop was in constant use for the sprinkling of sacrificial blood."—Cowley. See Exod. 12: 22, &c. "The idea of the psalmist here evidently is, not that the mere sprinkling with hyssop would make him clean, but he prays for that cleansing of which that sprinkling with hyssop was an emblem."—Barner. Hyssop, an eastern plant with "long stems and bright green leaves."

8. Make me to hear, &c. Make me glad with a sense of Thy forgiveness and favor. That the bones, &c. A strong expression of the terrible distress he had endured (as if his bones had been crushed) through a sense of sin, arisen

from God on account of his guilt. He prays that the wretchedness of guiltiness may be turned into the joy of forgiveness.

9. Hide, i.e., cover, put a veil upon. Blot out. See v. 1. Note the expressiveness of this verse. On the one hand he prays God to veil His face so that He will not see his sin, on the other to blot it out so that it will no longer be there to be seen.

10. David wants the cleansing to be as deep as the sin has been; sin has got into the very fountain of his life, he desires that at the very fountain of his being he may be made holy. Right. The marginal rendering brings out the sense, "constant, firm," so that neither "the storms of calamity nor the gusts of passion" will be able to move him from God and from duty.

11. Cast me not away, &c. "There is nothing that a good man desires more than the presence of God, and nothing that the bad man fears more."—Peloubet. See Job 21: 14. Presence. God is everywhere present, and David here means, "cut me not off from Thy favour, from communion with Thee, from all those blessed experiences which are the portion of Thy children through their sense of Thy presence." Take not thy holy Spirit, &c. "God had departed from Saul, because Saul had refused His counsel and departed from Him; and Saul's successor, trembling as he remembers the fate of the founder of the monarchy, and of his vanished dynasty, prays with peculiar emphasis of meaning, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.'—Maclaren. It would be unwise here to begin discussing the doctrine of the Trinity, or to inquire what conception David had of the Holy Ghost as compared with that which is given in the New Testament. Let it suffice that David wanted God the Sanctifier to dwell in him, keep him, and felt that that was his hope of being sanctified."

12. Restore, &c. This joy he had lost by his sin. There is such a thing as "the pleasure of sin," but it is always obtained by the sacrifice of the joy of God's salvation, and a poor bargain it is. See John 1: 9. David has long been a humble penitent asking God to let him have back that which he had let go for the pleasure of sin. Coming as a true penitent he is coming in the right way, and God is so long-suffering he is likely to have his prayer answered. And uphold me, &c. Leave out the words "with thy," and read "and uphold me a free spirit." "Free" here means, willing, and the idea is, "keep me in that state in which I will obey Thee willingly, freely, gladly."

13. "Huntingdon's degree of S.S., or 'Sinner Saved,' is more needful for a soul-winning evangelist than either M.A. or D.D. The pardoned sinner's matter will be good, for he has been taught in the school of experience, and his manner will be telling, for he will speak sympathetically, as one who has felt what he declares."—Spurgeon.

#### REMARKS.

1. In connection with this lesson read the 6th and 7th sermons, entitled "David's Cry for Pardon" and David's Cry for Purity," in the 2nd volume of sermons by Maclaren of Manchester.

2. What sin cannot God's mercy forgive? Only one, the sin of clinging to sin. Impentence is at once the greatest sin and cuts off all chance of any sin being forgiven. Matt. 11: 20.

3. He who only seeks to escape the consequences of his sin and does not in his soul abhor the sin itself is not a true penitent. For an example of this and of the uselessness of the prayers of such an one, see Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act III., Scene 3rd. The words of King Claudius are worth considering and are full of solemn truth.

4. Does the fact that God can forgive lead one to think lightly of his sin, or should it lead to deeper penitence? Ponder these words of Vinit:

"Woe to him who, pardoning himself as easily as God pardons him, does not re-engage his sins in his heart in proportion as God effaces them from his book, and remember them in proportion as God forgets them! Pardon is not for that man."

5. How wonderfully complete is God's forgiveness! Consider what God does with our sins; *removes* them, Ps. 103: 12; *covers* them, Ps. 85: 2; *does not impute* them, Ps. 32: 2, 2 Cor. 5: 19; *blots them out*, Isaiah 43: 25; *forgets* them, Heb. 8: 12.

6. Christianity provides alike for the *pardon* and the *purification* of the sinner. He who professes to have the *pardon*, whilst having none of the *purify*, is deceived, 1 John 1: 6, Matt. 6: 14, 15.

7. Though David was forgiven and sanctified and is now in Paradise, the fact still remains and will remain forever in his earthly record that he *committed adultery and murder*.

8. Beware of making God's mercy an encouragement to sin; nothing could be more ruinous.

### March 9.—The Joy of Forgiveness.— Psalm 32: 1-11.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*—Ps. 32: 1.

#### INTRODUCTION.

The author of this psalm was no doubt David, as stated in the title of it and as confirmed by Romans 4: 6-8. David had committed the terrible double crime referred to in the last lesson. After the commission of that crime he remained for a time far from God, impatient and wretched. Then came to him Nathan the prophet, to bring him to his senses: (2 Samuel xii. See the wonderfully beautiful parable of *The Poor Man and his Lamb* in verses 1-6.) After Nathan's visit followed David's genuine repentance; and Ps. li contains his heartfelt confession and cry for pardon and purity. His cry was heard, and then came to him the peace and joy of being forgiven and restored to God's favour. Our lesson to-day gives expression to this joy, together with some lessons taught the psalmist by his late experience. *Mitchell*, the title given to this psalm, seems to signify, *a didactic poem*, i. e., a psalm in which instruction is given respecting God's dealings.

#### EXPOSITION.

Verses 1 and 2. *The blessedness resulting from the forgiveness of sin.* Blessed. This word in both verses is the same as in Ps. 1: 1, and is literally, *Oh, the blessedness of*. For the different shades of idea expressed by the words *transgression*, *sin*, *iniquity*, see notes on last lesson. *Forgiveness*, more literally *covered*, *concealed*. See Ps. 103: 12. The sin of the penitent is *removed*, *covered over*, *not reckoned*. How language is exhausted to give expression to the completeness of God's forgiveness of sin! To see this symbolized by a scene from real life, read the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke xv. Notice, verse 20, the father's action on the son's approach, and verses 22-24, the father's reply to the son's confession. Christ uttered that, *the parable of all parables*, to teach us what God is like and how God treats the returning penitent. David has lately tested the teaching of that parable in his own experience and has found it true, and is now exclaiming about the blessedness of returning and being so treated by God. *No guile*, no deceit, no falsehood, no attempt to represent things in a way different from what they really are. For David's *honesty* before God, see Ps. 51: 1-5. This *honesty* about one's sin is essential to forgiveness and the joy thereof. 1 John 1: 8, 9.

Verses 3 and 4. *David's wretchedness so long as his sin remained unconfessed and unpurged.* When I kept silence. "A whole year had

elapsed between David's crime and David's penitence. It had been a year of guilty satisfaction not worth the having, of sullen hardening of heart against God and all His appeals. Then came Nathan," *Ec.—Mortimer*. *Bones*, the seat of strength. *My bones waxed old*, &c., might be read, *My strength wasted through my groaning*. The reference here is not to a physical disease, but to the extreme wretchedness of his mind owing to the burden of unconfessed sin it was carrying. *David's conscience* was assailing itself, and an outraged conscience can give one no end of misery. Since mind and body are so intimately joined, David's physical health necessarily suffered at this time. *Thy hand was heavy*, &c. God ordained the moral law; God made the conscience; God has linked remorse and misery to sin, and what David suffered was just as much the doing of the Almighty as if he had literally put forth His hand to afflict. *Moisture*, sap, life-blood, vigor. *My vigor is all dried up*, no energy, ambition, enthusiasm; but wretched, morose, conscience-smitten. Surely sin is a losing game. *Selah*. Conjectures as to the meaning of this word are without end. After devoting two pages of his Bible Dictionary to the word Smith conjectures thus: "If any further information be sought on this *hopeless subject* it may be found," &c., &c.

Verse 5. *David narrates how he confessed his sin and how God forgave him.*

Verse 6. *David's experience of God's mercy an encouragement to others.* See 1 Tim. 1: 16; Luke 22: 31, 32. For this, i. e., because God is merciful as seen in His forgiveness of David. "Where one man finds a golden nugget, others feel inclined to dig,"—*Sparrows*. Every one that is reading. "The clause may perhaps admit of this freedom." "Every God-fearing man who is conscious of having sinned, remembering my sin, my confession and God's merciful forgiveness of me, and knowing that God is the same always, will be encouraged to come to God with confidence and prayer for pardon and purity." In a time, &c. This seems to teach that there is a time when repentance will be too late and unavailing. Isaiah 55: 6; Proverbs 1: 28. Surely in the floods, &c. "David apparently compares, as our Lord does in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7: 24-27), God's judgments upon sin to the torrents which in the East rise suddenly after rain, and sweep all before them with impetuous force. Should the judgments so come they shall not fall on him whom God has graciously forgiven."—*English Lesson Notes*.

Verse 7. *An expression of David's confidence and rejoicing in God.*

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Songs are expressions of joy and triumph. Contrast the sentiment of this verse with that of verse 8.

Verse 8. "Most of the older interpreters, including the modern Stier and Ewald, regard verses 8 and 9 as the word of God. Almost all recent interpreters regard these verses as the words of David."—*Dr. Holt*. "There is nothing in the original to determine which of these opinions is correct. On the whole I think the former is most likely the true one, and would therefore regard verse 8 as a promise of instruction and guidance given by God to David." We would hardly expect David to say to his fellow-men, "I will guide thee with mine eye." This clause is more literally "I will counsel thee; mine eye shall be upon thee." "We are not pardoned in order that we may henceforth live after our own lusts, but that we may be educated in holiness and trained for perfection."—*Sparrows*.

Verse 9. *An exhortation not to act like irrational creatures.* Lest they come near unto thee. This translation does not convey the true sense, but the opposite. It should be, *Otherwise they will come near thee*, i. e., the only way you can manage them so as to get them to do what you

want, to go and come at your bidding, is by means of *bit and bridle*. They have no understanding, but we have a mind and a heart and should render the obedience of rational and moral beings. "The true bridle for man is the eye of God."—*Rushin*. God wants to lead us as a shepherd, not drive us as a taskmaster. But if we will not be led we must be driven. Does not this verse indicate that sin is not only a violation of conscience, but also a contrivance to sound intelligence? Sin is a hinderer, as well as a crime, the sinner is a fool, as well as a culprit.

Verse 10. *Contrast between the experience of the wicked and that of the righteous.* Compass about, i. e., surround on every hand, as a circle surrounds its centre, as we are surrounded by the atmosphere. The same expression occurs in verse 7.

Verse 11. *An exhortation to the godly to rejoice in the Lord.* Be glad, rejoice, shout for joy. There is a gradation in these words. The first means to be of a cheerful disposition and joyous countenance, the opposite of all melancholy; the second, to be joyful even unto leaping for joy; and the third, to possess a joy which breaks through all restraints and expresses itself in songs and shouts. Notice the source of all this joy—"in the Lord."

#### REMARKS.

1. Verse 1. The angels are blessed because they have never sinned; that blessedness can never be ours, but ours is the blessedness of this verse. We can never be other than *sorry* that we have sinned, yet there is an intensity of blessedness in being redeemed from sin that angels can never know. e. g. Health is prized so much more by him who has been brought back from the door of death, or by him who has been once been shipwrecked. Hence such a passage as Luke 15: 3-10, especially verses 7 and 10.

2. Verses 3 and 4. When men have sinned they are not done with it. "If it were done, when 'his done, then 'twere well if were done quickly." Shakespeare's *Macbeth* says this before he murders Duncan. After the murder listen again to Macbeth:

"Will all great Neptune's oceans wash this blood  
Clear from my hand?"

There is the moral law violated, there is conscience within to wake up, and accuse, and torture. Many a man has had a *fortaise of hell* in this world from the stings of conscience. "We are beginning to find out that not only have we conscience, but that conscience has us."

"The mind is its own place, and of itself  
Can make a hell of heaven."

"You carry the brimstone with you," said an old lady to a young man who was scoffing at the idea of a hell of fire and brimstone. When David sinned, his conscience was like a sleeping lion; his sin waked up the lion. All sin is tampering with this sleeping lion, and is sure to wake him, if not in this world, then without fail in the next. e. g. *Judas*. May not this be the worm that never dies?

3. Verse 5. If we try to hide our sin God will expose it and deal with it, but if we expose and confess it God will hide it. How foolish for one to think that he can hide his sin. See Psalm 94: 7-9. "Be sure your sin will find you out." How the Christian delights to come before his God and confess and lay all bare, and then seek God's mercy in Christ. Notice that David went right to God with his confession and directly from God he received forgiveness. So still, no man, no organization, must come between the soul and God. I believe it will be the fundamental difference between Evangelicals and Ritualists, between Protestants and Roman Catholics; the former content for direct, uninterrupted union between Christ and the individual soul; the latter say, have had, and will have, between the soul and the sinner on the other, and the church, and

priest, the sacrament, must come in between, and only through the medium of these can the sinner receive salvation.

4. Verse 8. Do you want to know how many are going to heaven? See Romans 8: 9, 14.

5. Verse 10. *All suffering* is the result, direct or indirect, of sin.

6. Verse 11. When the poet Carpani inquired of his friend Hayden, how it happened that his church music was so cheerful, the great composer made a most beautiful reply. "I cannot," he said, "make it otherwise, I write according to the thoughts I feel: when I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen; and, since God has given me a cheerful heart, it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit."—*John Whitcomb's Anecdotes (from Spurgeon)*.

"The rest, that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live,  
"The religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die."

### March 16.—Delight in God's House.—

Psalm 84: 1-12.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will still praise thee. V. 4.

#### INTRODUCTION.

We are not told when, or by whom this psalm was written. It is generally ascribed to David, though it occurs in the third book of the psalms, which is said to have been compiled in the days of Hezekiah. "Some think it was written by some pious Levite, in the days of Hezekiah, when kept from the temple by the Assyrian army."—*Scott*. The psalm naturally divides into three stanzas of four verses each, the termination of the first and second being marked by the word *Selah*. The first stanza refers to the *dwelling* in the tabernacles, the second to the *traveller* thither, and the third, to God as the light and joy of that holy place. In the inscription, the word *Githith* signifies a musical instrument, supposed to have been introduced by David from *Gath*. The sons of Korah probably had charge of the musical rendering of this psalm in the temple. Ten other psalms are inscribed to them in the same way, all of them "full of pleasant and cheerful subjects." These descendants of a wicked ancestor are not shut out from God's house for his sin. The son shall not die for the father's sin. See Ezek. 18: 14-20.

#### EXPOSITION.

Verse 1. How amiable! "How lovely, how worthy of being loved! But the Hebrew is more personal: how dear to my heart!"—*Comins*. Thy tabernacles. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. His ear is ever open to the cry of His children, whether they lift up their voices in secret and alone, or in the company of others. But still there are blessings to be found in the tabernacles of God which cannot be obtained elsewhere. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." Ps. 77: 2. And the blessings of the tabernacle are not confined to any particular edifice or locality. "Neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem," must we assemble in order to obtain them; but wherever the "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," there will the Lord be in the midst of them. O Lord of Hosts. Observe the manner in which God is addressed in this psalm. Four times He is addressed as Jehovah of hosts. The psalmist delights in his house, not only because it is the house of the God of love, but because the great God, omnipotent, terrible, dwells there. All of God's attributes are sources of blessing and joy to His people. His mighty power, which crushes His enemies

is the defence and support of His children. "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people." Ps. 68: 35.

Verse 2. Longeth, fainteth. Expressions of intense, languishing desires.—*Comins*. My heart and my flesh. His whole being was, as it were, consuming in the flames of holy desire. For the living God. It was not for the empty courts of the Lord's house that the psalmist longed, not for any of the symbols of God's presence, not for the company of God's people, but for the living God himself, the only satisfier of souls.

Verse 3. The Sparrow. The English tree sparrow is very common in Palestine, and seen in numbers on Mount Olivet and around the Mosque of Omer. The Swallow. Many species of swallows are found in Palestine. Thine altars, or rather, in the place of sacrifice, that is, the sacred enclosure generally. In the East, a bird that builds its nest around the habitations of men, is held in great respect, and is regarded as under Divine protection. It is said that the Athenians put a man to death for molesting a sparrow in the temple of *Ascalopus*. No doubt the Israelites shared in the Eastern veneration for such birds. The psalmist envies these little creatures, that were at home and dwelt securely within the sacred precincts. O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God. These solemn names are not thrown in here merely for the sake of the rhythm. This great God despises not the little birds. The shelter of His tabernacle is thrown over them. "God fails not to find a house for the most worthless, and a nest for the most restless of birds," some one says. The psalmist longs to be at home with God, to abide in His house.

Verse 4. That dwell in thy house. "This is true, blessedly true, of all who trust in Jesus now. But though God's children are all priests by birth, as were the sons of Aaron, they are not all, alas! priests by consecration. Comparatively few have their priestly place at the golden altar. Many of them are doubting as to whether their sins, root and branch, were all consumed outside the camp; and, consequently, such are afraid to come within the court; and, as being assured of their full justification and sanctification in the risen One, they gravely doubt and fear that such blessedness can ever be their happy lot. Hence, that state of soul which answers to priestly consecration at the laver, and happy worship at the golden altar, is unknown and unenjoyed. They are not priests by consecration." (See Ex. xxix.)—*Things New and Old*. They will be still praising thee. Those who understand their right to dwell in God's house, who see themselves continually in His smile, these have cast away their fears and doubts. They are occupied now with His praise.

Verse 5. Beginning of second stanza. In whose hearts are the ways of them. That is, who love the paths leading to the tabernacle.

Verse 6. Valley of Baca. The valley of mulberry trees, dry and sandy, or the valley of weeping. (Bochim Judges 2: 1-5) Make it a well, etc. "That which seemed an impediment turns to a furtherance; at least, no misery can be so great, no estate so barren, but a godly heart can make it a well, out of which to drink forth the water of comfort."—*Sir R. Baker*. Little as there may be of water, that little suffices on their way. It is 'a well' to them.—*A. Bonar*.

Verse 7. From strength to strength. The pilgrims, setting out for the holy feasts at Jerusalem from a great distance, would be few in number. But every place they passed through would add recruits to their number, so that at each halting place they found themselves stronger than at the last. In the Christian pilgrimage, no one perishes on the road. Every one of them in Zion appears before God.

Verse 8. In this prayer, we have God represented as, the great Lord of all, and secondly as our God, the God of men, the God of Jacob, the God of Bethel.

Verse 9. Beginning of third stanza. Our Shield. This explains the delight in God as the Lord of Hosts. The Omnipotent God is our shield. His strength is exercised for us, if we are on His side. Thine Anointed. Thy Christ. "We cannot always say, 'Look on us'; but we can always say 'Look on Him.' . . . True faith can only rest on God's estimate of Christ, not on inward thoughts and feelings."—*Things New and Old*. "Look upon Him as our Representative, and look upon us in Him."—*Rogers*.

Verse 10. A day in thy courts, &c. One day of such pleasure as God gives is better than a thousand of the best we can have away from Him. A doorkeeper. Rather, one who sits on the threshold, a beggar. Better to take the meanest and most despised position, if it will only secure us a share in the blessings of the sanctuary, than to be an inmate in the house where God is forgotten.

Verse 11. A Sun. A wonderful comparison, and yet inadequate to represent what God is to us. What the earth would be without the sun, dark, cold, and unimaginable chaos, such is the soul, upon which the light of the Sun of Righteousness hath not shined. All the life, the light, the warmth, the force, the motion of the earth, is drawn from the sun. So from God we derive every good thing we possess—every good thing He possesses which we are capable of receiving. Grace and glory. Grace here, glory hereafter. "Heaven in the heart now, the heart in heaven by-and-by," as a French writer says. No good thing will He withhold. Whatever is withheld, then, however good in itself, is not good for us. Uprightly. This wonderful assurance is given only to those who walk uprightly. It is not strange that those who walk in His ways should so love Him and the tabernacle where He is worshiped.

Verse 12. The psalmist, after dwelling upon his deep delight in God and in His house, fittingly closes his psalm with the exclamation, Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. Even while still only seeing through a glass darkly, knowing only in part, he can say from his own experience, "Blessed is the man." And truly any man is blessed who can feel that the relationship between God and himself is that described in the 11th verse.

#### REMARKS.

1. In this psalm, the delight in God's house is not referred to the social religious pleasure of the assembly, but to God's own peculiar presence there. Do we look forward eagerly to meeting with God, when we go to church, or prayer meeting?

2. A fugal religious life is generally a life of much doubt and murmuring. If we would live a joyful, grateful life, let us dwell with God, make Him our hearty love.

3. It is a marvelous privilege to be allowed to lead a soul out of darkness into the light; out of the gloom of sin, into the blessedness of those who trust in the Lord. It is not only our privilege, it is our solemn duty to point out clearly to those young minds, who are trusting in us, the way to attain that blessedness.

### March 23.—The All-Seeing God.—

Ps. 139: 1-12.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou God meetest me.—Gen. 16: 13.

#### INTRODUCTION.

"It is probable that David wrote this psalm, when accused of traitorous designs against Saul, as a solemn appeal to God, that he was, in

that respect, entirely innocent."—Scott. "Most German commentators, on account of certain Chaldee words and phrases, imagine it written after the captivity; but the English commentators generally are unwilling to give up the authorship of David."—Pelouzet. With regard to the divisions of this psalm, Murphy says: "It falls into two parts of twelve verses each. The first part has six verses on the omniscience and six on the omnipresence of God. The second part dwells on the constitution of man, as the highest example known of the omniscience of God, in six verses, and appeals to Him as the infallible Judge and Searcher of hearts in the remaining six verses." Ahen-Ezra calls this the crown of psalms.

EXPOSITION.

**Verse 1. O God, thou hast searched me and known me.** Under the clear and ceaseless scrutiny of His eye, everything in us is perfectly seen and known. God knows us, as no human being knows us, and as we certainly do not know ourselves. He knows the remote springs of all our actions. Our souls, in their entire structure, and with all their movements, lie naked and open before His eye.

**Verse 2. Down-sitting . . . up-rising.** Whether at rest or in motion; in every state, every posture, we are not forgotten, but God still observes us. **Atar off.** This is generally supposed to mean, that when thoughts are just dawning in our minds, before they have assumed a definite form, or approached utterance, even then God knows them.

"My thoughts, before they are my own, Are to my God distinctly known, He knows the words I mean to break Ere from my o'pning lips they break."—Watts.

**Verse 3. Compassed, or, winnowed,** that is, distinguished most exactly, separating, in the judgment of my actions, right from wrong, most accurately. **Far . . . lying in wait.** The public and the private, which is done before the eyes of men, and that which is done in secret, God knows all. When the eye of man no longer rests upon us we are still beneath the eternal gaze. The unsleeping eye beholds us when we close our eyes and surrender ourselves to sleep. **Acquainted,** quite familiar with our ways. Even those things we would fain hide, and sometimes succeed, with painful effort, in hiding from our fellow men, God knows. Our darkest secret, our crookedest ways. One, at least, is acquainted with. And, also, those better thoughts and intentions wherein the world may have misjudged us, He knows, and judges rightly. Men censure sometimes where God approves.

**Verse 4. Not a word.** Thoughts, deeds, words, all are known to God. We could we always remember the listening ear into which enters our every word, we would, perhaps, not utter so many rash, uncharitable, or foolish words. We might weigh our words better before we uttered them. We should remember, however, that not even the thought of God's presence will cause good words and deeds to flow from the natural heart. It is only in the renewed heart that the consciousness of His presence is an efficacious means to produce right living.

**Verse 5. Beset me,** that is, "enclosed" or "shut me in, so that whichever way I turn, whether this or that, I can only go where and so far as Thou dost permit." Whichever way we turn, we face God. Laid their hands upon me. God is not to us simply a spectator. "We are under His power. He has 'hedged us in.'" Job 3: 23. But for that restraining power, so irksome at times to the natural will, we should soon rush into utter destruction.

**Verse 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.** This is the language of admiring awe, not of fear. The psalmist is lost in rapturous wonder in contemplating the omniscience of God. And when we remember the immensity of God's created works, amid which

our little world floats—a tiny speck, and then when we remember the other side of nature, the minute creation, the tiny organisms, compared with which man is "a colossus, a world, a universe," as Pascal says, what wonderful suggestions of His omniscience are given to us! His tender mercies are over all these His works. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, not a hair of your head, but He knows it. Each creature is known perfectly, as though it were the sole study of His eye. Verily, such knowledge is high, we cannot attain unto it.

**Verse 7. Whither shall I go.** Not only does the eye of God penetrate all things, but all things are forever in His presence. The psalmist is not seeking a place of escape. He is simply expressing his sense of the impossibility of finding a single spot where God is not. The child of God loves to be with His Father. That is his home. He may, like Jonah, war'er from it, and endeavor to get himself from God's hand; but, like Jonah, it will surely be to God he will turn when reduced to an extremity. He will cry unto the Lord by reason of his affliction.

**Verse 8. Hell,** that is, the grave, *sheol*. The idea is that of antithesis to heaven in the matter of locality—heaven, in the heights above; *sheol*, in the bowels of the earth. Of course, there were certain conditions associated with these localities, but perhaps no reference to these conditions is intended. Where any reference is intended, however, the same idea would be expressed: one can never find himself in such a place or state that God cannot reach him.

**Verse 9. The wings of the morning.** Could I travel with the swiftness of light, and fly faster than the limits of the habitable earth. The Creator of light would meet me wheresoever my journey might end.

**Verse 10. Thy hand lead me.** The psalmist derives comfort, not dread, from the thought of God's eternal presence with him. In His wings, in all places where he might be, God would be there to lead him, and to hold him. Guidance and protection he was sure of, even if he journeyed on the outer verge of creation, for even there, God, his God resided and reigned.

**Verse 11. Darkness shall cover me.** The darkness of night hides many things from the eye of man. When it descends like a thick pall over the land, it is welcomed by many a one, whose deeds are more fit to be covered up and forgotten, than to be brought out in the daylight, and yet the records of the night are all inscribed in the book of God's remembrance clearly and luminously. And when darkness descends on the earth, many a timorous child lies in fear, as though isolated from all who could help or protect. But God sees His children through it all, and they are safe beneath His eye, for the night shall be light about them.

**Verse 12. Both alike.** God has created the light. His omniscience is independent of it. He does not require the sun to shine as a token to show His path. Were the sun, and moon and stars extinguished, His ways would not be darkened. God is light, and there is no obscurity for Him.

REMARKS.

1. To the Christian the omniscience of God is a source of comfort and relief. If it were possible for the Christian to wander into a place, where the loving and protecting eye of God could not follow, he would find that a dark and dreadful place. He would desire never to enter it. He wishes to see His children through it all, and they are safe beneath His eye, for the night shall be light about them.

2. We like to preserve outward decorum and have a good reputation with our friends and

neighbours; but, what the Christian should desire, is that purity of heart, that integrity of character, which will please his Master.

3. The presence of this Great Witness of all things, adds solemnity to the most trifles of life. It exalts all our deeds above the realm of littleness to consider that One is beside us, who is grievous or pleased, according to the spirit in which we do our duties, whether the duty itself appear to us great or small.

4. Let us cultivate the sense of God's presence. Let us try to maintain that relation to God which will make His presence a great joy and support to us. We shall not then feel that He is an oppressive taskmaster always goading us on to distasteful duty. Alas! that any should so regard His presence. But we shall feel that we have a stimulus, a support, an encouragement in Him, and then, even when we sin, we shall come to Him and say, "Search me, try me." The physician must probe the wound, but it is to heal, he may heal it. When God's children sin, it is better for them to fall into God's hands to be dealt with than into any other, for His treatment is merciful and heal ing.

PRIMARY LESSONS.

Prepared by Mrs. J. C. Nye.

March 2.—The Prayer of the Penitent.—Psalm 51: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Verse 2.

LESSON BASIS.—The *five W's*.

This Psalm was probably written

When?—About the year 1033, B.C.

Where?—At Jerusalem.

Why?—To be a memorial of David's anguish

for sin, and of God's pardoning mercy.

By—*Whom?*—David, king of Israel.

It is—*What?*—A penitential prayer.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

In order to understand this Psalm, it is necessary to recall an event in king David's history that must make us very sad; indeed no one can ever feel so sad about it as David did himself. David had become a great king; there was none so rich or powerful as he; and, as often happens when God sets men very high, he forgot, for the time being, God's law, yielded to temptation, and fell into sin. There was in Jerusalem a very beautiful lady whom the king wished exceedingly to make his wife. But she already had a husband—a good man, and a brave soldier in king David's army; so king David thought, if this Uriah were only dead, then there would be nothing in his way. So he came greatly to wish Uriah dead; and then he began to *plan* how to get him killed. Accordingly he told the officer who commanded his armies that, when he went to battle, he should put Uriah in a very dangerous place where he would be pretty sure to be killed. The officer did so, and Uriah was killed; and the beautiful lady became David's wife. But was he happy? No, indeed! It is true, he had not killed Uriah with his own hand; but he had planned all how it was to be done, and he knew God held him truly guilty of murder. You will see in this psalm and also in Ps. xxxiii, 3, 4, how he felt about what he had done, and how very, very awful his guilt appeared in his own eyes. Did God forgive David, do you think? Yes, for he repented deeply, and God forgave him, as he does every poor sinner who repents and cries for mercy.

LESSON TABLE.

King David  
1st. Transgressions and sins . . . . . Verse 3  
2nd. That they were against God . . . . . Verse 4  
3rd. His sin . . . . . Verse 5  
nature and conduct. . . . . Vs. 5, 6

1st. Mercy..... Verse 1  
2nd. Pardon and free pardon..... 1, 9, 11  
3rd. Effects of pardon..... 2, 7  
He asks for  
4th. Restoration of what  
he had lost..... 10, 12  
5th. Removal of the  
effects of his sin..... 8

He promises—To teach transgressors... Verse 13

1st.—*Acknowledges.*

Verse 3. **Transgressions**,—that is, he owned to them all; did not try to cover them up or make them less; and God forgave them. Read Psalm 32: 5. Is it any wonder that David says, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord for HE IS GOOD?"

Verse 4. **Against Three—THEE ONLY.** "But," some one will say, "surely David's sin was not all against God?—was it not also against Uriah and against society?" David's SIN was against God, for it was God's law he had violated; his WRONG was against Uriah and society, for it was them he had injured. He had broken the oath, 8th, 7th, 6th commandments, and the spirit of all at once more. Is not that a black list? Verse 5. Here David confesses the humiliating truth that his very nature is debased—this is what his words fully imply.

Verse 6. **Thou desirest, &c.** But God had not found David true. Oh, how false, how dark, how dreadful were the things God had found in David's heart! "Thou shalt make me," &c. He believed God would do this for him;—had faith that God would hear his prayer notwithstanding the folly and madness of his conduct.

2nd.—*Asks for.*

Verse 1. **Mercy.** Mercy is the pouch for those who *deserve* wrath. In asking for mercy David virtually confesses he does not deserve it. **Blot out;** that is, grant full and free pardon; so that not one line in God's book of remembrance should stand against him. According to *Psalm*, "How great a multitude are the tender mercies of God; do you think? Just as great a multitude, dead children, as the sins He blots out."

Verse 1, 9. **Hide Thy face from;** that is, do not even see them. **Blot out, &c.** See remark on verse 1.

Verse 11. **Cast me not away, &c.** They who are pardoned shall never be cast away;—hence this is just another way of asking for pardon. **Take not away, &c.** This is still another way of asking for the same thing. God does not *take away*, but *gives* His Spirit to him whom He forgives. Read Ezek. 36: 26, 27.

Verse 2, 7. **Wash me.** Those who are forgiven are washed. 1 Cor. 6: 11; Rev. 1: 5. **Purge with hyssop.** This is the plant used in the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb, in the cleansing of lepers, &c. The idea here is, that of *atonement—of purifying. Whiter than snow!* Dear children, think how white, how clean they are whom God has cleansed!—clean, not in their own sight, but God's. Read Psalm 68: 13.

Verse 10. **Create, &c.** In defiling himself with sin, David had lost the evidence of having ever been cleansed in heart and renewed in spirit. It seemed to him he could never, never have been God's dear child. Hence this prayer.

Verse 12. **Restore—give me back.** But it was not enough to get back the joy, the peace of mind; but God must hold him up or he might again fall into sin. Read Psalm 119: 117.

Verse 8. **Let me hear, &c.** That the grief of those who mourned on account of his sin was turned into joy and gladness on account of his repentance.

3rd.—*Promises.*

Verse 13. **Then will I teach, &c.** Those who have God's forgiveness love to teach others about God—love to tell of His willingness to forgive, so that they too may be converted.

From this lesson we may learn that the greatest

and best people will fall into sin when they grow careless and self-satisfied, and forget to watch and pray;—that great sins may grow from very small beginnings, like the bit of a snow-ball which a little boy rolls and rolls till it grows into a huge mass; and thus the wicked desire, if it is not driven quite away out of the mind, may become a terrible crime—*that sin, to be forgiven, must be repented of and confessed, and that both are very hard and bitter things;—that God forgives all who truly repent and cry to Him for mercy;—that forgiveness brings joy and peace, and that forgiven people like to tell others of God's goodness, that they too may be forgiven.*

March 9.—**The Joy of Forgiveness.**—Psalm 32: 1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Verse 1.

LESSON BASIS.

*This Psalm was probably written*

1033 B.C.—After the 51st Psalm, or not far from it.

Why?—At Jerusalem.

Why?—In fulfillment of David's promise: that is, to "teach transgressors," &c. (See the meaning of Maschil.)

By—*Whom?*—David, king of Israel.

It teaches—*What?*—The blessedness of being forgiven.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

King David is, doubtless, the author of this Psalm. He had sinned; had repented, and cried to God for mercy; had been forgiven; had realized that his prayer was answered; and now, in fulfillment of the promise recorded in the 51st Psalm, undertakes to teach others about God—His loving kindness and His tender mercy.

LESSON TALK.

1st. The blessed man—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12.  
2nd. What the blessed man says to God—7.  
3rd. What God says to the blessed man—8.  
4th. What the blessed man is *not to do*, and what he is *to do*—9, 11.

1st.

Verse 1. **Transgression**,—the doing of things forbidden. All transgression of God's law is sin; but all sin is not transgression. We sin by *desiring* to do what God has forbidden; we transgress by *doing* it. **Forgiven.** Christ bears the punishment of sin, and God forgives the sinner for Christ's sake. Christ atones for sin by dying for the sinner, and God *covers* the sinner's sin by remembering it against him no more—puts it out of His sight—*reuses* to see it.

Verse 2. **Iniquity**,—injustice, crime, Guile,—deceit.—King David had *sinned* by letting a wicked desire have place in his heart;—he had *transgressed* by doing what he desired to do;—he had practiced deceit in various ways in order to accomplish his purposes;—he had committed *unlawful iniquity* through it all.

Verse 3. **When I kept silence**,—did not confess—covered up my guilt. **My bones waxed old**,—that is, my strength departed in consequence of secret sorrow. **Through my roaring**,—groaning and sighing in secret. All these are but faint and feeble expressions for the horrors of remorse. Thrice happy is the man whom they drive to penitence and confession, and not to despair.

Verse 4. **Day and night THY HAND WAS HEAVY.** It seemed an awful weight pressing his very life out, until he became like a plant in the burning heat of noon-day, all parched and withered in the fiery glare. Oh, if remorse for sin makes people suffer so in this world, where there is hope of God's mercy, what must it be in Hell, where hope cannot come!

Verse 5. **Acknowledged, &c.**—that is, owned to it all—confessed the whole truth to God. And then, what? God forgave the transgressions.

**Covered**,—looked away from—would not see—the sin; *did not impute*,—set to David's account; his iniquity; made his spirit free from *guilt*. Oh, what a happy day! Why did God do it. Was it for David's sake? No, but for Christ's sake, who died for David; and in whom David trusted. Read Eph. 4: 32.

Verse 5. **For this, &c.** What God did for David would encourage good people to pray. They would think that, if He was so good to David, He would surely hear them also; so they would have courage to ask God both for themselves and others. Nothing, not even the floods of great waters,—that is, great and sore troubles,—can come nigh,—that is, to harm—him whom God forgives. Read Mat. 7: 25.

Verse 10. **But he that trusteth in the Lord, &c.** God's mercy will be round about him forever. Read Psalm 125: 2.

2nd.

Verse 7. The blessed man calls God his **hiding place**;—read Psalm 27: 5—and then see what name God calls His people in Psalm 83: 3. Now read Col. 3: 3, 4. See if you ever heard of anything half so nice. Who would not be God's dear child?

3rd.

Verse 8. I will instruct these, **teach these, guide these.** Read Isaiah 48: 17, and also Isaiah 48: 11. What little boy or little girl will be one of God's "*hidden ones*," whom He will stoop to *teach* and to *guide*.

4th.

Verse 9. **Be not, &c.** Do not be headstrong like the horse, or obstinate like the mule, for they are but poor unreasoning animals; but you are God's dear children—*forgiven, washed, hidden with Christ in God.* Now behave accordingly; be obedient, patient, gentle, loving. And then—

Verse 11. **Be glad—rejoice—shout for joy!**—but do not forget—see the first part of the verse—that **many sorrows shall be to the wicked.** God, therefore, and teach poor sinners that God loves them, and gave His Son to die for them, that they too might be happy. Dear child, what is your place to-day? Are you *blessed*?—has God washed your sins away in the blood of Jesus? or are you yet a *sinner* for whom God says *there shall be many sorrows!* Oh! if you are, go, as this great king did, and confess it all to God with a broken and contrite spirit, for— Read Psalm 34: 18, and also Psalm 51: 17.

March 16.—**Delight in God's House,**—Psalm 84: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Verse 4.

LESSON BASIS.

*This Psalm probably belongs to the reign of Hezekiah, and, if so, must have been written—*

*When?*—Not far from the year 726 B.C.

*Where?*—At Jerusalem, or on the way to it.

*Why?*—In order to embody in sacred song the longing of devout souls for God's house.

*By—Whom?*—One of the sons (descendants) of Korah.

*It is—What?*—A psalm of thanksgiving and prayer.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

[NOTE FOR TEACHERS.—The date and authorship of this Psalm, as well as the events it was intended to celebrate, are involved in much obscurity. Some suppose it was written during the captivity; others in the reign of Hezekiah, and in order to perpetuate in sacred song the sentiments and emotions of those Israelites who, at Hezekiah's invitation, came up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. The latter opinion is here adopted as the most probable. See 2 Chron. 30th chap.]



Many little boys and girls will remember that the great kingdom which David ruled over was, soon after the death of King Solomon, divided into two parts, the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah; and that, in course of time, the former became so wicked that God gave them up to their enemies, by whom they were carried away into captivity. The kings of Judah, too, were, many of them, idolaters, and led their people into all sorts of wickedness. But after a time there reigned in Jerusalem a good king named Hezekiah, and he thought he would try and get the people to leave off their bad ways and to serve God again according to their own law, and, among other things, he resolved to have a Passover kept once more, for so far as we can discover, it had not been kept at all for about 250 years. So he had the temple cleansed, and the priests and Levites purified, and the singers called together, and great preparations made to have a most happy and joyful time. But then, he thought, what a pity that the Israelites, some of whom had been left in their own countries, would not leave their filthy idols and come too, just as they used to in King David's time, and led their letters both to them and to his own people the Jews, urging them to come. But a great many of them had grown quite as bad as the heathen, and they just mocked and scoffed at the good king's invitation. There were others, however, who longed for nothing so much as for their dear old temple and its worship, and they came most gladly. You can fancy them thinking as they came to this least the very words of this beautiful psalm which some one wrote just as you see it here, and which was sung in the temple, probably, at that very feast.

LESSON TALK.

- 1st. The house of the Lord, verses 1, 2, 3.
- 2nd. The blessed people, "4, 5, 6, 7.
- 3rd. A prayer, 8, 9, 10, 11.
- 4th. A choice, and three reasons, "10, 11.

Verse 1. This is addressed to God. **Amiable**,—pleasant, worthy to be loved. **Tabernacles** (plural)—those parts of the temple where God manifested His presence in a special way, as the Holy of Holies, or temple within the veil, and the outer hall, or Holy place. In Heb. 9: 2; 3, the latter is called the first tabernacle, and the former the tabernacle.

Verse 2. "My soul . . . my flesh,—that is, soul and body, or the entire mental and physical being. **Longeth, fainteth, crieth out**—that is, desires above everything else—what? The living God and His house.

Verse 3. We must not understand that sparrows and swallows had made their nests in God's temple at Jerusalem. Here is a reading of this verse which makes the sense very plain and beautiful. "As the sparrow findeth a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, so findeth my soul Thine altars." Here is yet another. "Even as the sparrow finds out (seeks) a house, and swallow her nest in which she may hatch her young, so I, thine altars, O Lord, my King and my God!" How great the psalmist's longing must have been, to justify such a very strong comparison.

Verse 4. **Blessed** (happy)—they that dwell in—have their home in God's house. Why? They can be all the time praising—worshipping and serving—God.

Verse 5. **Whose strength is in Thee**—in God. How strong does God make those that wait upon Him? Read Isaiah 40: 31. In whose heart are the ways,—or, "the highways are in their hearts,"—meaning, probably, the roads leading to the temple. They would love even the roads leading to God's house.

Verse 6. **Of Balm**—probably a real variety having mulberry tree growing in it, though, of which many going up to the temple would have to pass. **Rain**,—possibly a figurative expression for tears of joy at drawing near their beloved Jerusalem.

Verse 7. **From strength to strength**,—all the time growing stronger in love, and confidence, and joy, as they draw nearer God's house, which they at length reach, and each takes his place before God in Zion.

3rd.

Verse 8. **HEAR, give ear**,—that is, be pleased to listen to me. This is the substance of this beautiful prayer. **O Lord, of Hosts, the God of Jacob, our** (Verse 9.) **Shield, hear my prayer! Behold, look upon the face of thine anointed** (Christ in whom I trust. Bring me to Thy house and (Verse 10.) let me dwell there, for a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand anywhere else, (Verse 12.) **O Lord, bless!** indeed it the man that trusts in Thee.

4th.

Verse 10. **A CHOICE**. To be a door-keeper in God's house rather than dwell in the tents—palaces, rich dwellings—of the wicked. Reasons, Verse 11, 1st, Because God is a SUN. The sun gives light by which we see things aright; gives warmth, without which there is no life; gives beauty, and growth, and bodily vigor. So God illumines our minds so that we see (understand) what He teaches. He warms our cold hearts with His love—that is, gives us a new life; He makes our spirits beautiful—that is, Christianlike; He makes us grow strong and vigorous Christians, and therefore useful and happy.

2nd, God is a SHIELD. A shield is what a soldier holds between himself and his enemy, to keep from being hurt. So God is a Shield to the blessed people, always standing between them and their deadly enemies.

3rd, God keeps back no good thing from the blessed people; perhaps not just what they think is good, for then He would be giving them a great many very bad things, but such things as He knows are good for them.

Now, dear children, is not one day with God for a SUN, to give you grace and glory; and with God for a SHIELD, to give you perfect protection; and with God for a PROVIDER, to give you freely everything that is really good for you, though you should be only door-keepers in His house, rather than a thousand days anywhere else? I think so; and if one day in God's house on earth is worth so much, oh, think what must heaven be!—and how blessed must be all they who trust in God!

March 23.—The All-Seeing God.—Psalm 139: 1-12. Golden Text, Gen. 16: 13.

LESSON BASIS.

The things contained in this Psalm are true,—When I—At all times. Where?—In all places. Of Whom?—Of God; they could be true of no one else.

They are—**What!**—Declarations of God's Omnipresence and Omnipotence, and that they are written **Why!**—To impress with us the greatness of God, and the relation of His attributes to ourselves.

LESSON TALK.

We can give no history of this Psalm or its author. It is called a Psalm of David; but it is not very likely that David wrote it. Probably it was written by some one—quite possibly one of the prophets—who had been with the captives in Babylon; but we have no means of knowing who it was—whether prophet, priest, or singer. It is a Psalm that any little child may understand, with suitable explanations, and in which he is sure to be interested; and yet it contains some of the grandest truths concerning God that are found in the Bible.

In this lesson there are three great truths taught: 1st. God knows all about us. Verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

2nd. God is in every place to which we may go, or think of going. Verses 7, 8, 9, 10.

3rd. There is nothing can hide us from God's sight. V. 11, 12.

IST. GOD KNOWS.

V. 1. **Thou hast searched me**.—God has done it; not He may, but He has; so He knows us even better than we know ourselves. We cannot see our hearts beating or our blood flowing, or ten thousand other things going on within our bodies; but God sees them, for He has searched us through and through, and there is nothing, either in our bodies or minds, that He does not know perfectly.

V. 2. How many things are named in this Verse?—**Three**—*our sitting down, our rising up, and what we are thinking about.* "What!" says some little boy or girl, "does God know such little things as those?" Yes, dear child, and even the tiny, little thoughts that come and go in your mind—some of them bad ones too—God reads them more plainly than you could read a printed book. God knows them  *afar off*, that is, when they are  *outside*  *your eyes, and go on in your mind.*

V. 3. **Compasseth my path**—that is, He classifies your paths as right or wrong paths, bad or good paths, and even your lying down God knows. All your ways, too—pleasant ways, naughty ways, angry ways, kind ways, selfish or rule or gentle ways, God knows all about them every one.

V. 4. **Word—every one, good or bad, true or false, kind or unkind, God knows; and what is very dreadful, does not forget!** Read Matt. xii: 36.

V. 5. Here is a reading of this verse, beginning with the word *Lo*, in the 4th Verse. "Behold, thou, O Jehovah, knowest the whole" hereafter and the past! Thou hast formed me, and laid thy hand upon me, "—that is, God knows all that has been in the past and all that will be in the future that concerns us. Nothing ever has happened to us, or ever will that He does not know. Read Heb. 1: 3. Laid thy hand upon me—that is, God's forming hand has been placed upon us, really and truly. Read Acts xvii: 28.

V. 6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me—it is far, far greater than I can understand. There are very few things that even the wisest men quite understand. "They cannot tell you the way a blade of grass grows in the field, the way a leaf grows on a tree, or the way a hair grows on their own heads. So it is no great wonder that one should not understand this amazing knowledge of God. It is indeed, even vastly too high for any body to climb up to.

2ND. GOD IS IN EVERY PLACE.

V. 7. **Whither shall I go? Whither shall I flee?**—that is, how shall I get away from God? "Surely" says the wicked man, "there is some place I can hide in, where I will not find me!" No, no, wicked man, indeed there is not! I may search and hunt till you are tired out, but you will not find one.

V. 8. **If I ascend, etc.** But you cannot climb up to heaven. You may stretch your arms, and try ever so much, but you cannot get there; and if you could, God is there as truly as here. He made the sun, the moon, and the stars; and there is not one among them all where He is not. Even in hell—that awful, awful place you cannot escape from God, for He is there as well as here.

V. 9. **Does he think he'll ask the morning to take him up on its beautiful wings, and carry him away, away to the far off ocean?** Why, if the morning could speak, she'd shake her head sadly, and say, "Oh, no! I see all the sea and the oceans there, but God is in every one—it's no use for you to go there. You will be sure to find Him.

V. 10. **You would find His hand there to lead you, and His strong right hand to hold you fast,**

## 3RD, NOTHING WILL HIDE US FROM HIS SIGHT

*V. 11.* "Surely," says the wicked man "the darkness will—it will cover me all up—God cannot see in the dark." No, it will not; for God created the dark (Is. xlv. 7); and it's just the same to Him as the light. The darkness cannot hide you. Read Job xxxiv: 22. The night, dark as it may seem to you, to God shineth as the day, it could not hide you if it wanted to. The wicked may cry to it ever so much, but it will all be in vain. And so, dear children, the wicked have no hiding place from God. How dreadful! But cannot they have any? No, not while they remain God's enemies. But if they will turn from their wicked ways, and flee to the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved, *He will hide them.* He will come right between them and the wrath. He will take all the wrath upon Himself, and they shall be a thousand times safer in Him than the little baby in its mother's arm. Read for yourself, and see how tenderly God hides those that love Him: and then ask yourselves if you would not rather run to God and be hidden by Him, than to run from God and try to hide yourselves. Ps. xxvii: 5; xxxi: 20; xxxii: 7; cxix: 114.

## March 30.—Quarterly Review.

## OUTLINE.

*Jan. 5.—Ezra 3: 1-13.*—Jerusalem in ruins, temple destroyed; Jews through favor of Cyrus, king of Persia, just returned from the 70 year's captivity in Babylon; number returned, see Ezra 2: 64, 65; leaders, Jeshua and Zerubbabel. Special work to be done—the re-building of the temple; preliminary step—the partial settlement of the returned Jews, the erection of an altar, revival of the Feast of Tabernacles, securing of workmen, artificers, etc.; foundation of the temple laid amidst extraordinary rejoicing.

*Jan. 12.—Ezra 6: 14-22.*—Work of re-building the temple, for several years interrupted, through the efforts of Haggai and Zechariah, resumed (Haggai 1: 2, 12) after some five or six years brought to a completion; temple dedicated to God, priests set again in their divisions, and Levites in their courses, ceremonies of purification re-established, Passover solemnized.

*Jan. 19.—Nehemiah 2: 1-8.*—Time—some 70 years subsequent to that of the last lesson; Jerusalem in ruins, its walls burned, Jews in affliction and reproach; Nehemiah, a rich and pious Jew, cup-bearer to the king of Persia, hears thereof, and humbles himself before God with weeping, fasting, and prayer; God hears, gives him favor with the king, who empowers him to go to Jerusalem, re-build the walls, and set up the gates; giving him both letters of authority under his own hand, and adequate military protection for his journey.

*Jan. 26.—Nehemiah 4: 7-18.*—Opposition to the part of enemies, watchfulness and prayer on the part of Nehemiah; Jews disheartened and murmuring from without, threatened destruction. Nehemiah arms his followers and Jews, distributes them judiciously, assigns each his post, inspires to resistance by appeals to piety, family ties, and private interests; enemies overawed and the work carried forward.

*Feb. 2.—Nehemiah 8: 1-8.*—Work—Jerusalem re-built, the gates set up, Nehemiah meets to hear the Law read and explained, Ezra the scribe, aided by thirteen of his brethren the Levites, reads and makes it plain to the understanding of the common people who listen reverently and penitentially, consenting to the Law that it is good, and virtually promising before God to observe its requirements.

*Feb. 9.—Nehemiah 13: 15-22.*—Nehemiah, after a lapse of time, returning to Jerusalem finds the people again fallen into gross sin, particularly that of Sabbath desecration; he adopts prompt

and vigorous measures for checking the evil; remonstrates with the people, sharply rebukes nobles; sets a watch at the gates; breaks up the traffic with the Syrians, and thus re-establishes Sabbath observance in Jerusalem.

*Feb. 16. Psalm 1: 1-6.* Probable author—David—character—a moral contrast;—its design—to show the blessedness of the righteous in contrast to the opposite condition of the wicked. The blessed man, negatively—(verse 1), or positively, by considering opposites—his delight, &c., (2);—comparisons—the righteous, (3)—the ungodly (4)—their destiny—(5-6).

*Feb. 23. Psalm 2: 1-12.* Probable author—David—character—prophetic; design—instruction in regard to God and His purposes. It teaches—1st, Of opposers—what they do and say, (1, 2, 3)—2nd, of God—how He regards such as oppose His purposes, and how He will treat them, (4-5)—3rd, what God says of His King, (6);—4th, the King's declaration concerning the DECREE and its provisions, (7, 8, 9);—5th, kings, judges, and all men counselled in reference to their treatment of this KING, (10, 11, 12).

*March 2. Psalm 51: 1-13.* Author—David; character—penitential; design—to be a memorial of David's anguish for sin and God's forgiving mercy. In it the Psalmist confesses—(1)—sinfulness both by nature and conduct, (5, 6)—2nd he ASKS FOR—mercy, (1),—full and free pardon, (1, 9, 11),—effects of pardon, (2, 7), restoration of what he had lost, (10, 12),—removal of the effects of his sin, (8)—3rd—he PROMISES to teach transgressors, (13).

*March 9. Psalm 32: 1-11.* Probable author—David—character—instructive—design—to teach the blessedness of being forgiven. Topics: 1st—the blessed man, (1, 2, 3, 4, 5),—2nd—to what the blessed man says to God, (7)—3rd—what God says to the blessed man, (8);—4th—what the blessed man is, and is not to do, (9, 11).

*March 16. Psalm 84: 1-12.* Author—unknown—character—prayerful thanksgiving;—design—to be an expression of the longing of God's people for His house. Topics: 1st—the house of the Lord, (1, 2, 3)—2nd—the blessed people, (4, 5, 6, 7)—3rd—a prayer, (8, 9, 10, 12)—4th—a choice, and reasons for it, (10, 11).

*March 23. Psalm 119: 1-12.* Author—unknown—character—praise—design—to impress men with ideas of the greatness and majesty of God. It teaches—1st—God's Omniscience, (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6);—2nd—God's Omnipresence, (7, 8, 9, 10)—3rd—that nothing can hide us from God's sight, (11, 12).

## Religious Intelligence.

## DENOMINATIONAL.

## ONTARIO AND ONTARIO.

Baptists reported from January 15th to February 17th:—*Brantford, First, 2; Colchester, 4; Collingwood, 7; East Flamboro', 2; Hamilton, Park-st., 6; Montreal, Olivet, 1; Mount Pleasant, 12; Niagara Falls, 4; Orillia, 9; Toronto, College-st., 4; Jarvis-st., 4; Usbridge, 9; Waterdown, 2.*

**Pastoral Changes.** Rev. GEO. EVERTON has resigned the pastorate of the Harrow church and gone to Victoria, B. C. Rev. R. LENNIE has resigned the pastorate of Zion church, St. Thomas. We commend this worthy minister to churches seeking a pastor.

**Chapels Dedicated.** The new white brick chapel in *Port Elgin* was opened for Divine service on the 26th January, with appropriate services conducted by Revs. James Couits, of Guelph and J. C. Macdonald, M. L., of Tiverton. The building cost \$2,500 and will seat comfortably 350 persons.

The new Baptist chapel in *Sydney* township was

dedicated with appropriate services on the 12th January, Rev. I. T. Dowling, of Stirling, preaching the opening sermon. The chapel is said to be a very neat one, and cost \$2,000.

**Miscellaneous.** *Olivet Baptist Church, Montreal*, held its 4th annual meeting recently. The statistics for the year were: Increase,—by baptism, 27; by letter, 2. Decrease,—by letter, 2; by death, 1. Present membership, 223. The average attendance of scholars at the Sabbath school was 280. The financial report and the report of the building fund were, on the whole, encouraging. The handsome new church edifice is very near completion, and is to be dedicated some time in March.

*The College-st. Church, Toronto*, held its 6th anniversary tea-meeting on the 19th January, Hon. Alex. Mackenzie, M.P., in the chair. The statistics of the year were as follows: Increase,—by baptism, 25; by letter, 37; by experience, 8. Decrease,—by letter, 6; by death, 1; by excommunication, 14. Present membership, 200. As usual, the annual tea meeting was a marked success, and reflected praise upon pastor and people alike.

*The Lewis-st. Baptist Sunday School, Toronto*, held its New Year's festival on Thursday, January 23rd. About 175 sat down to tea and thoroughly enjoyed the provision made for them. After tea, a novelty in the way of entertainment was given by teachers and scholars, consisting of singing and scripture recitations illustrative of the way of the Christian from darkness to light and to heaven. Prizes were distributed to the scholars who had been most regular in attendance during the year. The chapel was filled with visitors and scholars; and all seemed pleased with the evening spent in social enjoyment.

The progress of the school during the year has been good. The building is already comfortably filled, and if the increase during the coming year is proportionately rapid, the Lewis-st. Sunday school will soon have to enlarge its borders. The teachers have adopted the CHRISTIAN HELPER as their lesson paper for this year.

## For the Young

## FIREWORKS IN OCAWANDA.

DEAR MR. EDITOR:—As your paper is now devoted chiefly to Sunday school work, I suppose that anything from India likely to interest boys will not be thrown into the waste paper basket. Therefore I am encouraged to send you a few lines about fireworks in Ocawanda.

In the first place I must tell you that weddings furnish occasion for wasting much powder. I think it matters very little whether a man is very poor or not, a wedding in the family must be celebrated with considerable show. I believe that wealthy men spend sometimes as much as 5000 Rupees, that is about \$2500, in jewelry for the bride and in entertaining the wedding-guests. A wedding in this country is not celebrated in a few hours as at home, but a week or more is devoted to the festivities. A large amount of the sun spent goes for fireworks. I remember a grand wedding some months ago when I was kept awake till after midnight by the bursting of rockets and the whizzing of wheels, a spot not far from the mission-house being honoured that night as the site of the fireworks display. Marriages are celebrated more or less all the year through, though I believe that May and June, are the favorite months, so that rockets are sent up probably half the nights in the year.

But the idea of writing to the boys about these fireworks in Cocanada was suggested to me by the celebration of a Hindoo feast on the 25th Oct. That night gave us quite an illumination and as incessant a cracking of fire-crackers of various kinds as the 24th May or the 1st July produces in Canada. A great many of the houses were illuminated with little lamps set on bamboo-sticks stretched between the pillars of the low verandahs. Some had a kind of trellis-work formed for the occasion and a little lamp placed in each square. Of course this illumination was poor compared with such as Toronto boys may have seen, but still it was very good for Cocanada.

But I must proceed to say something about the fire-works, and the first thing I would say is that almost all the fireworks used here are made here. You know some people talk about these Telugus as though they were uncivilized barbarians, but that is a mistake. They are more like the Chinese or Japanese, and can make almost anything, as furniture and cloths and tools. So they can make fire-works also. I have spoken of rockets already. In this town they do not make rockets that burst and send out stars. The kind they have here shoot up into the air with a great rush, and then explode with a loud report, but after the explosion you see nothing at all. Besides rockets they have large wheels, made like the pin-wheels at home, only very much larger. Then there are flower-pots, made of earthenware with a hole in the centre which is filled at the bottom with earth, and with powder in the upper part. Besides these there are some things that look like Roman candles, but contains a mixture that burns like calcium or magnesium, and hence these things are called blue lights. There are others that look like these, but give a red light instead of a blue one.

There is another kind of firework here that reminds me of what we used to call "serpents" at home. It is about as long as one's little finger, and when set off jumps about, and sometimes ends by shooting up into the air fifteen or twenty feet. Now I come to the crackers and to a firework that resembles the fire-crackers in form, but when set off goes whizzing round and round for a good while instead of exploding. This and the fire-crackers are made of palm-leaf and are in the form of a triangle I think. At any rate they are not at all like the Chinese firecrackers in Canada. The palm leaf is like that you see at home in large fans, only it is used green. A kind of case is made by winding a narrow strip of this leaf, round and round many times, and then another strip is wound round in another direction, and so a very strong case is formed. A small quill of a hen sticks out of one corner, and that is where you light the fire-cracker, as there is some powder in the quill. There are two sizes of these crackers, but both of them make a noise that would astonish you, as the small one makes a report like that of a gun, while the large one is as good as a small cannon, so that you would prefer to hear it at a distance. They have the Chinese fire-crackers here as well as their own, but I think they never set them off singly; either a pack or half a pack must go at a time, making the rattling noise, so much admired by young men of ten or twelve years everywhere.

Now for the prices of these things; Chinese crackers sell about two cents a package; the small native ones at fifty or sixty cents a hundred, and the large ones at about two dollars a hundred. Flower-pots cost about two cents each; blue and red lights are sold by weight at about ten cents a pound, and sky-rockets at from two to three rupees a hundred.

I think the boys of Cocanada were enjoying themselves on the night of their fireworks celebration just as well as boys in Canada enjoy such events. I saw even the smallest children that were not babes, setting off firecrackers or holding blue lights. I suppose that boy-nature is pretty much the same all the world over. But now I must speak of one tremendous difference between the boys of India and those of Canada to be found even in fireworks celebrations. This feast was in honor of some great hero of old, looked upon as a god. He is supposed to see the fireworks and to be pleased by them. How different is it with those who celebrate the 24th May in honor of a good Christian Queen, or the 1st July in commemoration of the union of the various provinces, which together constitute the Dominion of Canada. On such happy days we ask God to bless our Queen and our country, while these poor people hold their feasts to honor gods of their own making.

Boys! I tell you these things about the boys of Cocanada not simply to amuse you, but to make you realize how much you have to thank God for, and to awaken among you an interest in the poor heathen boys of India. Show that you are thankful to God by giving Him your heart, and then pray for these boys, and give your cents and dimes and quarters to send them the Gospel.

Yours Sincerely

JOHN CRAIG.

#### THE YOUNG CADET:

or Not Ashamed to Pray.

By the Rev. R. Newton, D.D.

*We may be useful by our example, and we should improve every opportunity of doing good. I was reading, lately, of a little boy who "gathered up the fragments" about him in this way, and was the means of great usefulness on shipboard. The little fellow was only about eleven or twelve years old. He was the son of a clergyman. His father had got a situation for him, on board one of those ships where boys are put in order to be trained and educated for officers in the navy. This little boy's father and mother, being good Christians, had taught him carefully to pray to God every morning and evening; and had told him to be sure and do this, wherever he might go.*

When the little fellow went on board the great ship, he found himself surrounded by a large company of other boys. Some of them were older, and some younger than himself. They were cadets and midshipmen, who were to be his companions, and who were very fond of fun and play, as boys generally are. He got along with them very well till the time came to go to bed in the evening. A bell was rung as a signal for the boys to go to their berths, as the beds are called on ship-board. The boys were laughing and

talking, and playing tricks of various kinds, while getting undressed.

George, as our little friend was named, looked round to see if none of them knelt down to pray before going to bed, but not one of them did so. He remembered what he had been taught at home; he thought how God had taken care of him all the day, how only He could preserve him through the night, and he felt that he could not go to bed without prayer. Then the temptation occurred to him—"But can't I pray as heartily when lying in my bed, as if I should kneel down to pray? and then the boys won't laugh at me?"

But then the thought occurred, that it would please his mother better, if he should kneel down to pray; and a better thought still came into his mind, that it would please God. This decided him. He knelt down to pray. Immediately all the thoughtless boys around him began to laugh at him. One called him a Methodist; another said he was the parson. One threw a book at him; another threw a pillow at him. But the little fellow still knelt on till he had finished his prayer.

The next night he was interrupted in the same way; and so it continued night after night. And yet the brave little fellow would kneel down, and offer his prayers to God. He never complained of the conduct of the boys. But some one else about the ship found out how the boys were behaving in their cabin at night, and went and told the captain.

Now, it happened that the captain was a good, pious man, and he resolved to put a stop to the conduct of the boys. The next day he had all the boys called up before him on the deck of the ship. Then he called George up to him, and said:—

"Well, my little fellow, have you any complaint to make of the conduct of these boys?"

"No, sir," said George.  
"Now, boys," said the Captain, "George will tell no tales, and make no complaints; but I have heard how you have been teasing and persecuting him at night, because he has the courage to kneel down and pray to that God who takes care of him. I have only this to say: if any of you dare to do this again, I'll have you tied up on deck, and try how you like the taste of a rope's end on your back. Now go to your duties."

All the boys felt guilty. They would hardly speak to George during the rest of the day. But when evening came again, George knelt down as usual to pray. There was no laughing or talking. They were all as still as mice. George had not been kneeling long before he felt something at his side coming close up to him. He looked round to see what it was, and found one of the little boys who was nestling close up to him, that he too might say his prayers in peace and quietness. Presently another came, and then another, till at last quite a number were found kneeling round him. These boys had all been taught to pray at home; but, when they were surrounded by rude, mocking boys, they had not courage enough to do what was right, by acknowledging their dependence on God, before their companions. But the influence of George's example, when he quietly and bravely took his stand, determined to do right himself, whatever others

did, encouraged them to do so too. From that time, prayer was never neglected on board that ship, while even those who did not pray themselves, were afraid or ashamed to laugh or mock at those who did. In this way, little George was very useful to his young companions, by the example which he set them. We should "gather up the fragments" of usefulness that lie around us, by setting a good example.—Exchange.

#### THE MISSIONARY HEN.

BY M. R. F.

Tippecanoe was a very long name for a very little thing. Some things need long names to make them amount to anything at all, but it was not so with our Tip. Tippecanoe or Tip, as it was familiarly called, was a white chicken,—at least it had been white in the days of its babyhood, but too frequent contact with the ash-pile had sullied its snowy plumage. Little Minnie Grey was the owner of Tip. She had strayed away from the rest of the family, and was wandering houseless and homeless when Minnie picked her up in the alley and carried her home. Under her tender watch-care she grew and developed into a matronly hen.

One Sabbath, Minnie came home looking very sober.

"What is the matter?" said mamma.

"Oh, there was a missionary man at Sunday-school to-day, and he told us all about the poor little children away out West. He wanted some money, and I have concluded to give him some."

"You have? Where are you going to get it?"

"Well, I guess I will sell Tip."

"Sell Tip! Why, I thought you loved her too well to part with her."

"I do love her, but she's all I've got. If I don't give her, I haven't anything."

"My child, I am glad to see that you are willing to part with all you have for the sake of doing good; but I can tell you how you can make more money than by selling Tip."

"How?"

"Save all of her eggs carefully and sell them. In the Spring she will sit, and we will have a nice lot of young chickens and—"

"Oh, that will be grand! and I can keep poor Tip! I did feel so sorry when I thought of her being killed."

Minnie began feeding Tip with pepper and lime so she would lay, and every day her efforts were rewarded by a nice fresh egg. It was not long before she had a whole dollar laid away. One warm spring day old Tip came marching off the nest with twelve sprightly little chicks. She was a careful mother, and every one of the de-wy little creatures developed into a plump fat chicken; but they had scarcely begun to cackle and crow until, one after another, they disappeared, and each time, a new silver piece was added to the little pile. The next fall when the missionary man returned, Minnie had five dollars to send to the poor children.

Tip has not wearied in well-doing, and next year Minnie hopes to have more money to send away than she had this.—Chicago Sunday School News.

"Slander, worst of poisons, ever finds An easy entrance to ignoble minds."

#### "CLEAN HANDS."

"I say, Harry, what has made you take this wonderful clean fit all of a sudden?" asked John Shelford of his little brother, who was drying his hands after a vigorous pumping. "This is the seventh time I have seen you go to the pump and wash your hands to-day."

"Because I want to be strong," replied Harry.

"Well, but washing your hands wont make you strong."

"Yes it will, the Bible says so."

"I don't believe it does," said John.

"I am sure it does though," returned Harry positively: "papa read it at prayers this morning: 'He that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger,' and Harry waved his arms in the air, and went through sundry gymnastic exercises, as if to see whether his numerous washings during the day had increased his strength.

"Well, you don't suppose that means really clean hands: you are a silly boy. You have had all your trouble for nothing."

"No, I haven't! I'll ask papa to-night if the Bible doesn't really mean what it says."

So in the evening, when Mr. Shelford had come home from business, as soon as he had finished his tea, Harry began:

"Papa, doesn't the Bible say that if you have clean hands you'll be stronger?"

"Certainly, my boy," said Mr. Shelford, smiling; "I see you remember what we read this morning—how Job said: 'The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.'"

"There," cried Harry, "I knew I was right, and washing your hands will make you strong, won't it?"

"It is very good for little boys to wash themselves, and it helps to make them strong and healthy if they keep clean; but there are some stains that we can't get out with soap and water, and it was freedom from these stains that the Bible meant. The other day I saw a little boy lift his hand to strike his sister, that made it far dirtier than if it had been making mud-pies for a whole day."

Harry blushed and his papa went on:

"When I was a little boy, I was taught that it was my duty to keep my hands from picking and stealing,—picking, you know, means taking little things that don't belong to you; like stealing lumps of sugar out of mamma's cupboard, or picking fruit off the young trees that I tell you not to touch."

"Then Eve made her hands dirty when she took the forbidden fruit," put in John, who feared the conversation was getting personal.

"Yes, indeed she did, and no one can tell the number of soiled hands that have been between the result of that action."

Now John, can you remember the name of a man who 'stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church?' That made his hands very dirty indeed."

"That was Herod, papa, when he killed James and put Peter into prison."

"Yes; and do you know who tried to clear himself from the blame of a very terrible act by washing his hands?"

Both boys were silent, and Mr. Shelford asked again:

"Who took water and washed his hands, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person?'"

"Oh! that was Pilate, papa," said Harry, "when he let the people crucify Jesus."

"Yes, but the stain of the sin was just as much on his soul after he had washed his hands as before, and it is the same with our sins, whether we call them little or great; we cannot get rid of them or their consequences, however we try to clear ourselves. No washing of our own will do it. So what must we do, Harry? When you make your hands dirty with wrong things, how can they be made clean?"

"God can wash them, papa; that is what you mean, isn't it? because David said, 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'"

"And Peter," added John, "asked the Lord Jesus to wash not only his feet but his hands and his head; but Jesus said he need only have his feet washed."

"Yes, because, as the Lord said, he was washed already, by faith in Christ's cleansing word. It was the same cleansing that David meant when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God!' And I want my dear boys to pray too."

'Wash me, but not my feet alone, My hands, my head, my heart.'

Then you will have the blessing that is promised to him that 'hath clean hands and a pure heart; and you will every day grow stronger and stronger' in the best kind of strength, till you are like those who st. John said, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong!'"

Selected.

A BAR-ROOM PANEGYRIC.—A lazy, beer-soaked German had died. In his lifetime he had been drunken, gluttonous, cruel to wife and children, faithless to friends. But he was dead, and of course something must be found to say in his favor. It was a hard task for his comrades, as they sat in silence in the neighboring bar-room. But at last one of them was able to utter this eulogy: "Vell, Hans vos got to schmoke, anyway." That was the summary of the virtues of a lifetime.

"Why," said a lover to his mistress, "are you like that hinge?" "Can't even guess," "Because you are something to a door" (adore). She cut his acquaintance immediately, which, we surmise considerably untinged him.

A nobleman who is in the habit of speaking to soldiers in an affable manner was much amused when a Guardsman said to him, "I like you, my lord. There's nothing of the gentiaman about you."

A celebrated oculist offered to operate on a Parisian blind beggar's eyes, "I'll guarantee to restore your sight." "What," exclaimed the beggar, "restore my sight and so ruin my business! A pretty notion!"

At one of the schools in Cornwall, England, the inspector asked the children if they could quote any text of scripture which forbade a man having two wives. One of the children sagely quoted in reply the text, "No man can serve two masters."