

The Christian Helper.

A BAPTIST MONTHLY JOURNAL.

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

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SHALL OUR CHILDREN BE TAUGHT DANCING?

A few words in reply to this question will be timely. The principal arguments urged in favor of dancing are: 1st. That it affords at once healthful exercise and pleasant amusement; 2nd. That it is very helpful to the carriage, and general development and grace of the person. Now we really think too much importance is attached to dancing on these accounts. It is far from being the only or the favorite amusement of young people; and we have generally observed that it is irksome to them unless attended by exciting accompaniments. Nor is it the only means by which a graceful deportment may be obtained. Drilling, and calisthenic exercises, are quite as well calculated to effect this object, while they afford equal, perhaps greater, advantages in point of physical development.

The arguments above referred to are as frequently urged by Christian parents as by others. But there is another which is most naturally and powerfully felt by those who wish their children to mingle in scenes of worldly gaiety. It is, that young people who are not qualified to take part in this fashionable amusement, appear to disadvantage in "society." We may be prejudiced, but we certainly regard this as a strong inducement to Christian parents to keep their children ignorant of the art. No truly pious father or mother could view, without alarm, a beloved son or daughter becoming engrossed in the chosen pleasures of a godless world, not excepting those of its most "refined" circles. And next to the preservation afforded by divine grace, a sense of what the world regards a deficiency, appears to us to be the best defence against such alluring pursuits.

Whatever may be said in favor of dancing, there are far stronger reasons to be urged against it. One is, that in this amusement there is, in *all circumstances*, an amount of familiarity that exists nowhere else; and the large number of dances that come under the description of *waltzing*, are especially objectionable for the reason now hinted at. And as dancing is objectionable in itself, so it is in its accompaniments. To say nothing of an extravagant and scarcely becoming style of dress, untimely hours, frivolous society, &c., &c., a peculiar excitement is produced,

which, when once tasted, is apt to bring the soul under its power, and to become what is denominated not "a taste" but "a passion." Dancing points towards the world, and not towards heaven; its tendency is to lead its votaries downwards. It is one of the steps towards the enchanted ground of "dissipation." But a slight partition separates some dances from all dances, private dances from public balls; and these again from all sorts of corrupting entertainments.

It is not without reason that the great majority of Christian parents have been led to the decision not to have their children taught dancing; and that in a great number of select schools and ladies' colleges, the practice is excluded on principle.

"A WELL QUALIFIED TEACHER."

This is a phrase of frequent occurrence in these days of Sunday School Associations, Conventions, Institutes, Normal Classes, etc., and, rightly understood, it is full of meaning. As we thought upon it the other day, after hearing it several times repeated by a speaker in the course of an earnest address, the image of such a teacher rose up before our imagination. We beheld him in his work—the eye of intelligence and benevolence beaming on his youthful charge; and on their part the returning glance of affection and riveted regard; on the one hand an earnest instructor, and on the other an intensely interested class. He is no trifler himself, and triflers cannot take refuge within the circle of his influence. He has something of infinite moment to impart, and he looks as one who feels the weight of his message. His love of order is such that the most disorderly yield him homage. His rebuke, indeed, is sometimes stern, but the law of kindness is in his heart and on his lips. He can reason, and inform the judgment; but he can also plead and melt the heart.

Urgent must be that call of duty which withdraws such a teacher from his post. He has put his hand to the plough and feels that he dare not look back. While others leave their classes to the chances of an hour, of him it may be said, as of the faithful pastor, he is "instant in season, out of season." And all this is the result of fixed principle—vanity and self-importance have no place in his rule of action. He has calculated the cost and the self-sacrifice involved in his work, and has resolved to place all on the altar of his Saviour. His heart is full of compassion and love for the members of his class, and he longs to lead them to the feet of the Good Shepherd who "gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom."

Nor does he satisfy himself with handing out to his class what costs him nothing. He neither talks to them at random, nor commits the equally heinous offence of reading to them from the printed lesson notes which he has been "too busy" or *too idle* to study. On the contrary his Sunday toils occupy his thoughts during the week. Could we follow him to the retirement of home we should find him preparing for future service with intelligence and energy. Now he seeks to rectify and enlarge his general Bible knowledge. Now he ponders the lesson of the coming Lord's day, that he may teach it with clearness, impressiveness and ease. Now he examines the best works at his command on topics of acknowledged importance, and makes the ripest thoughts of men wiser than himself his own. His determination is to be an efficient worker—one who "needeth not to be ashamed,"—and hence he is constantly aiming at self-improvement.

But our ideal teacher is distinguished by something higher still in importance. He is a man of prayer. He walks with God. He lives in the Spirit. He feels his own weakness and insufficiency, and depends upon divine help. This is the *grand secret* of his intensity, his consecration to his work, his zeal and regularity in the performance of it, the stillness and thoughtfulness of his class, the progress which marks his career, the blessing which attends his labours. He is in *earnest*, and all around him can see that his is the purpose of a devout and undivided heart, the toil of one who is striving to approve himself unto God, and willing "to spend and be spent" for Christ, and the souls of the youthful group, for whom he expects to render an account in the day of the Lord.

With or without a "Normal class" certificate, a teacher such as we have described, will be universally admitted to be well qualified for his work.

A SOURCE OF DANGER.

The Christian parent never had so many obstacles to contend with, and so many resisting influences to overcome, in the way of the religious training of his children as he has in the present day. The human mind never had so many objects of engrossing power presented to its contemplation at once as it has now, which not only divert the thoughts of the parent but attract those of the child. Ours is an age of progressive refinement in matters of taste, which is running through all the habits of society, and no parent can leave his children destitute of ordinary elegance and polish. Then also, mental cultivation and the acquisition of knowledge are now stimulated to an unre-

cedented degree; and who can allow, or ought to allow, their children to grow up in ignorance amidst abundant information? Now these things wonderfully increase the danger of neglecting, and the difficulty of maintaining settled plans of religious training and culture.

There was a time when there was really little, comparatively, for children to learn, except the truths of scripture and the ordinary branches of a common education; but now, arts, science, literature, (in its higher branches,) and various "accomplishments," all engage, and too often *absorb*, the attention of parents, children, and even pastors. It is true there is nothing in any of these matters necessarily hostile to piety,—nothing indeed but what, with care, may be made auxiliary to it; but it certainly requires in such an age, and in such circumstances, additional solicitude, judgment, and earnestness, on the part of all entrusted with the interests of the young, to see that the culture of the intellect does not supersede and cast into neglect the more important culture of the heart. The danger is that in the eager, strained pursuit of mere secular knowledge, the knowledge of things spiritual and eternal will be overlooked, or sought with little real earnestness.

TO-DAY.

The great demand upon Christians is *work*—intelligent work—appropriate work—earnest work—cheerful work—untiring work—prayerful work. And it is not to-morrow, but to-day, that our service is required. "To-day," says Christ, "go work in My vineyard."

While we are resolving and preparing to do something for Christ, the lamp of life is being rapidly spent, the destinies of eternity are hastening on, fresh hindrances are springing up in our path, the fields to be cultivated are neglected, and the Master regards us as disobedient and ungrateful servants. It is "now" emphatically with Christ and the church, that "is the accepted time." We have no right, while present and pressing claims are neglected, to be dreaming over the proposed doings of "a more convenient season." We may never live to see it; and how shall we account to Christ, if He calls us hence before it arrives, for the unoccupied intermediate portion of precious time.

Promptitude of action is at once the demand of conscience, and the Word of God, and of the times upon which we have fallen. Ours is not the future, but the present. In a sense, indeed, we labour for posterity and for eternity; but the effort and

the action must ever be a present thing. The consequences must be left with Him, who will so over-rule and adjust all, that when we are dead and gone, not a single, well-directed and honest effort, shall have been found actually in vain.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"WOMAN'S WORK IN CANADA."—This is the title of an eight page monthly published in Montreal and edited by Mrs. O. C. Edwards and Miss Muir. It has reached its second volume. The field it occupies is indicated by the title. The subscription price is only 50 cts. *per annum*; it is an excellent and vigorous journal; and we recommend all our lady readers to take it. Send your subscription to "Woman's Work in Canada," 73 Bleury St., Montreal.

"THE TYRO."—The February number of this bright and spicy monthly, published by the students of our Institute at Woodstock, comes to us much improved in dress and carefully edited. We congratulate the young editors on their enterprise and progress as journalists. To outsiders like ourselves the *point* is not always discernible in the racy and humorous "*Locals*"; but we can appreciate to some extent the ticklishness of the sensation which must be communicated by the following to those who see it in the full glare of Institute light:—

"There will be some heavy moustaches here some day,—that is, if great things arise from small beginnings."

Our Toronto readers will certainly not feel less interest in the *Tyro* when we state that on the committee of publication are the names of S. S. Bates, B.A., Horace C. Speller, and George Sale.

"SUNNYSIDE" AND THE OTHER SIDE.—The following paragraph in the address of the Hon. Alex. Mackenzie at College St. Baptist Church, which we cull from the February number of the *Christian Reporter* should be emphasized and passed on for the benefit of all concerned, from one end of Christendom to the other:—

"A minister, to be useful, must and ought to be thoroughly independent in means, and not be treated as many ministers are treated in this country. There is nothing more odious to me than to read accounts of those surprise parties where a number of people invade a minister's house, spread tables, empty baskets of provisions, eat them all up—(laughter)—make some speeches, and then some one of their number, with more brass than the rest—(laughter)—makes an address to the minister, and presents him with \$15—(renewed laughter)—and something, possibly, in goods. The minister is expected to make what the newspapers call a "feeling

reply." (Great laughter and applause.) I heard from an acquaintance a minister's wife—and I was glad when she told me of such an expedition, that she shut the door in their faces. (Applause.) It is utterly impossible for ministers to be useful unless they are thoroughly supported; and it is utterly impossible for them to respect themselves unless the congregations over which they are set respect them, and pay them in a proper manner."

The above paragraph is all we have space for of Mr. Mackenzie's excellent address. We recommend our readers to send for the full report of the College St. Church anniversary as contained in the February number of the *Christian Reporter*. It is an excellent number.

ANOTHER BAPTIST INTEREST IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.—A correspondent of the *Baptist Beacon*, the organ of the Baptist Convention of the North Pacific coast, gives an interesting account of a recent visit to British Columbia and the state of the Baptist cause there. After referring briefly to the church in Victoria—concerning which our readers have recently been informed—regretting the resignation of Rev. J. H. Teale, and mentioning the efforts of the brethren to remove the floating debt on the chapel building now reduced to about \$450, the writer thus speaks of a second Baptist interest now existing in the far-off Province of our Dominion.

"At *New Westminster*: a thriving pleasant town on Frazer River, there is an organization consisting of ten faithful members. Its prayer meeting is the first I remember of having attended where all take part. None there that have a name, and are dead. I first met one of the members as a stranger, who, at his own home asked me if I would accept a tract; feeling rebuked for my remissness, I commended his fidelity, when he enforced his excellent example by saying, "We do not know how short the time may be that we are permitted to work for our blessed Lord,"—a serious reflection certainly. I found its author poor in this world's goods, but rich in all that constitutes true riches. I was not greatly surprised and not a little gratified to learn he was connected with the Baptist interest at Westminster. Services are held there twice each Sabbath in the Good Templar's hall; once each month supplied by Bro. Teale, the remainder of the time by two of the brethren. Another member (fourth in order that I have referred to) who had charge of the prayer meeting the evening that I was present, could, I am sure, if occasion required, fill the desk acceptably and with profit to his hearers."

THE STATE BALL AT OTTAWA.—It appears that the grand ball which took place on the opening of Parliament was the scene of disgraceful drinking on the part of some of the guests. A poor opinion certainly, the noble Princess and the Governor-General must have formed of Canadian habits and

morality from the exhibition made by some men high in power and authority. We are more than gratified at the many and outspoken reference to the ball by the Rev. A. A. Cameron, in the course of a special sermon preached subsequently in the Ottawa Baptist Tabernacle to a crowded congregation. Pastor Cameron said in the course of his sermon :

"If ever I go to Rideau Hall, however, I am resolved to go as a gentleman, conduct myself there as a gentleman, and come home as such. When I go I will go in the full exercise of my mental faculties, and come home without permitting any kind of thief to steal away my brains. I will go as a wise man and not come home as a fool! I will go firmly resolving not to look upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, knowing that at last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder. When I go I will go as a loyal subject of Queen Victoria, but I will endeavor to get home without being disgracefully disloyal to the King of kings. I will go as a man with as much dignity as I can carry, but I expect to return with the crown of my manhood unsullied. But one night ended the pleasure, and the pleasures of that night were succeeded by headaches and heart burnings next day. The gay company is scattered, the flowers worn are faded, and the gay dresses soiled, and after all that the eye saw there, and the ear heard, and the thrilling motions the heart felt, our text [1 Cor. 2 : g] still remains."

WHAT IS BEAUTY.—How various are the notions which the natives of different countries entertain of personal beauty; yet there can be no doubt that the expression of the soft emotions of benevolence, pity, and love, as exhibited in "the human face divine" is pleasing to all the world. The different opinions of beauty, entertained in various countries, relate to colour and to form. These opinions arise from national customs or certain prejudices widely extended, which modify the natural taste. In China, the chief beauty of women is thought to consist in the smallness of their feet. As soon as girls are born the nurses confine their feet with the tightest ligatures, to prevent their growth. The women of Arabia colour their eyebrows with a black powder, and draw a black line under their eyes to make them more prominent and expressive.

In the time of the old court of France, the faces of the Parisian ladies were spotted with patches, and plastered with rouge. Lord Chesterfield, when at Paris, was asked by Voltaire, if he did not think some French ladies, then present,—whose cheeks were fashionably tinted,—very beautiful. "Excuse me," said Lord Chesterfield, "from giving an opinion, for I am no judge of *paintings*."

An Englishman of fine appearance, as he was travelling among the Alps, attracted

much notice; but the natives thought his person deficient in one important point which they flattered themselves was a *local* beauty "How completely handsome," they said "this Englishman would be, if he had, like us, a swelling under his throat."

Communication.

FOR THE "HELPER."

OUR FOREIGN MISSION FIELDS.

Here I am in India, and in our own Canadian mission to work, as if it had always been my home. There is one hard part of a missionary's life that I do not have to meet this time coming to India. I mean the acquiring of the language. It is pleasant to feel at home at once, and be able to communicate with the people. Of course there were hard things about our coming this time that we did not have to meet when we turned our backs on Canada more than eleven years ago. There were no loved children then tugging at the heart strings.

We had been in Cocanada less than two weeks when the time came around for us to go to our Annual Mission Conference, if we wished to attend it. I was loathe to go because of the time I would lose in preparing to build our chapel, that we are going to try and have done by next rainy season. On the other hand we very much desired to see the brethren of the Maritime Provinces, and their fields north of us. The end of all was that we went. We made quite a company going out to take the steamer in the Cocanada bay. There were Mr. & Mrs. Currie, Mr. & Mrs. Craig, Bro. McLaurin and myself. Mrs. McLaurin and Mrs. Timpany stayed behind to take care of the place, and I presume to have a good visit together all to themselves. We left the mission house in Cocanada, Thursday at 11 o'clock A. M. and were at Bimlipatam the next day at mid-day.

Bimlipatam is about twenty miles north of Vizagapatam. It is the place selected by Mr. Sandford for a station. He has obtained a commanding situation back of the centre of the town; he has the foundation of a good mission house in, and will in a few months have a good house for the mission family. Miss Hammond who came out with us will have her home in this house and be joined with Mr. & Mrs. Sandford in work; Bro. Sandford will go on also with the building of a school house and I think a chapel. Building material, save wood and labor are very low, not above half as much as in Cocanada. The brethren of the Maritime Provinces certainly will get the worth of their money at Bimlipatam. It is a magnificent field and I doubt not has a future before it, and Bro. Sandford is the making of a good missionary.

We expected to have started the same evening for Chicacole, 45 miles west of north from Bimlipatam, but failed to get carts till next day. This is the station recently opened by Bro. Armstrong. He first went to Kimidy, much farther north. They found the place so unhealthy that they had to leave it. I make no doubt that they have reached the right place now. Bro. Armstrong has bought a good place on the bank of the Chicacole River. The house is on the site of one of the bastions of the old fort. In

and about Chicacole there are about 25,000 people. Then it is the centre of a very large population. A man could ask for no better location to work for his Master. Here, as well as in Bimlipatam, an excellent station will be secured at a very moderate price.

Bro. Churchill is building at Bobli, a large town over fifty miles from Bimlipatam, and located in a large, populous, and rich plain at the eastern side of the Ghants, which run up through the country. I am enthusiastic over the field that we Canadians have here. It will be a grand mission in time, if we are true to the work the Lord has committed to our hands.

The meetings of the Conference were characterized by a delightful spirit of harmony, frankness, and good will. Business of an important nature was transacted. Among the different items of business was a resolution spoken to, and approved of by all the missionaries, setting forth their desire that an organic union of the Foreign Mission Societies east and west might be brought about. I hope that the brethren at home, in the Maritime Provinces, and in the West will seriously take the matter up. It would give conscious power to our movements both at home and here, such as we cannot now have. It would enable us to locate ourselves to the best advantage. United work could be undertaken that neither feels strong enough to bear alone. A hesitating policy that must at times mark the separate movements of the two small societies would give place to a greater degree of confidence. Important resolutions on Bible revision were passed. You will hear more of this in the near future I presume.

A. V. TIMPANY.

A LITTLE SERMON.

The woman was old, and ragged, and gray, And bent with the chill of the winter's day; The street was wet with a recent snow, And the woman's feet were aged and slow. She stood at the crossing, and waited long, Alone, uncared for, amid the throng Of hum-*ah* beings who passed her by, Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye. Down the street with laughter and shout, Glad in the freedom of school let out, Came the boys like a flock of sheep, Hailing the snow piled white and deep. Past the woman so old and gray Hastened the children on their way, So meek, so timid, afraid to stir, Lest the carriage wheels or the horse's feet Should crowd her down in the slippery street. At last came one of the merry troop— The gayest ladzie in all the group; He paused beside her, and whispered low, "I'll help you across, if you wish to go." Her aged hand on his strong young arm She placed, and so without hurt or harm, He guided the trembling feet along, Proud that his own were firm and strong. Then laid again to his friends he went, His young heart happy and well content, "She's somebody's mother, boys, you know, For all she's old, and poor, and slow; And I hope some fellow will lend a hand To help my mother, you understand. If ever she's poor, old, and gray, When her own dear boy is far away." And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head In her home that night, and the prayer she said Was: "God be kind to the noble boy."

Who is somebody's son, and, prize, and joy!"

—Harper's Weekly.

S. S. Lesson Department.

ANECDOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION. (Lesson for April 6th.)

Robert Hall, the great preacher, referring to his life-long physical malady—severe pain in the back—says, "I presume the Lord sees I require more hammering and hewing than almost any other stone that was ever selected for his spiritual building, and that is the secret reason of his dealings with me. Let me be broken into a thousand pieces, if I may but be made up again, and formed by his hands for purposes of his mercy. I see more and more of the unspeakable blessedness of being made like God, and becoming a partaker of his holiness. I see it, I say, but I do not attain, or, at least, in so unspeakably small a degree, that I have every reason to be abased, and repent in dust and ashes."

Another minister of a former age, on recovering from a dangerous illness, was one day visited by a friend who expressed his fear that the disease would leave him so prostrated in body and mind as to prove nothing but a serious misfortune to the church, without bestowing any compensating advantage upon himself. The good man answered, "you are mistaken my friend; for this six weeks' illness has taught me more divinity than all my past studies, and all my ten years ministry put together." He meant, doubtless, that his affections had been weaned from the world, and his soul brought into more conscious fellowship with God.

It is related of one, (a slave we believe) who, under great severity, had fled from the worst of masters to the *Azi*—to Christ Jesus, the "friend of the wretched and helpless"—that he was so impressed with a sense of the benefit he had derived from his sore trials, that when lying, on his death-bed, and seeing his master standing by, he eagerly caught his hands, and kissing them, exclaimed with great pathos, "These hands have brought me to heaven!" Thousands besides him have had reason to bless God for their afflictions, and for oppressions also, when they have been the instruments in his hands of promoting the salvation of their souls.

DIFFICULTY OF ACCESS TO THE MONARCH.

(See Lesson for April 20th.)

The Greek historians, says Kitto, give many incidental statements concerning the difficulty of access to the Persian king. The rule seems to have been that even when the king was in his outer apartments, no one was admitted to his presence uncalled, or unannounced; and that when the king was in his interior residence, not even the most dignified inhabitants of the interior palace might presume to appear before him unbidden. The historians relate that the freedom of access to the sovereign's presence was first checked by Dejeos, king of Media, who directed that no one of whatever rank, should appear before him unless specially called, but that all business should be transacted through messengers and ministers, his

nearest attendants only being allowed to see his face. The Persians adopted this and other regulations from the Median Court; hence we may understand the distinction allowed to the seven princes (Esai 1: 14) "who saw the king's face," that is, who might appear before him uncalled. Even these, however, were not admitted, when any of the king's wives were with him; and this restriction enabled the king to see them as little as he pleased. One of the privileged nobles, who disobeyed the excuse, cut off the ears and noses of the two doorkeepers, for which he and all his family (excepting his wife and eldest son) were punished with death (Herodotus i. 99; iii. 118.) It is difficult to imagine the intense veneration with which the royal person is and has been regarded in Persia and other countries of the East.

A Chinese author has said that "all the roads lengthen as they approach the throne." In old times the emperor was sufficiently accessible to the complaints and suits of his subjects. But for many ages past great care has been taken to prevent him from being annoyed with the petitions of individuals, or representations adverse to the men in power. When the emperor appears in public, indeed, the inferior mandarins have the right of kneeling by the way side, and of holding up any memorials they wish to submit to the sovereign, who sends to take them from their hand; but this procedure is often dangerous to the party from the notice it attracts. The Roman Catholic missionary Castiglione once undertook the responsibility of presenting a petition to the emperor, as his majesty was in the room where he painted. But although Castiglione was a mandarin, and as such entitled to present a petition in the ordinary way, he violated the law by this private presentation. The emperor turned pale with astonishment and said to him, "Thou art a stranger; thou knowest not our laws; but what thou hast done deserves death." The monk knew this before; but was willing to face death for the cause to which his life was devoted, and to which this petition related.

International Bible Lessons, 1879.

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

April 6.—Sanctified Affliction.—Job 33 :
14-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

My sin despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him.—Heb. 12: 5.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

This book was always considered by the Jews as part of the sacred canon. It is recognised as such in the New Testament, for Paul introduces his quotations from it by the words, "It is written." (1 Cor. 2: 19.) Some believe the book to be strictly historical; others call it a religious drama based upon facts; others still, regard it as a religious fiction. It is probable that the narrative of the book was an exact relation of facts, but the poetical form of the dialogue renders it unlikely that the very words of the various speakers are given. That Job himself was a real and not an imaginary person, appears from Ezra 14: 14-20; James 2: 21-25, 5-11.

The authorship of the book is ascribed by some to Job himself; by others to Moses. Some think that Elihu was the author, and that in ch. 32: 15-17, he is addressing the reader. It is impossible to be certain with regard to the author of the book, or the period at which it was written. The archaic forms of which the language abounds, prove the antiquity of the book. Then, as there is no reference whatever to the Mosaic ritual, and the history is probably older than the wilderness period. It is generally thought that Job lived during the time of the Egyptian bondage; though, certainly, the religious views expressed in the book seem rather advanced for that period. If the book of Job is not the oldest in the world, as very many suppose it to be, it is certainly one of the most wonderful. It has been called "the most remarkable monument of the Semitic mind."

The first two chapters and the last chapter are in prose, the rest is poetical, and the poetry is of a very high order, unsurpassed for dignity and grandeur.

The object of Job's trial seems to be the refutation of the charge made by Satan that selfishness was the mainspring of Job's righteousness. By this severe trial and its results, it is shown that a man who had no clear certainty of a future life with its rewards and adjustments, could yet submit to terrible calamities without abjuring the service of God. In desperate trouble, and without the prospect of any release from woe in this life, his soul seems, through the instincts of his great soul, to discern a future, which shall bring a solution of his difficulties. It must be remembered that Job and his friends were ignorant of the special occasion of this trial, and their discussion of the mystery of Providence brings out several important lessons. The mystery, however, is left without any real solution, and when God at last appears and speaks, He does not clear away the clouds from the subject. Instead of explaining why He deals with men as He does, He points to His works, which display His love, His wisdom, and His omnipotence. And these works are beyond our comprehension, how shall we understand the greater wonder of His dealings with men. It should be enough for us to know that all things are in the hands of One who is infinite in power and in wisdom. Our true position is absolute trust in that One. "Here alone the finite comes into harmony with the Infinite, and finds true peace; for if it refuses to trust until it can comprehend, it must be in eternal discord with God and with itself."—Smith's Bib. Dict.

INTRODUCTION.

The best introduction to the lesson is the reading of the previous part of the book. It is not necessary to suggest this to the teachers for themselves, but they may need to suggest it to their scholars, and to point out the wonderful attractions of this book to them, so that they may desire to read. Let us try to make our scholars Bible-readers.

Elihu the Busite. Buz and Uz were the two sons of Nahor, Abraham's brother. The family of Elihu had retained the knowledge of the true God, though Gentiles, as Job himself was. In the lesson of to-day, Elihu brings forward for the first time, his peculiar theory, that it is the voice of mercy which speaks through the judgments of God, calling men away from their sins to God. Elihu's discourse is carried on to the end of the 37th chapter. It is generally supposed that the last part of his discourse is uttered just as a great storm is coming on, which ushers in the theophany.

EXPOSITION.

V. 14. *God speaketh.* God does not look with indifference upon those who walk in the paths of sin. He utters a warning voice again and again, yet none understand his meaning. Elihu thinks that Job is one of those who will not understand the voice of God.

V. 15. In a dream. In that age when there was no written revelation, God often revealed Himself in dreams. But it is likely that what is meant here is the voice of God speaking through the conscience in the still hours, when the bustle and noise of the daytime are past, and that voice is left alone to compel our ears to hear.

V. 16. He openeth the ears. Men would often gladly close their ears to the voice of conscience, and many a resistor of the sinner springs upon his bed, because God has opened his ears, and he cannot close them. Sealath. "Here it means that God makes the man feel from whom and for what purpose chastisement is sent."—*E. C. Cook.*

V. 17. Purpose. His evil purpose. To withdraw him from an evil purpose would certainly be mercy. Hide pride. "It may mean to cover it, so that it may not tempt a man."—*Cook.*

V. 18. The pit. "Perdition. More is meant by this expression here than the grave or corruption. The idea is not distinct, but it is that of some great loss, something terrible connected with the thought of going out of life."—*Lewis.* Perishing by the sword. Being cut off by a sudden judgment. The passage means that God speaks to men solemnly, that He may hold them back from sin and thus save them from its dreadful results also.

V. 19. God not only speaks through the conscience; He sometimes lays a man on a bed of affliction, and chastens him with pain. In the latter part of the verse "the old text gives a stranger meaning: and with continuous struggles of his soul."

Vs. 20, 21, describe a man wasted with a long sickness, as Job himself was.

V. 22. The destroyers. "Death and its attendants and precursors: the pangs preceding dissolution. Many commentators suppose that Elihu speaks of the angels."—*See 2 Sam. 24: 16-17; Ps. 78: 49; 2 Ki. 19: 35; Acts 12: 23.*

V. 23. This begins the most difficult and most important passage in Elihu's speech. "The word *messages* is always rendered *angels*, and even when (as in Matt. 3: 1) our version has *messenger* it is in the sense of a divine Being, the Messenger of the covenant. There is no reason to suppose that it has another sense in this passage, when all the old versions have *angels*."—*Cook.* Even if Elihu did not feel the full significance of his own words, yet it is evident that these words describe the office of Christ. Interpreter. "The Jewish prayers show that the Interpreter was always identified in their minds with the expected Redeemer of Israel."—*Cook.* His uprightness.—The right way.

V. 24. Then He (God) is gracious unto him, and He (the Interpreter) saith. A ransom, or atonement, as in the margin. "Elihu evidently speaks of a propitiatory offering; in whatever form that may be provided, he is sure that when the great Angel intervenes, the reconciliation must be effected. We have a true, though it may be an undeveloped, anticipation of the truth afterwards revealed."—*Cook.*

V. 25. His flesh shall be fresher. When a man through the chastening of the Lord is brought back into the ways of righteousness, he is restored and renewed. Elihu may refer particularly to physical recovery, but how suggestive his words are of the new birth and the renewing of the inward man.

V. 26. Happy condition of the renewed soul! God looks down with favor, and that soul looks back with joy. Will render. This means either that God will regard the renewed one as righteous, or that He will reward the righteous deed of such a one.

Vs. 27-28. "The two verses have this sense: He (the restored penitent) will sing unto men, and say: 'I had sinned and perverted that which was right, and it was not required unto me. He

redeemed my soul from passing into the pit, and my life beheldeth the light with joy.'"—*Cook.*

Vs. 29-30. God oftentimes worked in the ways Elihu had spoken of, by warnings through the conscience, by afflictions, and by the messenger, so that men may be drawn from "the pit," into the light of the living.

REMARKS.

"Woe to him who should be without affliction here below—whom the divine educator should have excluded from his mysterious school! We might well ask ourselves at sight of so alarming a felicity, what then has he done to be thus overlooked? Is he too pure to be passed through the crucible, or too bad, too desperate, to be worth trying there?"—*Vind.*

"No doubt education by sorrow would be useless, if the question were merely of perfecting us; the angels have to be perfected, and God does not chasten them; but it is indispensable to beings who have to be regenerated."—*Vind.*

"Two artists were once frescoing the ceiling of a lofty cathedral, when one of them in order to perceive the effect of his work walked backward upon the scaffolding. He was just about to step off unconsciously and be hurled to the floor below, when the other painter, seeing his danger, and that it was too late for words to save him, hurled his brush at the lovely picture his friend was viewing. The artist rushed forward in indignation, but he was saved, and he blessed his friend who saved his life by marring his picture."—*Peloubet.* Thus our kind Father often defeats our plans, defaces the bright picture we have drawn of our future, in order to save our souls from ruin.

April 13.—Prosperity Restored. Job.

42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold we count thee happy which endure. James 5: 11.

CONNECTION.

The latter part of Elihu's discourse was uttered while the great storm on which announced the approach of Jehovah. Elihu is evidently much impressed by the storm, and his last words are uttered in a broken and hurried manner. The last two verses of ch. 37 contain a summary of his whole discourse, and "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." This answer is contained in four chapters and might be summed up in the words of Ko. 11: 33. "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." God's word of our absolute trust: Let us trust Him, even when we cannot understand His dealings with us or with others. It is quite certain that He is always right, and that what He has done is the most merciful and wisest thing that could be done. After God has spoken, Job renders absolute submission to Him. He falls in perfectly with the Divine will and blames himself severely for his former murmurings.

EXPOSITION.

V. 2. I know. Job now knew God as he had never known Him before. We have seen the preparations for this knowledge. First came great affliction, filling him with amazement, and disturbing his theories. Next came painful groppings in the dark; Job trying to understand God's ways with him; and lastly God's revelation of Himself, satisfying Job, while showing that it was not necessary for him to understand, only to trust. Then came do everything. Omnipotence. No thought can be withholden.—Omniscience. Job recognizes anew these two attributes. The Almighty God had then seen and permitted Job's trial.

V. 3. Job refers to the words of God (ch. 38: 2) and applies them to himself. "Therefore,

i. e., because I see now that I was, as that reproof intimated, without true knowledge, I uttered, etc."—*Cook.* Job is not the only man that ever spoke rashly about things he understood not things too wonderful for him. But not every such man makes a confession so frank and humble as this.

V. 4. A humble petition. Contrast Job's attitude towards God here, with that in the tenth chapter. I will demand of Thee, rather ask of Thee. Job went asking humbly now. The verse contains a request that God would teach him further. Job wishes to learn of God henceforward, and not to rely on his own judgment, or depend on such enlightenment as his friends could give him.

I have heard of Thee, etc. The faith of Job, and his knowledge, had received sudden illumination. His former knowledge had been comparatively obscure. It was as if he had only known God by hearing, and had now met Him face to face. He now really knew something concerning God's ways, and he could build a tower of faith heaven-high upon that foundation of sure knowledge. All faith must have knowledge for its foundation.

V. 6. Wherefore I abhor myself. In proportion as we truly know God, we are humble. By revealing Himself to Job, God has changed the despairing bitterness of this man into grateful humility. Repent. "The word translated, *repent*, signifies two contrary things in Scripture; first, to grieve; secondly, to comfort, or to take comfort. . . . Sorrow and comfort meet in true repentance. . . . To repent is to change both the mind and way. . . . From a bad or good mind . . . and from a painful to a pleasant and delightful way."—*Caryl Dust and ashes.* The mourner sat down in dust, and sprinkled them over his head and upon his garments. Instead of mourning over his sorrows, Job now admires his affliction. He is not guilty of the charges his friends have brought against him, but in the presence of the pure and holy God, he sees distinctly his own unworthiness. His wonder hereafter would be, not that God had bereft him of riches, health and wealth, but that God should ever give His good gifts to so unworthy a one.

V. 7. "After that all was sinful in his (Job's) speeches is blotted out by repentance, there remains only the truth of his innocence, which God Himself testifies to him, and the truth of his holding fast to God in the hot battle of temptation, by which, without his knowing it, he has frustrated the designs of Satan."—*Delitzsch.* Elihu's seems to have led in the discourse against Job, and is specially named. Elihu receives no rebuke; he spoke conscientiously, and was most anxious to convince Job of God's mercy and justice in afflicting, and though he does not get at the whole truth concerning God's ways, still the spirit he has shown has been good.

The three friends do not seem to have shown any regret for their misjudgment both of God and of His servant Job. Perhaps they were complacently ignorant that they had done wrong, and were therefore amazed to have God's rebuke.

V. 8. Seven was regarded as a perfect number. The three friends were to bring a sacrifice and Job was to pray for them—Job, the man whom they regarded as condemned of God. They were thus taught that their sin required an atonement and an intercession, and they were obliged to overcome their pride, and apply to the man they despised for intercession with God. Perhaps the atonement and intercession of Him who "was despised and rejected of men" was thus dimly suggested to their minds.

V. 9. The three friends, though they had been so obtuse in regard to their own sin, yet did not hesitate about obeying the direct command of God when unmistakably addressed to them. But their obtuseness was sin. The beam was in their eye when they sought to cast the mote out of Job's

eye. If they had been serving God faithfully and fully they would have been more sensitive to their own faults. Self-complacency is a weed that withers in the presence of God.

V. 10. Turned the captivity. "A saying which early became proverbial among the Israelites, whose whole national history was a series of deliverances; but it may have been one of very early origin, well familiar to other kindred races."—Cook. When he prayed for his friends. "As though that act, the crown and consummation of goodness, was the immediate cause of his reward."—Cook. Beautiful is charity in the eye of God. Love to our fellow-men is closely connected with love to God. It is in truth, part of it. Twice as much. All his substance was doubled exactly (compare Job 1: 2 and Job 42: 12). His children, however, numbered the same as before. His first children were not lost; they were still his, and now that as many more were given him, his possessions in that respect were also doubled.

REMARKS.

1. In this story, we see that Satan was foiled. Job did not cast away his allegiance to God, though tried severely. And when the history of each child of God is told, it will be the same; each one will be a trophy of grace. And when the history of the world is told, it will still be the same. Whatever the appearance of things may be now, the end will be; Satan foiled, Christ and His church triumphant.

2. Perhaps Job's redoubled prosperity was necessary at that time to prove to all men God's delight in Job; but it is spiritual, and not temporal blessings that are the measure of God's favour to us.

3. It is a good thing to pray for others; your own souls are then abundantly watered. Nothing is a greater help to a kindly, charitable disposition towards any one than to pray for him.

April 20.—Queen Esther.—Esther 4:

10-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Commit thy way unto the Lord; and trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.—Psalm 37: 5.

THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

This book appears as if it were written by some Jew, living in the midst of the scenes he describes. The writer was well acquainted with even the private affairs of Esther and Mordecai, and would therefore seem to be Mordecai himself. This is the general opinion. There are strong internal proofs of the truth of the book,—the accurate knowledge of Persian names and the adherence to the facts of history and chronology. The feast of Purim, kept up to this day, points to the history in this book as its origin. The Jews hold the book of Esther in high esteem, describing, as it does, the great honour to which their nation was advanced. "It is a saying of Marinonides that, in the days of Messiah, the prophetic and hagiographical books will pass away, except the book of Esther, which will remain with the Pentateuch. This book is read through by the Jews in their synagogues at the feast of Purim, when it was, and is still in some synagogues, the custom at the mention of Haman's name, to hiss, and stamp, and clench the fist, and cry, 'Let his name be blotted out; may the name of the wicked rot.'"—Smith's *Bib. Dict.*

It is remarked that the name of God does not once occur in this book, yet God dwells in it as the defender of His people.

INTRODUCTION.

The Ahasuerus of this book has been supposed to be Artaxerxes Longimanus, but it seems more probable that Xerxes, predecessor of Artaxerxes, is the king referred to. For the argument

leading to this conclusion see Smith's *Bib. Dict.* the article on Ahasuerus.

In the third year of the reign of Ahasuerus he held a great feast, and it was then that Vashti incurred his displeasure, and was deposed. In the seventh year, he selected Esther as his wife. In the twelfth year of his reign, Haman concocted a scheme for the destruction of the Jews, a gigantic revenge for Mordecai's contempt. Mordecai conveyed to Esther a copy of the king's decree, permitting Haman to carry out this scheme. Mordecai charged Esther "to go in to the king, and make request before him for their people."

EXPOSITION.

V. 10. Esther. "A Persian word, meaning 'the star of planet Venus.'"—Stanley. Her Hebrew name, Hadassah, signified 'myrtle.' A beautiful woman, patriotic, pious, r'ays gratefully submissive to the friend of her youth, so attractive as to "find favour in the eyes of all those that looked upon her." Hatach, Chief eunuch. There was no more direct way of communicating with Mordecai than through the same faithful old servant of the king.

11. The name Mordecai in *Gen. 2: 2* and *Nehemiah 7: 7* may apply to this same person.

12. The king was surrounded by a circle of selected officers, and all communication with him must be through the medium of one of them. One can easily see what great evil would spring out of this order of things. "For in general, the king must see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and receive their reports, and if any one would venture to present to him a complaint, petition, appeal, or information, he must do it at the hazard of his life. By this method, the king also was excluded from liberal society and converse."—Scott. "We are made to feel the inaccessibility of the king to any but the seven councillors, the awe with which his presence was surrounded, which required all persons introduced to him on their faces before him, and, on pain of death, to cover their hands in the folds of their sleeves, the executioners standing round with their axes, instantly to behead any rash intruder."—Stanley. Our law. Only one way of treating intruders. Golden sceptre. "In all the numerous representations of Persian kings at Persepolis, there is not one in which the monarch does not hold a long tapering staff (which is probably the sceptre of Esther) in his right hand."—Cook. These thirty days. The king may have desired to see her for so long, Esther may have thought herself out of favour.

13. Esther's race would be most surely be discovered by some enemy, and she also would fall under the king's immutable decree.

14. Mordecai has no fear that God would desert His people at this crisis. His strong faith in the assurance of him of the contrary. From some quarters the Lord would send deliverance. Mordecai was sure of that. His anxiety is that Esther shall not shrink from the heroic duty laid upon her. "It is remarkable that these sentiments, so replete with faith and piety, are conveyed to us without the mention of God, or Providence. This seems to be done intentionally."—Scott. Who knoweth. God might have brought Esther to her exalted position for the very purpose of saving His people through her means.

15. Fast ye for me. Prayer is not enjoined here, but it is understood. The fasting was intended to gain God's favour for His people. We may be sure they did not refrain from prayer, nor did Esther fail to request their prayers, though the writer does not refer to it. Here again there seems an intentional omission of reference to the name of God. It was owing to these peculiarities that some persons based the theory that this Book at first formed part of the Persian chronicles, and that it was

TRANSCRIBED BY DIVINE COMMAND. IF I PERISH, I PERISH. ESTHER HAS MADE UP HER MIND, THAT SHE WILL ACCEPT THIS MISSION, EVEN THOUGH SHE SHOULD PERISH PERFORMING IT. "ESTHER IS THE PATTERN OF A TRULY GREAT CHARACTER; OF LOVE TO HER COUNTRY, OF COMPASSION, GENEROUS RESOLUTION, COURAGE AND PATIENCE."—Pyle. We observe her constancy towards Mordecai and the nation she belonged to, her submissiveness to her old guardian, even when she was a queen, and her faith in prayer, and the intercession of God's people. What an ample revelation of her character is given in the few simple touches of the narrative. She was not merely beautiful in person, she possessed the higher and more enduring charm of a noble character, generous, faithful, and self-sacrificing. The subsequent narrative shows the success of her pleading. The king could not revoke his former edict, but he issued a new decree, which formed a kind of antidote for the evils permitted by the first.

REMARKS.

1. The hand of God works silently in all the history of the world. Wars, treaties, revolutions, all are only so many items in the perfect story of God's providence. In some mysterious way, the deeds of man accomplish the ends of God. There is an overruling, restraining hand, which suffers the evil, only so far as it works ultimate good, and which says to the tide of passion, "thus far, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

2. How much easier to approach God than to approach one of the kings of earth? There is no etiquette to confuse one, no prescribed garment to wear, no host of officials to convey or announce us; any where, at any time, in any circumstances, without formally, without any claim to the privilege, we may approach our God, through the One Mediator. We may have an intimate, private interview with Him, and be sure of having a favourable hearing, and of receiving a great blessing.

3. Let us be ready for great and noble deeds, by faithfulness to the smallest duties.

April 27.—The Coming Saviour.—Isaiah 42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And is a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Matthew 3: 17

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH.

ISAIAH WAS THE SON OF AMOS; but who Amos was, what his tribe, occupation, social position, etc., we do not know. Hence we know nothing of Isaiah apart from his prophetic work. He prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." "The ordinary chronology gives 758 B. C. for the date of Jotham's accession, and 698 for that of Hezekiah's death. This gives us a period of 60 years. And since Isaiah's ministry commenced before Uzziah's death (how long we know not), supposing him to have been no more than 20 years old when he began to prophesy, he would have been 80 or 90 at Manasseh's accession."—Smith. (Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah.) We know not how long Isaiah lived after Manasseh began to reign. Some think it may have been ten or fifteen years, and some think that he was put to death in the first year of Manasseh. So we know not the exact date of his birth or death. It is generally thought that he was put to death by being sawn asunder, and that the reference is to Him in Heb. xii. 37. Manasseh was a wicked man; in 2 Kings 21: 16 it is said that he "shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." Isaiah, being a good man and perhaps reproving the wicked king, probably suffers along with other innocent ones.

To fix the date of Isaiah in the minds of the

scholars, remind them of the dates of the captivity, and return of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Isaiah lived at Jerusalem in the early part of his prophetic life and probably he never lived far from that city.

The prophets Jonah, Hosea, and Micah lived in his time.

In the days of Isaiah "public morals were corrupted, and the fear of the Lord was forgotten. Luxury and vice prevailed, and idolatry took the place of the worship of the true God. Hezekiah sought to reform abuses, and to bring the people back to God; but it seemed to be only a temporary reformation."—*Peloubet*. The kingdom of Israel was broken up and its people carried into captivity by the Assyrians B. C. 722. The kingdom of Judah was rapidly ripening for the Babylonish captivity.

Isaiah's character stands before us as one of almost superhuman elevation. When we think of him during those 60 years, discharging so many varied offices, expostulating, reproving, expounding, comforting, doing all with deepest resignation and unflinching faith towards God, and with serene dignity towards men, we seem to be contemplating one who, while retaining all purely human sympathies, has a portion of seraphic nature communicated to him.—*Cook*.

"The natural and obvious division of Isaiah is into two parts, the first of which closes with the 39th chapter, and the latter of which comprises the remainder of the book. The main drift and scope of the latter part is to array events to come—the certain deliverance of the Jews from the bondage in Babylon, and the higher deliverance of the world under the Messiah, of which the former was the *suggester and emblem*."—*Barnes*.

The writings of Isaiah are full of the sublimest figures and the most beautiful ornaments of poetry. Jerome says that Isaiah is more evangelist than prophet. It seems sometimes as if he were writing a history of the past rather than a prophecy. The beauty of the style is greatly lost in the translation. There are in the New Testament many quotations from Isaiah, some of them literal. Teachers that like to give exercises for the following Sunday to their classes might ask them to find some of these quotations.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

Isaiah lived in a *forming* period. During his life Assyria waned; its destroyer Babylon, was firmly established. Rome was founded 753 B. C.; and the Macedonian dynasty, B. C. 750 by Caranus. Syracuse, a Corinthian colony founded by Archias, B. C. 734.

EXPOSITION.

V. 1. Behold my servant. Of the whole passage, Bishop Lowth says: "St. Matthew has applied it directly to Christ; nor can it, with any justice, or any propriety, be applied to any other person or character whatever." See Matt. 12: 14-21. Christ, though "being in the form of God," yet "took upon Him the form of a servant." "Being upheld by the Divine power, in His human nature, He finished the work which was given Him to do."—*Scott*. Mine elect. The one I have chosen to fulfil my great purposes. Selected because of His fitness, His peculiar excellence. Delighteth. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." I have put my Spirit upon Him. "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." Christ was divine, yet when He became flesh and dwelt among men, He was the recipient of the Holy Spirit without measure. "No mere human intelligence could be thus receptive of the Holy Spirit of God."—*Afford*. Judgment to the Gentiles, or "make known to them the truths, precepts, and ordinances of God, that they may become accepted believers."—*Scott*.

V. 2. He shall not cry nor lift up His voice. This refers to the quiet and unostentatious ministry of our Lord.

V. 3. A bruised reed etc. "The word 'reed' means the cane or calamus which grows up in marshy or wet places."—*Barnes*. A reed is a very frail thing, easily bent, easily broken, yet in the bruised reed, there is some feeble life still, and that will not be extinguished. And though such a reed be the emblem of our spiritual condition, yet there is hope for us in God. Barnes quotes from Luther: "He doth not cast away, nor crush, nor condemn the wounded in conscience, those who are terrified in view of their sins, the weak in faith and practice, but watches over and cherishes them, makes them whole, and affectionately embraces them." Smoking flax, or the wick made from flax. "The word rendered 'smoking' means that which is weak. Small, thin, feeble; then, that which is just ready to go out, or to be extinguished; and the phrase refers literally to the expiring wick of a lamp." The least spark of true religion in the heart, will not be extinguished, but will be nursed into a glowing flame. This is not written to encourage a low state of piety, or to teach us that we may remain in passive indifference without censure. But it is written to encourage all who, conscious of the feebleness and dimness of their faith, long for a stronger and clearer light. "The word *smoking* shows that he maintains and cherishes, not *darkness* but *sparks*, though feeble and hardly perceptible."—*Calvin*. Judgment—the true religion. Unto truth *Unto victory*, Matt. 12: 29.

V. 4. We shall not fall nor be discouraged. Barnes says of the word translated 'fall': "There may be an allusion here to that which is applied to the *flax*." We may be disheartened and feeble, *He never falls* nor is discouraged, and He will carry on His glorious work unflinchingly to a triumphant completion. The *isles shall wait*. Missionaries have sometimes found the heathen dissatisfied with their own religions, and vaguely expecting some new system. This is said to have been the case in the Sandwich Islands. His law. "Law" in Scripture sometimes stands for the whole revelation of God in His word.

V. 5. This verse introduces an address to the Messiah. God has been speaking of Him, He now speaks to Him. The introduction is a description of God's creative and sustaining power. The heavens, the earth, everything on the face of the earth, the people dwelling upon it, and the breath and life of all, have come from God in the first place, and continue to exist only through His power. The sustaining power of God is but a continual repetition of the creative act.

V. 6. It is this great God that has called Christ to His peculiar work for men, and He is able to sustain Him in it. A covenant—*that is*, as the mediator of the new covenant. A light. He is the light of the world, bringing light for all, Jews and Gentiles. We know that, until He came, the Gentiles sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

V. 7. He hath called His people "out of darkness into His marvellous light," and released those who were "bound in affliction and iron," who were in the snare of the devil, and "taken captive by him at his will."

V. 8. I am Jehovah. An address now to the people. This solemn name denotes essential eternal being. This name distinguishes Him from all false gods. See Ps. 83: 18; Ps. 96: 5. In the latter passage, it will be seen that the word translated *Lord* is *Jehovah*. My glory will I not give, etc. See Ex. 20: 3, 4, 5.

V. 9. Former predictions by the mouths of the prophets had been fulfilled. That was a guarantee that "the new things" also would come to pass. See Is. 37: 7; Is. 38: 5.

V. 10. A new song. The great deliverances wrought for Israel by the Lord were often celebrated by new songs made for the occasion, as the Song of Moses, and Song of Deborah. All the inhabitants of the earth are here called upon

to sing a new song, for the deliverance Christ should accomplish, not for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles.

REMARKS.

1. How kind, how gentle, is the hand of Christ. The bruised reed is not broken by its touch. The wounded spirit can bear that healing hand to be laid upon it. Let us not fear to approach Christ with our complaints. There is none other will deal so tenderly with us. We need not hope for better comfort anywhere.

2. Those who will not take God for their master, are not free for all that. They are slaves of sin, captives of Satan. And he may give his servants a loose rein now, yet they are every day more firmly bound, and in the end Satan and sin will have unhindered control of them.

3. The name *Jehovah* was and is regarded by the Jews with peculiar reverence. Fear of taking it in vain caused them to refrain from all use of it. At last its pronunciation was forgotten, and it was referred to as "The Name." It was thought that the utterance of it would shake heaven and earth, and, as it could not be denied that miracles were really wrought by Christ, it was thought that He performed them by using this name. The writing of the name was done with the utmost care, and a few would not tread on a fragment of paper on the floor, lest it might have the sacred name upon it.

There is an old synagogue in the City of Prague, whose inside walls are black with the accumulations of many years. It has remained for generations unvisited, because it is said the name *Jehovah* was somewhere written upon it, and as the spot is unknown, no one would wash the wall for fear of erasing the holy name. We may think this undue reverence, let us be careful not to err in the opposite and more dangerous extreme.

PRIMARY LESSONS.

For the quarter commencing Apr. 6, 1890.

Prepared by Mrs. J. C. Yule.

Apr. 6.—Sanctified Affliction.—Job 33: 14-30.

Golden Text.—Hebrews 12: 5.

WHEN? WHERE? WHAT?

WHO? WHY?

LESSON BASIS.—The five W's. SKETCH.

The *when, where, and by whom* of the Book of Job are absolutely unknown—the things it teaches and why they are taught can be clearly discovered only by patient and careful study of the book itself. Job, the afflicted man of God, is represented

as having listened for a long time to the arguments of his three friends who vainly sought to convince him that God, in afflicting him, was punishing him for his sins; and at last, when no conclusion had been reached, and all were unhappy, and dissatisfied both with themselves and with one another, Elihu, the youngest of the company, rises to give his opinion. The question, *Why does God afflict me*, was even then an old one, as old as sin itself; and to this day people are not satisfied to accept God's solution of it—Heb. 12: 5, 11. Neither Job nor his friends had been able fully to answer it, and the latter, unable to convince Job, had heaped upon him harsh and unwarranted accusations. Elihu, however, seems to have spoken more in accordance with the mind of God, for we find in the end that He rebukes all the others, Job included. He administers no rebuke to Elihu.

LESSON TALK.

Having stated in verse 13 the general principle that God does not render account to men for His actions, Elihu goes on to show in the verses chosen for the lesson:

1st.—That God deals with people directly through their spiritual natures, and why—14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

2nd.—That He deals with them also by means of bodily afflictions—19, 20, 21, 22.

3rd.—That if, with all this, He gives them some one able to interpret His dealings, then He deals with them graciously, in order to bring them to repentance—23, 24, 25, 26.

4th.—That this free grace is for all who repent—27, 28, 29, 30.

1st.

(14.) *God speaketh once, you fools*,—that is, He speaks often; but by means of words addressed to the ear, but He in some way makes people understand what He wants them to do or not to do. He speaks thus to all old enough to know right from wrong; but very often they perceive it not, that is, do not recognise it as being God's voice.

(15.) One of the ways by which God has been known to teach men is by means of dreams. Give an instance from the Old Testament. Give one from the New. Another way is by visions. A dream is what comes to us when we are really asleep; a vision may be seen when either waking or sleeping, or when in a state called a trance. Give an example of vision from the Old Testament; one of trance, one of vision from the New.

(16.) *Openeth the eyes of men*,—that is, He reveals, or uncovers the meaning of His acts, so that people have to understand that He is really dealing with them. *Search their instruction*,—fixes it firmly in their minds. Are they certain after that to obey? No; much oftener they scoff at God's warnings, and will not heed.

(17.) Why does God do all this for people? This verse tells us: He wishes to turn them from their sinful purposes—to make them give up their pride and incline them to seek Him. Is it God's duty to do this? No; He does it because He is merciful, and does not want any to perish—Ezek. 18: 32, and 33: 11.

(18.) *Kelethick*, &c.,—leads people to pursue a course by which they escape accidental death, and also the stroke of the murderer. Almost any teacher, were it desirable, could furnish examples of both.

2nd.

(19, 20, 21, 22.) From these four verses we learn that sickness of all kinds is another way by which God deals with us, to secure the same ends. *He is chastened also with pain*, &c.,—that is, with ordinary or common illness. *Strong pain*,—very severe illness, until appetite and strength are all gone, and the body is greatly emaciated.

All your pains, dear children, even the slightest,

are proofs of sin and warnings of death. With every one God sends a voice to say to you, "You must die!" Those awful visitations of God speak very loudly; and sometimes, while very sick, people hear and promise that if spared they will repent and forsake sin; but, alas! too often when they recover, they forget all about it, and are even worse than before.

3rd.

(23, 24, 25, 26.) But all those means offend to cause men to repent than otherwise. Therefore God graciously provides messengers to interpret (explain) what He means by them, particularly by bodily afflictions. Now who are those messengers—interpreters? The first is the Great God Himself—John 3: 16. The second is Christ, who—Gal. 1: 4. The third is the Holy Spirit, who is come to—John 16: 8; and who, if men will yield themselves to His guidance, will guide them—John 16: 13. The fourth are Christ's ministers whom He has told to—Mark 16: 15. The last is the Bible, God's holy word, which is—Ps. 119: 105.

Now, if people listen to God, believe in Christ and give themselves wholly to Him, He will graciously deliver them from going down to the pit (hell), because He has found a ransom for all such—Matt. 20: 28; and they shall be born again,—he made new creatures,—become as little children. Then it shall be with them as said in verse 26,—they shall pray to God, and God will be favourable to them; and at length they shall see His face with joy—John 17: 24; and Christ will give them the reward of righteousness—Matt. 13: 43.

4th.

(27, 28, 29, 30.) *He looketh upon men*,—Why?—Ps. 14: 2. *And if any say, &c.*,—What will God do? See verse 28. *See the light*,—2nd Cor. 4: 6. *Lo*,—look, take notice! God does all this *openly*. Why?—*To bring back (recover, redeem) his soul*, and your *soul*, little boy, little girl, from the pit, and that you may be enlightened with the light of the living,—John 8: 12.

Apr. 13.—Prosperity Restored.—Job. 42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—James 5: 11.

REMARKS.

Intervening between this and last Sabbath's lesson, we have the remainder of Elihu's speech, followed by God's reply—not to Elihu, nor yet to the three friends, but to Job. In this day's lesson we have Job's answer to God—an answer full of shame and self-abhorrence; of shame that he, who in the presence of the holy God was so ignorant and unholo, should have deemed himself competent to explain mysteries which only God could reveal, and of self-abhorrence consequent upon the deeper view he had gained of the presumption and pride of his own heart.

LESSON TALK.

In this lesson we have four special topics:

1st.—Job's reply to the Lord—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

2nd.—What the Lord said to Job's three friends—7.

3rd.—Job constituted a mediator in behalf of his friends—8, 9.

4th.—Results—10.

1st.

(1.) *Job answered the Lord*. Had he wished for an opportunity to do so?—see ch. 1: 13; 2: 3; 3: 24. Why did Job wish this? Because he knew his outward life, as well as his intentions, had been upright, and he felt sure that God would justify him. What great treasure did Job possess? Just what Paul says he possessed—Acts 23: 16.

(2.) *I know*. God had just told Job many of

the great things He did. Job's reply is substantially what Christ afterwards said to His disciples—will some scholar repeat it? *No thought can*, &c.,—another reading is "*No thought of thine can be hindered*." In this verse Job acknowledges God's omnipotent power and perfect wisdom.

(3.) *Who is He*, &c. Job here repeats God's own question, ch. 38: 2, and adds—therefore—because Thou has asked, I confess that *I have uttered that I understood not*, &c. Oh, how little wisdom Job now sees in all he has been saying!

(4.) Job again quotes God's words, ch. 3: 3; but with these appropriate differences; Job's utterance is a prayer *I beseech thee*; God's is a command—*Give up thy sins*! that is, make ready to reply, prepare yourself. Job says—*delectable Thou unto me*! that is, reveal, make me understand; God says—*ansure me!*

(5.) *I have heard of Thee*,—that is, only heard, consequently his ideas both of God and himself were very imperfect. *But now mine eye seeth Thee*. Job had not literally seen God, but he had come into direct personal intercourse with Him; God's voice had entered into his soul, enabling him to see (understand) what he did not before know.

(6.) *Wherefore* (for which reason, or because he had seen) *I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes*. *Abhor*,—look upon myself with horror. *Repent*,—he made new creatures,—become as little children. Then it shall be with them as said in verse 26,—they shall pray to God, and God will be favourable to them; and at length they shall see His face with joy—John 17: 24; and Christ will give them the reward of righteousness—Matt. 13: 43.

2nd.

(7.) *My wrath is kindled*.—The three friends had spoken hard, cruel things against Job in addition to their signal failure to convince him of sin in his life; and while the things they had said were in the main true, they did not apply to Job, nor properly explain God's dealing with him. They had misjudged the case, had grieved and troubled Job, and now God rebukes them sharply. Doubtless they had meant well; hence God was merciful to them, and directed them what to do in order to be forgiven.

3rd.

(8.) Go to my servant Job. Here Job is appointed to act as a priest, or mediator between his friends and God. Job had previously acted as priest in behalf of his own family—ch. 1: 5; now he is called to offer sacrifices for the sins of his friends. Here Job is seen to be a type of Christ, and it will be interesting and profitable for teachers to trace this thought much farther.

(9.) *And the Lord also accepted Job*. The word *also* is significant. Job had sinned as well as his friends. He had been strongly irritated, as well as his expressions shown, and possibly had felt the risings of an unforgiving temper.

The three friends were told that Job should pray for them. No one can pray acceptably for one who has wronged him until he forgives. Job prayed acceptably, we see by the fact that he *also* was accepted, that is, both they and he.

4th.

(10.) Turned the captivity of Job,—restored him to his power and dignity. When? *When he prayed for his friends*. Matt. 6: 14-15, Eph. 4: 32.

Apr. 20.—**Queen Esther.**—Esther 4: 10-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Ps. 37: 5.

LESSON BASIS.

The circumstances narrated in part in this lesson are supposed to have occurred:—

When—In the 17th year of Ahasuerus (Xerxes), or about 447, B. C.

Where—At the king's palace in Shushan.

What?—Plan for preventing the execution of a cruel edict.

Who?—Mordecai, a Jew; and Esther, the queen, his adopted daughter; and the Jewish captives in Babylon.

Why?—That God's goodness to those who trust Him might be known by all men.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

By an edict of the cruel king Ahasuerus, the Xerxes of profane history, all the Jews in his dominions were condemned to be put to death on a certain day. Mordecai, who may be seen by reading the preceding chapters, had been the innocent cause of the trouble, was seen weeping and lamenting before the palace gates by some of the queen's attendants who, knowing he was Esther's friend, came and told her. Esther sent at once to inquire the cause of his trouble.

So Mordecai sent her word, and also sent her a copy of the king's decree. This was, probably, the first intimation she had of the coming trouble, and of course her grief and anxiety were very great. What followed was very small part of the story, all children are urged to read the Book of Esther for themselves, in order to see how graciously God delivered His people, and made the cruel designs of their enemies come back upon themselves.

LESSON TALK.

(10.) *Hatach*,—one of the chamberlains of the palace, in immediate attendance upon the queen. *Gave him commandment*,—told him what to say to Mordecai.

(11.) Here Esther briefly explains to Mordecai how difficult and dangerous a thing he had asked, or rather, it seems, commanded her (ch. 2: 20) to undertake. *Into the inner court*,—into the court, or apartment no one, not even the greatest favorite, dare enter unless specially called. If she did, as Esther said, there was but one law—death; unless, indeed, as possibly might happen, the royal king proved to be in a gracious humor, and stretched out the golden sceptre, then, of course, the intruder was forgiven; but, says Esther, *I have not been called these thirty days*.

(12, 13) Esther's answer was duly reported to Mordecai who gave Hatach still another message to her. *Think not with thyself*,—that is, in thy own mind—*that thou, &c.* Here Mordecai evidently does Esther a great injustice. He seems to think that she is selfishly shrinking from personal danger, and flattering herself that, although the blow should fall, she (her nation) being unknown to the king) would escape unharmed.

Probably this implied suspicion arose from the fear that possibly such might be Esther's feeling; rather than from any settled belief that it was so; so easy it is for persons in great affliction and terror to suspect the motives and intentions of others.

(14.) *Enlargement and deliverance to the Jews shall arise*. Mordecai believed that what God had said through the prophets concerning his nation would in some way be fulfilled; but he warns Esther that unless she bestir herself, both she and her father's house will in all probability be cut off. *And who knoweth whether, &c.* Here was encouragement for Esther. It is possible that our God has placed you where you are for this very purpose—for such a time as this. It was not necessary that Esther should know beforehand

why she had been put in such a position. It was for her to do what was manifestly her duty, trusting only to God; and very bravely she did it. In the case of Esther we find a proof that the right way is always the safe way.

(15, 16.) *Fast ye for me, &c.* Fasting was a usual thing among the Jews in times of trouble, or danger, or for special spiritual discipline; and it was frequently, if not always, accompanied by prayer. There is no reasonable doubt but that the fast which Esther called for was a season of urgent prayer, though we are not told so. Throughout the book of Esther neither the name of God nor any direct allusion to His worship is found. This omission seems very surprising, and has been accounted for by some of the Jewish teachers thus: that this history had been originally incorporated with the chronicles of the Medes and Persians, hence the writer (probably Mordecai himself) purposely omitted the use of the sacred name of God—which every one knows the Jews held in profound reverence—from those heathen records. If this be true, which seems very probable, it is likely that similar reasons withheld the writer, whoever he was, from any allusion to special acts of Divine worship.

If I perish, I perish! Esther had made up her mind in the fear of God to do what she could to save her nation, even though she should lose her life. But, after such a season of humiliation and looking to God, she had the best of reasons for believing she should not perish, for God had promised—Ps. 50: 23; and doubtless she was familiar with the words—*Who would vent his way, &c.* Dear children, if you read this book for yourselves, you will see that God was, then, as He is now, and ever will be true to His promise. He heard the cry of His people, and saved them from their enemies; and you believe His word, and put your trust in His Son. He will hear you too, and save you from the power of a far more cruel enemy than the wicked Haman, and from a more dreadful destruction than that which hung over the Jews.

April 27.—**The Coming Saviour**—Isaiah, 42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Matt. 3: 17.

LESSON BASIS—the five W's.

The precise date of this prophecy is not known, but it probably was uttered not far from—

When—712, B. C.

Where—At Jerusalem.

By whom—Isaiah, a prophet of God.

It is—What?—A prophetic view of Christ.

It is given—Why?—As God's testimony to men of the coming and mission of His Son.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The prophet Isaiah, who, it is believed, uttered the words of this lesson, was an Israelite, the son of Amoz. Further than this we know nothing of his family, nor even to what tribe he belonged. His prophecies were uttered from time to time during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; and foretold events reaching down to the present, and probably to a time even yet in the future. He must have lived to an advanced age, probably not less than eighty or ninety years.

There is a tradition that he was placed in the trunk of a tree by order of the cruel king Manasseh, and killed by being sawn asunder. This seems to find some confirmation in Heb. 11: 37; as, except this, we have no known instance of the kind. The Hebrew prophet, were all poets; and among all there is none that ranks higher than Isaiah. His predictions of Christ and His reign are marvels of tenderness and beauty; and his descriptions of the majesty, power, and glory of God are in the highest style of sublimity. But

we must not forget that these prophet-poets did not speak all those things of themselves; but it was God's Spirit that spoke through them. They wrote and spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and very generally did not understand their own utterances (See 1st Peter 1: 10-12) as we might, if only we study them carefully in the light shed upon them by Christ's and His Apostles.

LESSON TALK.

This prophecy was uttered for men. It represents God as speaking:

1st. To men concerning His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Verses, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

2nd. To Christ in man's hearing and for man's benefit. Verses, 6, 7.

3rd. As declaring the authority upon which those thoughts are said. Verses, 8, 9.

4th. As demanding universal praise. Verse, 10.

1st.

(1.) *Behold*,—look at, consider attentively. *My Servant, &c.*, Phil. 2: 7. What was said by another prophet more than 700 years later? John 1: 29. To-day, dear children, your teachers say the very same thing. So, if you consider His character; be acquainted with Him—not by hearsay alone, but by experiencing the power of His grace to make your heart new. *Mine elect*,—chosen, or appointed One. 1st Peter 2: 4. *In whom my soul delighteth*. For nearly the same words, uttered of Christ as on earth, read Luke 3: 22. To-day, if God would speak from heaven, He would say the same. *I have put My spirit, &c.* Is. 11: 2. *He shall bring forth judgment, &c.*—that is, His own law of love, the Gospel.

(2.) *It shall not cry, &c.*—Shall do His work quietly and without praise;—shall do so without lifting up of banners for the purpose of establishing any earthly supremacy;—shall utter no proclamation of His own power.

(3.) *A bruised reed . . . the smoking flax, &c.* The meaning commonly taken from this verse, however true in itself, is not suited to the prophet's language. The first metaphor—a bruised reed, implies something unable to throw off, or raise above existing restraints;—the second, something slowly gathering force in order to do so. The true idea seems to be, that Christ, in prosecuting His distinctive work, would not directly interfere with the existing order of things; neither, on the one hand, turning aside to aid men in their schemes of oppression, nor, on the other, to quell the hearts of dissent; but would rather pursue undeviatingly His chosen work until His own law should be established, to the ultimate triumphing of truth and righteousness in the world. This interpretation is in harmony both with the prophet's language and the facts of Christ's life.

(4.) *He shall not fail*,—to do all He has undertaken; nor be discouraged (broken), till He have set judgment—His own righteous law—in the earth. Christ came to do a definite and pre-appointed work. He should not fail in the smallest particular to do it all; nor lay down His life until the purpose of His coming was fully accomplished. John 10: 18.

(5.) Who saith thus? *God, the Lord*. What has He said? The foregoing things concerning Christ. Who is God, the Lord? Not one of those blind gods of wood or stone whom men vainly worship!—not one of those false oracles that utter their lies in the name of some unseen and terrible one; but Jehovah, the Omnipotent; He who created the heavens, the earth, earth's innumerable products, all living creatures, upon it, whether animal or spiritual. This is no doubtful authority!

2nd.

(6, 7.) *I have called thee in righteousness*, in pursuance of my own righteous purposes; and *will hold thy hand, and keep thee*—Ps. 1: 1, 12; and

give thee for a covenant ("covenant sacrifice,") of the people, for a light of the Gentiles—Acts 13: 47; to open the blind eyes—Matt. 11: 4, 5; John 9: 39; to bring out the prisoners, &c.,—the captives and slaves of Satan—Zech. 9: 11.

3rd.

(8.) Here God asserts more emphatically yet, the authority upon which these prophetic announcements are made, by using that NAME which, for us, is written Jehovah, but which, in its most sacred form, was not often written; and which, as it was never pronounced by any Jew, was termed the "incomprehensible name" of God.

(9.) *Behold! the former things* (former prophecies) *are come to pass!* A convincing proof, if you need any other, that these new things told you on the same high authority, will in due time be fulfilled also. *Behold thy spring forth*,—long before the time of their being fulfilled. How long?

4th.

(10.) *Sing*—praise God in song. Who is thus called upon?—All that dwell upon the earth; all that navigate the waters, or dwell in them; all the islands and the inhabitants thereof. Why?—Because of the Redeemer, who is here announced as coming to remove the curse of sin, to break the power of Satan, and to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel. To-day He has come; before very long He will come again; who is ready to meet Him should He come to-day?

"Oh, come to Me to-day!—
To-morrow may not be,"—
Thus, ever thus, those kind lips say,
"Come, come to Me!"

Religious Intelligence.

DENOMINATIONAL.

ONTARIO AND ONTARIO.

Baptisms reported during the month—Brampton 2; Cheltenham 4; Charlotteville Centre 8; Chesley 8; Claremont 6; Colchester 2; Forest 1; Fredericksburgh 4; Goble's Corners 14; Gueph 6; Hamilton, Park St. 4; Minesing 4; Montreal, First 2; Port Kawan 2; Selkirk 2; St. Catharines, Queen St. 3; Toronto, Jarvis St. 5, Parliament St. 2; Uxbridge 5.

Pastoral Changes.—Rev. A. McFADYEN has resigned the pastorate of the *Glanis* church on account of ill health. Rev. W. H. WALKER of Campbellford has severed his connection with the Baptist Denomination and gone over to the Brethren. Rev. W. LACEY has accepted the pastorate of the *Sidney* church. His P.O. address is Hallowsay. Rev. Wm. GRANT, late of Eversley and King churches, has settled over the church in *Durham*. The P.O. address of Rev. J. WILLIAMS, who is ministering to the Charlotteville Centre church is *Walsh*, not Vienna as formerly. Rev. J. SILCOX has settled as pastor of the *Louisville* church. Rev. DR. COOPER has resigned the pastorate of the York St. Baptist church, London. (See below.)

Ordination. Bro. D. BOYD, who has been labouring very acceptably for some time in the County of Grey, was on the 19th of February, ordained to the work of the gospel ministry at Eugenia. He is pastor of the Artemesia and Eugenia churches.

Church Recognition. The body of baptized believers in the village of Courtright, was recognized as a sister church, by an approved Council, on the 26th February. Constituent membership 23; pastor, Rev. S. G. Anderson.

Miscellaneous.—Rev. E. BARNWELL was publicly inducted as pastor of the Mount Forest church, on Tuesday the 25th of February, with appropriate services.

Rev. Dr. Castle delivered a most excellent and instructive lecture, under the auspices of the Young Men's Association, in Jarvis St. Church, on Thursday p.m., March 7th on "The School Days of John Milton."

St. Thomas. The re-union of the First and Zion churches was celebrated in a formal way by public meeting on Thursday, the 27th of February. A handsome brick church is being erected for the consolidated interest, to cost about \$10,000, and Rev. Ellmore Harris is pastor of the united congregation.

Rev. Thos. Booker, the beloved pastor of the Claremont Baptist church was recently presented with a very handsome and valuable gold watch by his congregation (bought at Rycie's). The presentation was accompanied with the following address, read by Dea. Tracy:

Rev. T. Booker.—Beloved Pastor,—In addressing these few lines to you, we, the members of the church over which we believe God in His providence has sent you to preside, desire to express our gratitude to Him, and our esteem for yourself and family. We rejoice to know that we have had ample proof that God has abundantly blessed your labors among us, and that you dwell in the hearts of your people. We pray that this annual epistle may abound more and more, that you may long be spared to labor as our pastor, be instrumental in building up the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in bringing very many precious souls out of darkness into the light and liberty of the Gospel. And now, dear brother, allow me, in the name and on behalf of the church, to present you this gift as a token of our sincere affection and regard. May you long be spared to labor with us, and if by the Master's will we will exert among us, till He calls you to wear your crown.

The reply of the pastor was tender, emotional, and freighted with a longing desire for the spiritual welfare of his beloved flock. After a happy evening of sacred pleasure, the large company dispersed.

Rev. Dr. Cooper's Retirement. We clip the following from the *London Advertiser*:

"The resignation by the Rev. Dr. Cooper of his charge of the York Street Baptist Church reported in a recent issue, we understand, to be taken as an indication of his intended retirement from the more active duties of a clergyman's life in so far connected with the oversight of a large city church. Though capable of occupying his pulpit as acceptably as ever, his increasing years, unable to retard his zeal or lessen his mental vigor, have naturally weakened his physical powers and rendered advisable a release from the more wearying duties of his position, or a transfer to a less arduous field.

There is no clergyman in the city more highly esteemed by Christians of all denominations and the general public than Dr. Cooper. With his high attainments as a classical scholar and theologian, with his kindly disposition that reaches beyond sectarian grounds, and with his courteous manner that marks the natural gentleman, the people of London are all familiar; and while the Baptist Church has had just cause to be proud of him as a Minister whose place it will be difficult to fill, the public, irrespective of creed, have had equal cause to be proud of him as a citizen.

We are pleased to learn that there is no present probability of his removing from London, and we are satisfied that all will unite heartily in the hope that his future years may be both many and happy, and that his opportunities of usefulness will only be increased by his retirement from the more wearisome labors of the position he has so long and so successfully occupied."

Collingwood. On the evening of Friday, February 25th, a most successful entertainment was given to the ladies of the Collingwood Baptist Sunday School, entitled "The Christian's Monument or Pyramid." The capacious chapel was crowded to the doors; and the scholars performed their part in so creditable a manner that at the request of a large number of the spectators the entertainment was repeated on the following Friday evening.

This flourishing Sunday School has just lost the services of its superintendent, Mr. W. H. Russell, who is removing to Williamsport, Penn. Mr. Russell was entertained at a Farewell Tea Meeting on the evening of Monday, March 3rd. The following account of it is from the *Collingwood Messenger*, kindly sent us by a friend:

"There was a very large gathering of the children and friends of the school. After tea the Rev. E. J. Stobo gave a short address and at the close presented to Mr. Russell a photographic group of the teachers and officers of the school (by Castor), beautifully framed, in an address in a companion frame, of which the following is a copy:—

We, the teachers and officers of the Collingwood Baptist Church Sabbath School, having been made aware that our dear brother and sister, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Russell, are, in the providence of God, about to remove from our midst, would take this means of expressing our Christian love and esteem for them as members of the Church, and also to bear testimony to their devotion, liberality, zeal and faithfulness in the work of the Sabbath School. And further, we would earnestly pray that Heaven's richest blessing may rest upon them on their return to their old home and its loved associations, and that our God may prosper them in all things that relate to both worlds, *AMEN.* E. J. Stobo, Pastor; ANNA GARRETT, Sec. -Treas.

Mr. Russell made a suitable and very pleasing reply, after which addresses were given by Messrs. Taylor and Olmstead, and the remainder of the evening was spent in hymn-singing, readings and dialogues. The ladies who provided tea deserve all credit for the handsome way in which it was done; and the children will long remember the occasion. It is worthy of notice that, through the liberality of the ladies, there was neither admission fee nor collection, something decidedly new in the way of tea-meetings."

UNITED STATES.

DEATH OF REV. DR. YOUNG. The *Examiner and Chronicle* of March 6th announces the death of Rev. Wm. M. Young, D. D., of Meadville, Pa. Dr. Young was a native of Scotland, born in 1826. He emigrated to the United States in 1829. He served congregations in Massachusetts, North Carolina, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Toronto readers of the *Helper* will remember his portly and genial presence, first during a two week's supply of Bond St. pulpit subsequent to the resignation of Dr. Stewart; and later of Alexander St. subsequent to the resignation Rev. A. H. Munro.

The following from a correspondent of the *Examiner and Chronicle*, will be read with interest:

"Dr. Young, late of Meadville, Penn., who came but recently to the pastorate of the Baptist church of Cheyenne, died of apoplexy Thursday morning Feb. 20th, at 11 o'clock. The writer takes great pleasure in testifying to the friendly expressions of regard that the good people of this city have shown the deceased, without respect to churches or social rank, although the Doctor had labored here but seven weeks. His funeral was truly an avation of the whole city. Dr. Young, as in anticipation of his sudden death, had left with the officers of his church a letter—"To be opened in case of his death in Cheyenne." In this letter he gave particular directions as to his funeral, and the disposition to be made of his body. Being a prominent member of the order of the "Knights of Pythias," he had requested them to take charge of his funeral, and that the religious exercises be under the direction of the writer. The military band at Fort Russell, near the city, kindly tendered their services, and with the Knights in front of the hearse and citizens on foot and in carriages, the cortege moved at half-past one on Monday from the residence of Deacon Whipple to the hall, when after appropriate singing by the choir, and prayer by Rev. D. J. Pierce, of the Baptist church at Laramie, Wyoming Territory, addresses were made by Rev. J. Y. Cowhick, of the Presbyterian church, Rev. C. M. Sanders, of the Congregational church, by the

writer, and also by Col. D. C. McCoy, of Meadville, Penn., an old friend of the Doctor's, who had come to take the body to Worcester, Mass., for interment. Among those who sat upon the platform was Governor Hoyt, of this Territory.

Dr. Young had won the confidence and affection of the whole community. The prospects of the church here were most hopeful, but this sudden loss of their pastor seems most painful and disheartening. But they feel that the standard which has so suddenly fallen from the hands of this strong and able leader must be placed in other hands immediately. The stricken church shares the sympathy of the entire community. The Doctor's death leaves vacant one of the most important and promising of our Western fields. Who is to fill the vacancy left by this beloved and faithful leader?"

F. M. E.

Denver, Col., Feb. 25th, 1879.

Selected.

THE BEST TALENT FOR THE INFANT CLASS.

"So many perpetual motions! some of them timid, some bold and ungoverned, some noisy and roguish, and all restless as the billows of the ocean; to keep such a group from crying or laughing, or whispering and playing together or striking, pinching, pushing, and hair-pulling, is by no means an easy task—it requires tact." So remarks a fellow-worker.

And he speaks truly; but this is not all. It is a greater difficulty to interest these little ones, and to render their associations with the class both pleasant and profitable. There the best talent is needed. Some would have us believe that any self-confident youth is competent to take charge of the infants, his main qualification being a willingness to do so. "The talented," we are told, "are required elsewhere; we want them for the Bible classes." By all means the best you can get for your young men and women's classes. And yet we say, if any class must put up with inferior teaching power, it must not be the infant class. Secure for that the greatest amount of talent—the best consistent with adaptation to the particular work to be done.

The infants are the most susceptible of the elements of which your school is composed; at this stage one sentence may do more towards shaping the life than will twenty a few years onward.

"People," says an American writer, "make gardens in the spring. A handful of seeds may represent so many plants, if they are put into the soil at the proper time; and they may represent as many failures in direct ratio with the untimeliness of their sowing. Let us not wait with the seed God sends us forth to sow, till the cares of life have trodden the heart as hard as a highway. Let the strongest and the best labourers go forth while the fields lie fresh and moist in the dew of the spring-time. Then shall the good seed, cast into good ground, bring forth some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred-fold."

Not only must infant classes have the best talent, they *must* have the best rooms. Some seem to think any sort of a place will do for the little folks. They will not protest. Perhaps not now. But wait a few years, and see how you will have to work to get them to Sabbath school at all. Do you know they

are now forming their likes and dislikes for their lifetime? Children are passionately fond of brightness and beauty. They cannot comprehend the glory of the Sabbath school idea. They must be helped to it by pleasant surroundings, a cheerful airy room, with flowers, pictures, and music, making the Sabbath school hour the brightest of the week. Do not have all your fine frescoes in your auditorium, leaving your infant classrooms blank and bare. Children live in a world of fancy. They can turn a walking-stick into a horse, or a roll of rags into a live baby, in a twinkling. They will get more beauty out of your frescoes, a hundred to one, than adults will, and they will never forget it. I remember an imaginative little girl of a half-dozen years, who used to lie in the morning twilight and conjure up all sorts of people, in all sorts of costumes and attitudes, upon a whitewashed wall. How she would have enjoyed frescoes of Jesus and His wondrous acts of love, and how they might have helped her to comprehend His truth!

And now a few words to infant class teachers. You must learn the *why* of your work upon your knees, before God. You may listen to ever so fine argumentations upon the momentous issues pending upon your efforts, but unless God speak into your souls the high motives that ought to thrill every fibre of your being, you will never be half awake to the work. You must learn the *what* of your teaching from the Bible, and the *how* from the experience of others, and your own common sense. The sculptor's first hold is his statue. Then an earnest purpose impels him to work out his thought in marble; then day by day, stroke by stroke, till the stone is rounded in almost breathing beauty. So, if you would mould children into the image of Christ, you must have first a right ideal. A man does not go beyond his ideal in anything. You must think about this work. You must plan out the very best thing possible for you to do with the material you have. Ask yourself often, "Am I doing my very best to bring this class?"—not into the most showy shape for visitors' reviews, but—"the nearest possible to Jesus?" Never be guilty of the indolent trick of locking the care of your class in the drawer of your desk, with your manual, to lie there till the next Sabbath. Give week-day thought to it. Bring up your ideal by studying the modes and successes of others. If you spend a Sabbath in a neighbouring city, better one hundred times forego a star sermon than an opportunity of observing the workings of a class where stars are gathered for Jesus' crown.

You must have an earnest purpose to work up to your ideal. We are all indolent. Cares press us. We can get stamina to hold us to our work, only from God in prayer.

We shall glide into the slipshod and easy-going, in spite of our good Sunday resolutions, unless we go to Christ, and wait before Him for the endowment of strength. When we bring ourselves to His terms, we may be sure this will be forthcoming. It will be the fault of nobody in the wide universe but our own sluggish selves, if we lack a stirring purpose to work to our ideal.

You have only an hour in one hundred and sixty-eight to give the only lessons about Jesus some of them ever have. Think of it. The world, the flesh, and the devil, have one

hundred and sixty-eight chances to your one.

You must bring yourself to your utmost strength by study. Anything that gives you mental grasp, be it mathematical gymnastics or mere historic reading, will be a help to you. The more familiar you are with good authors, the simpler and clearer will be your way of saying things, the less will your thought be lost in the rattle of the word-vehicle you send it out in. Of all books, however, THE BOOK must have the preference.

You must study child-nature; and this, by the way, is quite another thing from man and woman nature. The lion-tamer studies all the ins and outs of lion-life. He learns where the courage lies, and lets that point alone. He finds where the fear lurks, and makes his attack there. You have grown away from your own childhood's whims and fancies. Your reason has put your imagination in the stocks, and you have nearly forgotten the time when the poor captive was your queen. Children believe far more devoutly in fairies and wishing-caps than they do in continents and oceans, obligations and duties. Grown people do preposterously mis-measure the distance between themselves, on their worldly stilt, and the little folks. When you talk to children you must get down where they are; talk in range with their ideas; speak their vernacular; or you might as well preach to a Chinaman in Cherokee. You must beware of big words. Grown people have a fashion of using them because they sound so incomprehensibly erudite. But one of them may wreck the most richly freighted cart.

Singing is an important means of teaching God's truth to children. They love music. They may not understand all the words they sing, but they will remember them till they do get their meaning. More truth can be sung into children's hearts than can be talked into them.

And the little hymns echoed in their homes, day after day, may do a good work for older sinners.

It is not enough to care for your class in a general way, you must know them individually. If you call Tommy "Dick," no matter how graciously you smile, he sees that you don't know him—Tommy—his individual self. Ten chances to one he will say, "She don't care anything for me after all." And the little scapegrace will bolt you out, with your fine lessons. Show each that you do know him and her, by a personal recognition; a word about the invalid mother at home, or the baby, or, what is better, by a call when they are ill. Not unlikely the extravagant little fellow will get your identity confounded with that of the angels pictured in the big Bible.

But, after all, your main dependence for success must be upon prayer. I see my advice is according to that saying of Origen, "Begin and end all things in prayer." It is none the less pertinent, however. Go to Him that made the little mind, and understands its thoughts afar off. He will give you access to its surest stronghold, that you may capture it for Himself.

Your Sunday school work, wrought in faith, hope, and love, *must endure*. God gives you a chance to trace on many little hearts their first moral lessons. The world may write its falsities over them, but at last, like the sacred

characters on the palimpsest, the words of your tracing will come to the light.

The little words of truth you utter will echo from heart to heart, as a savour of life unto life.

In the long for ever the reward of your work shall be *glorious*. The hand bearing the print of a nail shall place upon your head a crown, and the "well done" of the Master shall sound through your soul in ceaseless harmonies.—*Sunday School Teacher.*

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL—A TRAINING SCHOOL.

FOR THE FORMATION OF BENEVOLENT HABITS.

(From the Baptist Teacher.)

There are churches not a few that will "not endure sound doctrine," if the doctrine have a sound of money in it. They like sermons on justification, and sanctification, and the final perseverance of the saints. They like to hear discourses about the cross and heaven. They want to hear something that will touch their hearts; but the moment the preacher undertakes to touch their pockets, they become impatient, and go "away in a rage," and begin to conspire to secure the services of some better man, who will confine himself to "preaching the Gospel," and not deprecate the Lord's day, and the Lord's house, by the offensive introduction of financial matters.

Let the preachers, however, do their very best, and sacrifice themselves ever so heroically "in this service of faith," we have very little faith in a universal reformation. "There are crooked things," says Solomon, "that cannot be made straight;" and the longer we live the more clearly we are satisfied that Solomon was right. There are people whom nothing short of the resurrection trump will ever wake. They are too old to learn, too deaf to hear, too thoroughly set in their ways to be ever moved much out of them. We do not presume to deny that they are Christians. Some of them may be, in spite of appearances that seem to be against them. But the trouble is they have never formed the habit of giving, nor been educated in the principles that ought to govern it; and hence their shameful failure to meet the measure of their obligation.

Our hope of betterment is in the on-coming generation; and we insist, with utmost urgency, that the Sunday school shall be regarded not merely as an institution for imparting Bible truth, but an agency for the development of the highest type of Christian character, by the inculcation of practical principles, and the early formation of benevolent habits. The study of the International Lesson is a great thing; but it is not everything. If the church of the future is to be, as we hope, immeasurably in advance of the church of to-day, it must not only *know*, but *do* and *give*. A very high authority has said: "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Large-hearted charity is the great desideratum of the world; not dwelling sentimentally in the heart, like a delicate perfume in a room, but trained to efficiency in practical benevolence.

The Sunday-school is a *training* school.

No agency outside of the Christian family can begin to compare with it; and in no direction is training more imperatively needed than in that which we have indicated.

Varieties.

WORDS AND DEEDS.—A laughing child flung a pebble into the ocean. The water closed over it, but it left a ripple on the wave, which widened, ever widened, ever pressed onward, until it had gathered in its wide embrace all the waters of the great deep. And the little one knew not the mighty, wide-reaching influence of the pebble in childish play her hand had dropped into the shining wave.

We are children casting pebbles into life's wide ocean, and the ripples are pressing on towards the great hereafter. To each one God has given a work to do for eternity. Reverently accept that work, cheerfully enter upon it.

Not thoughtlessly, as the child flings from its hand the pebble, let life's opportunities be thrown away. Send forth your words, your deeds, with prayer,—prayer winged with faith and love. Living thus, your own heart will be happy, other lives brightened, and God honoured.

THE EMPTY CLASS.—An empty class is a great grief to a thorough true-hearted Sunday school teacher, and yet how often such a thing is found! You notice one class always full, the children there in good time, ready with a bright smile the moment teacher enters the room. You feel that the sight of such a class does you good. Next to that you see another. The teacher comes in and sits down alone. Presently one child enters, and is shortly followed by another; but they have no word, no smile, for their teacher. And how does that teacher feel? Discouraged, disheartened, inclined to give up, thinking that some one else would do much better. But is there no other remedy? Cannot that same teacher refill that empty class in a short time, with a little patience and trouble? Certainly; and the pleasure of success will bring sufficient reward.

WHEAT AND CHAFF.—"A lady, teaching in London, and reading in the Bible about 'wheat and chaff,' found that not one of her scholars had an idea of what *wheat* was; but on asking them what 'chaff' might be, there was an immediate holding up of hands in signal of comprehension, and a unanimous reply of—'Impudence, ma'am!' The dreadful punishment allotted to such 'chaff' seemed to follow quite unquestioned."

A BAD MARK.—"I've got a boy for you, sir."

"Glad of it; who is he?" asked the master-workman of a large establishment. The man told the boy's name, and where he lived.

"I don't want him," said the master-workman; "he has got a bad mark."

"A bad mark, sir? What?"

"I have met him every day with a cigar in his mouth. I don't want smoking boys."

The Christian sometimes supposes himself to grow worse because he grows wiser. He seems more sinful because he is more enlightened: there is not more evil in him, but he sees more. JAY.

A HEATHEN trader in a seaport town came to a missionary for some religious books. When some surprise was expressed at his desiring them when he could not read them, he said that he wished them to lay about in the way of those who came to deal with him. He had always found that those who took them up, and looked them over with an air of respect and attention, dealt fairly with him. But one who tossed them aside with contempt was sure to be a bad man to trade with. He did not care anything for the books himself, he only wished them to test the honesty of others.

"TEACH that which you know best. Your teaching will be more effective, and your teaching will be more real and true, when your scholars are receiving from you part of those stores which you have fairly made your own, than when you are merely imparting what you have borrowed for the occasion." As that which we know best ought to be the great leading truths of the gospel, such as the character of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ; it is only by a personal and daily familiarity with such truths, in their relation to our souls, that we can become able teachers of the New Testament.

INCREASE OF LIGHT.—Old Master Brookes says,— "If you only have candle-light, bless God for it, and He will give you starlight; when you have got starlight, praise God for it, and He will give you moonlight; when you have got moonlight, rejoice in it, and He will give you sunlight; and when you have got sunlight, praise him still more, and He will make the light of your sun as the light of seven days, for the Lord himself shall be the light of your spirit."

WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.—As to amusements—I mean what the world call such—we have none; the place indeed swarms with them, and cards and dancing are the professed business of almost all the genteel inhabitants of Huntington. We refuse to take part in them, or to be accessories to this way of murdering our time, and by so doing, have acquired the name of Methodists.—*Cowper.*

An old Highland clergyman, who had received several calls, asked his servant where he should go. The servant said: "Go where there is most sin, sir." The preacher concluded that was good advice, and went where there was most money.

FAITHFUL dealing with ourselves will be accompanied by candid dealing with our fellows. When we are fully employed in pulling the beams out of our own eyes, we shall not have much time for finding "motes" in those of others.

MARRIED.

At the Baptist Church, Barrie, on Saturday the 15th. Instant, by Pastor H. F. Griffin, ARTHUR J. READING, to Miss HULDAH J. MOORE, daughter of the late WM. MOORE, Esq., of Barrie.

[We wish our old Sunday School scholar and his young bride all the joy they have anticipated from this union.—*Ed. C. H.*]