

The Christian Helper.

A BAPTIST MONTHLY JOURNAL.

"Not for that we have doubted ever your faith, but are helpers of your joy." St. Cor. 1: 26.

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The present issue completes Vol. II of THE CHRISTIAN HELPER. While acknowledging with gratitude the Divine favour and blessing upon our enterprise, and rejoicing in the service we have been permitted to do our fellow-labourers in the Master's vineyard, we can assure our subscribers that in the future no effort will be spared to make the HELPER worthy of their continued and cordial support.

Arrangements for the forthcoming volume are in contemplation, which if carried out promise to largely increase the usefulness of this Journal. We hope to be able to announce their completion, and to publish particulars in our next issue.

HOME PIETY.

Home is a sweet word when it describes a reality and not a shadow. But, alas! there is many a splendid mansion in which there is no home; and just for this reason, that home depends much more on mental and moral qualities, than on outward and adventitious circumstances. We have seen an earthly paradise, where there was no home; but in the log house of the humble backwoodsman we have found a home of contentment and peace, upon which angels might have gazed with delight. We will not say that there is no home without piety; for there are sweet congenialities of nature still to be met with in this fallen world. But this we will say, that the highest happiness of home can never be realized where the influence of piety is not felt. And yet strange to say, there are some families professing piety that are anything but happy. They dwell together, but they have no home.

Too many people in these days are pious everywhere but at home. They have an excellent out-of-door piety, which they lay aside the moment they cross their own thresholds. They are "saints abroad, but devils at home." Their piety is luxuriant on the open stage of public observation; but it withers, and even dies, in the domestic circle. They can work on committees, speak at public meetings, teach in Sunday-

schools, be prominent and active in the church, engage in all sorts of religious and benevolent activity; but their home life, so far as piety is concerned, is a blank, and worse than a blank. They have played their part in public, and at home they throw aside their official dress, and appear in their own native garb—unlovely, morose, irritable, unkind; having no home for themselves, and permitting none to those around them. Such professors are stumbling-blocks to others, and can be anything but really useful in the world. They lose sight of the true order of things, which is, to quote the words of the apostle, "first to show piety at home," and then to widen its circle, till it embraces the whole family of man.

We have doubtless all of us to perform a public part; and we should seek, as Christians, to perform it well; but this can never exonerate us from the still more pressing obligation of performing our part in private, and seeing to it that our own little garden is not overrun with noxious weeds while we are cultivating the fields of others around us. Like charity, piety must begin at home; and though it is not to stop there, it will ever be seen to greatest advantage where it is subject to the closest inspection. Piety is not a splendid hypocrisy, a gilded deceit, making clean the outside of the cup and platter, but the moment it retires from public gaze relaxing into indifference, or breaking into strife. Such piety may comport with the "form of godliness" but not with its "power;" it may gain the applause of men, but it cannot secure the approbation of God. Piety not distinctly seen at home is little worth; indeed it is worth nothing—yes, and less than nothing. It is all the worse for its holiday dress; by which it deceives the church, vaunts itself as a somewhat superior article, and all the while sheds mildew and blight around the domestic hearth.

Nothing in religion can be safely or consistently substituted for home piety. Home virtues are the parent of all other virtues. Home is the soil in which all true religion must find its seed-bed and its nursery. It is the lack of piety at home that makes the current of public piety flow on with such sluggishness. Raise the tone of private and family religion, and all Zion's interests will instantly be refreshed and invigorated. Get more Bible knowledge—more prayer—more union—more zeal for God—more conformity to Christ, "AT HOME," and Christian intelligence, devotion, harmony, activity and holiness will spread apace in the church. Nothing retards the success of the ministry so much as the defective piety at home. We believe, with the devoted Baxter, that when family religion shall rise to its proper elevation, con-

version will be more frequently the result of home influences, than of the public teaching of the church.

EXPERIENCED CHRISTIANS AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

We should be glad to know by what fiction of benevolence it has come to pass that the entire destiny of our Sunday-schools has been so largely committed to the hands of the young and inexperienced. We delight to see the young engaging with the ardor and enthusiasm peculiar to early life, in one of the most honorable and useful of all employments; but we must seriously demur to that arrangement of the churches which so generally entrusts the Sunday-school to the almost absolute care of those who, of necessity, stand in need of the counsels and example of those of riper years and experience than themselves. The evils of this system are clearly pointed out by the Rev. A. Rowland in the *Sunday-school Chronicle*—

"Too often mere children in Christian experience are persuaded to become teachers when they are painfully conscious of ignorance, and are longing to continue learners still. From that moment a demand is made for one lesson weekly,—sometimes for two,—from those whose time of serious thought and religious experience may be reckoned by months; and the result is, either the flimsiest class teaching, or an impoverishing drain upon mental and spiritual life. Meanwhile the Bible class, from which they were probably taken, is denuded of its most intelligent and thoughtful element, just when it was beginning to assert its power. The young Christian being gone from it, the leaving influence which made discussion profitable, and attention reverent, is taken away and the teacher is discouraged by seeing the results of his toil removed, when they would have proved a blessing to him and to those he tries to lead to decision for Christ. He is grieved just as a farmer would be if he saw his corn cut down that might be used as seed before it was really ripe, because some onlooker had seen its golden promise. In fine the too early removal of young Christians from the Bible class deprives the remaining members of a wholesome influence they specially want; it takes them away from an assistant service which might be well done, to attempt a more official work, which may for a time be ill done; it robs their teacher of his best help towards the preparation and delivery of the higher lessons he is willing to give, and it ultimately deprives the church of those who might by longer training have become leaders in the defence of the faith.

"But," urges some earnest superintendent, "what are we to do? If we give up the practice you reprobate, classes must go untaught, for we can find no other teachers than those who are in the Bible classes." It is painfully, shamefully true; but if the older teachers would not so lightly give up their service, and if the older members of our churches were faithful to their Lord, the

Bible classes need no longer be paralyzed, young Christians would no longer be asked for fruit when God only looks for blossoms, and our classes would no more be taught by those whose willingness is great, but whose capacity is of necessity small."

What happy results might not be expected to accrue to the entire working of the Sunday-school system if in every church the wisest, most established, and most "spiritually-minded" of the brotherhood, were to give themselves with full purpose of heart to the labours and pleasures of the teacher's office. In addition to the avoidance of the evils above enumerated, the presence and co-operation of these advanced Christians would inspire with confidence the hearts of more youthful workers; their standing in the Christian life would secure the reverence and attention of the scholars; their counsel in matters of difficulty—matters sometimes requiring the most prudent and skilful handling—would be invaluable.

And in what way could the older Christians in our churches hope to be more useful than by throwing a portion of their energies into a work which promises such vast results to the present and coming generations? What other field of labour can they enter upon with equal promise of reward? How can they more surely follow in the footsteps of their Lord, than by caring for those respecting whom He emphatically said to His selfish disciples: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"?

It is easy, of course, to make excuses; and there are undoubtedly many who can plead substantial excuses for not engaging in this work. The mother whose hands are filled with family cares; the sick and the aged, whose infirmities unfit them for labour; those whose daily toil is excessively arduous and exhausting, may fairly claim exemption from the responsibility we are endeavoring to fix. But when we have subtracted all these parties from the membership of our churches, there yet remains a numerous and influential class who cannot, we venture to think, excuse themselves from service in the Sunday-school, except for some such reason as they could not assign to their Master and Lord—to Him who seems to say to them, as they look upon the throngs which crowd our school-rooms, "Feed my lambs."

Are there not a goodly number of pious matrons, who have reared their families, and have thus acquired vast stores of experience in the management of the young, who have not as yet begun the work for which they are peculiarly qualified? Are there not persons of both sexes, unincumbered with the cares of a family, and in every other way free-handed, who might aspire to the high honor of

helping to train the rising generation for God? Are there not members in all our churches, who, if they were to devote themselves to the labours of the Sunday-school, would be far more useful than they have ever been since they set out upon the Christian course: for the simple reason that they have never yet undertaken any active, constant, methodical service in behalf of the Redeemer's Kingdom and glory? Their duty is plain; their opportunity is a grand one; their responsibility is great.

THE YEAR BOOK.

This important and very necessary publication has now been before the Denomination some three months; and we exceedingly regret to notice an amount of indifference among the Churches in taking it off the Committee's hands, that is neither creditable to their interest in the progress of the Redeemer's Kingdom nor their appreciation of the work that has been done for them by the painstaking brethren appointed by the Convention to compile and publish the annual.

We believe we are not far from correct in stating that out of 1500 copies printed not more than 600 Year Books have been disposed of—and that in a denominational constituency of 27,000 Church members.

What have our pastors, deacons and leading members of Churches got to say for their want of interest, nay, their positive lethargy in pushing the sale of what is on all hands admitted to be the best and most complete Year Book yet published in the interests of the Baptist Churches and Institutions of Ontario and Quebec?

No one who is fully alive to the interests of our Denomination, can afford to be without the Baptist Year Book for 1879.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

"THE WORK A BAPTIST S. S. CONVENTION SHOULD DO."—We call special attention to the paper on this subject in another part of this month's HELPER. We have deferred its publication to the present time in hope that its influence may be more beneficial, coming a month before—instead of a month after—our annual S. S. conventions in connection with the different Associational meetings.

TWO NEW EXCHANGES.—(1) *The Vermont Baptist*. We have received Nos. 1 and 2 of this new monthly, which is devoted to the interests of our denomination in the State named. We like it, and wish it abundant success. (2) *Our Church Home* is the local

organ of the Second Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo. The Pastor, W. W. Boyd, D.D. is Editor. The number before us is full of good things, calculated to be of spiritual benefit to its readers. *Our Church Home* has a welcome place on our exchange list.

THE BAPTIST REVIEW.—Just as we go to press No. 1 of this new quarterly has been sent us. We have not had time to read it; but from the Bill of Fare placed before us a rich treat is in store. The following are the contents: 1. *Our Knowledge of Infinites*, by Alvah Hovey, D. D.; 2. *Missionary Career of Jesus Christ*, by E. T. Winkler, D. D.; 3. *Augustus Tholock*, by H. S. Burrage; 4. *Religious Liberty under Roman, Gothic and Russian Law*, by G. W. Samson, D. D.; 5. *Swedenborg and his teachings*, by H. M. King, D. D.; 6. *Inspiration*, by G. W. Lasher, D. D.; 7. *John Wycliffe*, by C. E. Barrows; 8. *Progress of Biblical Scholarship* by J. O. B. Lowry; 9. *Dale's Theory of Baptism*, by H. Harvey, D. D.; 10. *Editorial*; 11. *Literary Notes*.

The Review is beautifully printed, contains 172 pages and is only \$2.50 a year, or in clubs of three or more \$2.00. It is published in Cincinnati, under the Editorship of Dr. J. R. Baumes. We shall be happy to forward any cash orders sent through us.

Communications.

ALEXANDER STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The twelfth annual meeting of the teachers and officers of this school was held on Monday evening, April 7th, the Superintendent, Mr. C. A. Morse, presiding.

FINANCES.

The report of the Treasurer, Mr. James Wright, referred to the introduction into the School in December last of the denominational scheme of Systematic Benevolence. The Treasurer acts as Superintendent of the scheme, and the teachers collect the money from their scholars. The amount received during the term of eighteen weeks under this system was \$69.50, which has been handed to the Secretary of the Convention, to be distributed as follows: Home Missions, \$34.70; Foreign Missions, \$22.43; Ministerial Education, \$12.37. The receipts represent an average of \$3.86 each Sunday, as against \$1.47 under the old system of plate collections. The money required for carrying on the School is received from the Church.

The plan of keeping the Library.

Mr. Thos. Bengough, Librarian, gave his first report. It described changes he had made in the manner of keeping trace of the books; and as the plan has proved very efficient, it may be well to give it here. Each scholar is provided with a box or compartment in the Library Post Office which stands near the entrance. Over this box the

scholar's number and name are written, each scholar being supplied also with a Library Card, bearing his name and number. On this card he marks the numbers of the books he wishes to read, and places the card in his box on his way into school. While the school is in session the Librarian withdraws this card—among others—takes down one of the books asked for, charges it to the scholar, places the card in the book, and deposits both in the box. The scholar, on leaving the school, withdraws the book. After reading it, he returns it and replaces it in the box with the card. This plan is simple, easy and efficient, there being no disturbance of the school exercises such as is created by the distribution of books in the classes. In charging the books given out, Shute's Library Record, published by Eben, Sauter, Boston, U. S., is used. By this Record can be shown how many times any book has been taken out, and also in whose possession any book is at any moment. Thus a perfect check is kept on all the books. It also prevents a scholar getting the same book more than once. The Record is made up entirely of figures, representing the numbers of the books, placed in perpendicular columns, each scholar having a column. The black figures run consecutively from 1 to 1,000. A few only are here given, as a specimen:

1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
30	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
40	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
50	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

When a book is taken out the light figure representing it is marked from right to left obliquely. If the book be No. 16, the figure 6, in the first line would be so marked. The black figures are not marked, but they are read before the ordinary figures. Book No. 505 would be indicated by marking the light figure 5 in the last line. At the head of each column is a calendar of the names of the months with the figures (as: January 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, to represent the several Sundays. The figure on the calendar representing the date is also marked when the book is taken out. When a book is returned it is credited by striking from right to left obliquely the figure representing it and the day it was taken.

The report mentions that 125 scholars use the Library, of whom no fewer than 30 belong to the Infant Class. It suggests that members of the Church who cannot attend the Sunday School be allowed the privileges of the Library, in order that it may be made more useful and kept pure; also that teachers should help the scholars in the selection of books.

The Work of the Year.

The Secretary, Mr. J. B. McArthur, presented the twelfth Annual Report showing the number of scholars on the roll to be: boys, 93, girls, 84, total 187; being an increase of 17 over last year. There have been 10 of the scholars baptized; 23 boys and 9 girls admitted to the school; 3 dismissed; and one Benj. D. Nudell, has died. 72 copies of the *British Workman* and 60 copies of *Morning Light* are taken. The Pastor, Rev. J. Denovan, has been present at 17 sessions, and on each occasion gave an address. The report refers to the resignation,

on account of frequent absence on business, of Deacon Lane, who served as Secretary for eleven years. On the 10th of March meetings for prayer and enquiry for the young were begun, and have been continued every Monday evening with marked success—some having found the way of life; while others are anxiously enquiring.

Election of Officers.

The election of officers for the year took place at and adjourned meeting on the 14th ult., resulting as follows: Superintendent, C. A. Morse; Assistant, A. Reeve; Secretary, J. B. McArthur, Treasurer, Jas. Wright; Librarian, Thos. Bengough; Assistants, E. W. Moyle, H. Dexter.

BROOK STREET MISSION SUNDAY SCHOOL.

A DOUBLE SURPRISE.

It is customary for the members of "Our Bible Class" to meet at each others homes for prayer and social intercourse. The teacher, Mr. W. E. Burford, having just entered into matrimonial alliance; and at the beginning of the year accepted the position of Railway Secretary (or Missionary) in connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, had desired that the first meeting of the year be at his new home. Accordingly on the evening of the 5th of February, eighteen of our members met at the teacher's residence 68 Lippincott Street. After the usual business, Mrs. Burford was asked to join us, when the following address was read:

MR. WILLIAM E. BURFORD,

Dear Sir and Brother,

Upon this the occasion of your leaving us as our teacher, to take up a larger, and we trust, a more useful sphere of labour in the Master's service; we, the undersigned members of your Bible Class of the Brook Street Baptist Mission, desire to give some token of our love to you, and our appreciation of your efforts as our teacher; and while doing so we would gratefully acknowledge the hand of God in guiding you amongst us.

We rejoice at the success which has attended your instructions, during the time you have laboured with us; when we remember that twenty six (26) have joined our much-loved denomination, and are now walking in the footsteps of our blessed Master.

It is pleasant to think of the unity and love which has characterized all our meetings; both of the Sabbath, and also the meetings which we held to talk of the best interests of the class. We have worked hand in hand for God's glory and the good of souls.

Many pleasant reminiscences come to our mind at this time, which we cannot now mention; but we now ask you to accept from us this pair of pictures and these two volumes upon the Old Testament, not according to their value, but as a slight token of our esteem for you.

And now, dear brother, we have to part with you as our teacher in the Sabbath School, yet we are glad that we still have the opportunity of receiving instructions from you; and we trust that "our Bible Class" at Shalesbury Hall will be as successful, yea, more successful than was the one at the Brook Street Mission.

To conclude, we pray, that God's richest blessings may ever attend you and your wife; that your life may be the "path of the just which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day"; and when the Master shall call you home, you may

have many, many gems in your crown of rejoicing which shall shine as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever."

The prayer of your old scholars.

(Signed by 15 names.)

Bro. Burford made a most earnest and touching reply.

On the evening of the 25th February the home of Mr. and Mrs. Burford was again taken possession of; This time it was to do honor to the lady of the house. Mrs. Burford has been for some years past the successful teacher of the Infant Class at the Mission. She has by her loving, thoughtful and gentle manner endeared herself to her pupils; and on that evening testimony was given to this fact in a short address which was presented to her, accompanied by a *souvenir* of the continued affection and love of those who had left her class to seek their places in the *older* classes of the Sabbath School. The little company broke up after having thoroughly enjoyed themselves, at an early hour. Why should we not have more of such meetings? They will cement teachers and scholars in love and friendship, and leave an influence that will be felt through life.

In regard to "Our Bible Class" it might be stated, that when it was known that Mr. Burford would not be able to conduct the class on Sabbath afternoons (as he should then be engaged at the Railway Meetings at the Union or Nipissing Station) and just as impossible to get him of a week evening owing to his multifarious duties, being loath to lose his instructions, and some of our number, taking into consideration the fact that Bro. Burford's discontinuing his teaching would cause a few to absent themselves from the Sunday School altogether, interviewed him as to Sabbath mornings, he was willing, and proceeded to hunt for a place of meeting. A room was found suitable for the purpose in the Y. M. C. A. building, and its use was kindly granted by the Association.

We are in no way separate from the "Mission" (although we do not meet there) as reference to a minute of our house-to-house meetings will show: "That the regular subscription on Sunday afternoon be continued (on our making our change) in the mornings; and the collection thus taken be finances of the class; and anything over its necessary expenditure (which is very light) be given to the Mission"—Carried by acclamation.

It is encouraging to notice that though our first meeting had only 11 present it has now increased just double viz., 22; and a steady increase is expected. We meet from 9.30 to 10.30. The first 15 minutes is occupied by what the teacher calls Normal Work, in which is endeavoured to study the chronology, names of the writers, compilers, etc., of the Books of the Bible; the character of the Book, evidences as to inspiration, etc. etc. Then the lesson for the day is taken up; when really "hearing and answering questions" is the order of the hour. Each session is opened and closed with prayer by the teacher or any one called upon by him; thus the young men make a beginning, and learn to take part in the social prayer-meetings of the Church.

Some of the Young Men, assisted by they are by this morning class, have taken classes

in the "Mission" or in the churches to which they belong, College St. and Parliament St. especially, two of our number occupying the position of Secretary and Librarian of the Mission Schools. "Our Bible Class" desire as young men to prepare for active work, and ask the prayers of all interested upon, both teachers and scholars to this end.

R. MCJ.

Practical Address.

THE WORK A BAPTIST PROVINCIAL SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION SHOULD DO.

BY PROF. J. MONTGOMERY, B. SC.

It has been said that we live in an age of conventions. There are social conventions, political conventions, religious conventions, scientific conventions, etc. Each department under these several heads has its convention also. It is certain, therefore, that conventions are fashionable. It would even seem that many people think that little or nothing can be done without them. We believe, however, that while, in some cases, men have gone to extremes in regard to this matter, there are good and sufficient reasons for conventions, and especially for the S. S. conventions. They undoubtedly have, and still do serve, an eminently useful purpose.

The Convention Idea.

Suppose that two superintendents of some backwoods village meet some day on the street, and proceed to exchange ideas about Sunday-school matters; and, for simplicity, let us suppose that each has twelve ideas about Sunday-school work. (I am afraid some workers do not have so many.) Superintendent No. 1 gives his twelve ideas. Superintendent No. 2 says: "Six of your ideas I had before, but six are new to me, and besides I have six ideas that are different from yours," which he proceeds to give. Superintendent No. 1 then says: "I have two difficulties in my school; the first I have overcome, the second I have not overcome. My difficulties are so and so. I overcame the first by such and such means." Superintendent No. 2 now says: "I have the same difficulties but I have not overcome the first. I now see how I may overcome it. The second difficulty I overcame in such a way." Each man has now six ideas that he did not have before, and each knows how to overcome a difficulty he could not overcome before. That is, they have had a little Sunday-school convention. They have exchanged ideas, they have learned how to overcome difficulties, they have both been encouraged, and have both had their enthusiasm increased. Now is this not what is done in most Sunday-school conventions, only on a larger scale? Exchange of ideas, removal of difficulties, encouragement, and enthusiasm are some of the main results. These results are reached by the discussion of subjects, the reading of papers, by teaching model classes, by blackboard exercises, by singing, etc. Now while this is exceedingly important in itself, and worth many times over the expense attending an annual meet-

ing, I do not think it constitutes the chief work of a provincial convention. Let us then inquire what the character of the work that should be expected of a regular Baptist Provincial S. S. Convention in Ontario,

OBJECTS.—1. Co-operation and Increased Interest.

I conceive the first object to be to devise some means of securing the co-operation, and of awakening the interest, and arousing the sympathy of, not a few local associations, but of all Sunday-school workers in the denomination in regard to the highest objects and best methods of procedure in Sunday-school operations. I do not believe these ends can be attained without some recognised head, without a common ground upon which all may stand, without our becoming better acquainted with each other and each other's work. All these requisites a Provincial Convention, if rightly managed, would supply. No associational convention could do this, simply because it would not be recognised as above any other associational convention; and that is what I intend to suggest any arbitrary subjection to be enforced, but I mean that a well managed Provincial Convention, by deserv- ing, and therefore commanding the respect of the denomination, would, in time, secure these ends.

2. Collection of Statistics.

The second object of the Provincial Convention I shall name, is the collecting of statistics. If statistics are worth anything, they ought to be used. In many cases they are merely collected, and are never used even in the place where collected. They are scarcely ever known outside of the association where collected. In some instances they are not preserved. Too frequently they are not adequately distributed, and too generally they are not available to Sabbath-school workers. What we want is some way of doing this work so that all Sunday-school workers of the denomination may know both in and out of these associational conventions what is being done. This can only be done by some recognised head, board, or committee. We need a man that can collect, compare, condense, tabulate, arrange, and send forth the facts in such a form and manner that they will attract attention and exert their legitimate influence.

3. Improved Methods.

The third object a Provincial Convention should aim at, comprises the preparation of the Sunday-school teacher for his duties. I do not think we can overrate the importance of this work. Without stopping to discuss the subject I may mention that other denominations are laying a great deal of stress upon it. Normal classes and teachers' institutes are everywhere in vogue. If we keep abreast of the times we must fit for this work. Fine Sunday-school rooms, blackboard exercises, maps and mottoes, charts and pictures, will have their influence; but the Sunday-school whose teachers know most about the Bible, and who know best how to teach it, who understand the most thoroughly its intricacies and feel most its power, is the Sunday-school that will do, after all, the most effective work for the Master. It is to give teachers these qualifications that the rightly managed normal class, or properly conducted teachers' institute aims at. We fit ourselves for other work; why not fit ourselves for the

all-important work of teaching God's Word? Local conventions may make provision for normal classes and teachers' institutes in their own associations, but they can do but little towards securing a general interest in such work. Local conventions cannot often avail themselves of the best talent. A Provincial Convention ought in time to arrange for normal class work and institutes throughout the whole Province; and further, it ought to command the best talent of the denomination, and arrange to give all of our Sunday-school workers the benefit of that talent.

4. Supervision of Publications.

A fourth object for the attention of the Provincial Convention is the various publications for Sunday-school purposes. We have heard something of the power of Sunday-school literature for good and for evil from Dr. Fyfe. It is certain that some sort of control over our Sabbath-school literature might be obtained without in any way abridging that freedom that all Baptists love. Good, and thoroughly reliable literature, literature that would teach truth and not error, that would cultivate the taste, not vitiate it, that would strengthen the mind, not weaken it, that would give faithful representations of life and duty and responsibility, and not distorted views of them, is what is wanted, and should be placed within the reach of all. I believe the Provincial Convention might have a committee that would give us the benefit of the best talent, taste and judgment of the denomination, to examine and recommend a list of books that would be worthy of a place in our Sunday-school libraries. There are many Sunday-schools that have no one really fit to select books or judge of the influence that books exert. Some Sunday-schools appoint committees to select books, but in most cases these committees are composed of young people of immature judgment and uncultivated taste, who have, in fact, little or no acquaintance with literature of any form. Now, such a committee as I have suggested ought to command the respect and confidence of all desiring books, and I have no doubt but that many would rejoice to have a well recommended list of Sunday-school books to select from. I am aware that such a plan would be attended with some difficulties, but I think they might all be surmounted. I am certain that all would not be satisfied with the selections, however good; I do not think, however, that these things would materially affect the good results that would flow from such a course. It is possible that music might receive some attention. It is certain that many Sunday-school hymns, while teaching nothing, nonsense or error, serve no other end than that can be conceived of. But on this topic I forbear. Music is a subject that requires such delicate handling, it is such dangerous ground to tread upon, and is pregnant with such an extraordinary amount of trouble, and is fraught with difficulties so intricate and incomprehensible, that I think my only safe course is to let it severely alone.

How a Provincial Convention may Secure these Ends.

These I conceive to be some of the objects to which a Provincial Convention should direct its attention. The time is nearly past when Sunday-school workers may meet and

*An address delivered at the Baptist S. S. Convention held in Aylmer, Ont., June 1878.

discuss threadbare subjects, compliment each other, and make nice little speeches that cost no effort and are therefore worth nothing after made. Some may think this is putting it too strongly; but downright, hard, earnest, practical work is what is needed now.

How are we to secure these objects by means of a Provincial Convention? may be asked. First, by appointing good workers, who can and will do a large amount of hard work in the interim of the meetings;—a Sunday-school Board, if you please, with full powers. Second, by meeting at the proper time and place. I am confident that no better time and no better place can be found than in connection with the Western Convention, and for several reasons. One is, that representatives from all of our Associations meet then, and must perforce know something about it work that is being done. Another reason is that the Provincial S. S. Convention would come to be recognized as a denominational affair by all of our people, and would therefore command greater respect. The effect upon others would be increased from the fact that those who are doing nothing would see others active, and thus be stimulated to activity also. The less favoured would learn and desire to imitate. Indeed there can be no doubt but that in various ways, and for many reasons, did it meet with the Western Convention, the S. S. Convention would exert a better and more extended influence than it can do meeting elsewhere. In this connection I would say that every possible effort should be made to secure a day or a part of a day at the Convention in Brantford, and thereafter in each annual meeting. Let the time be extended, if need be, and a portion of two weeks taken. The expense of holding the two Conventions, and the time spent in going and coming would be lessened, and a much larger attendance would be secured.

The last means I would mention, of promoting the objects of the S. S. Convention, is, not to expect too much, but expect to advance slowly, but surely; to endeavor to take steps in the right direction, even though they are not very frequently taken. All of this will involve much patience, much faith, and much prayer. I would say in conclusion that if our enterprise is a success, we must endeavor to create sentiment and to excite sympathy in its favor; we must strive to educate our people all up to it. Further, we must expect a certain amount of opposition, and be prepared to meet it. We must expect to do patient, earnest, hard work; and, most of all, and above all, must we expect our Master's blessing.

THE STOVE IN THE PULPIT.—The late excellent Bishop Gregg of Cork, who was very keen-witted, was being shown over a newly erected church by one of his clergy, who was a clear but cold and unimpassioned preacher. Discouraging upon the interior arrangements the latter remarked to the bishop "I cannot decide whereabouts to place the stove; can you suggest to me a suitable position for it?" The prompt answer of his diocesan conveyed a useful hint; he said, "Put it by all means in the pulpit; that is where it is most needed."

S. S. Lesson Department.

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

May 4.—The Suffering Saviour.—Isaiah

53 : 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Who *His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.*—1 Peter 2: 24.

INTRODUCTION.

After the historic interlude in the book of Isaiah, (ch. 36-39) there follows a portrayal of the deliverances God would work out for His people—first through Cyrus from their captivity in Babylon, and finally through the Messiah; that glorious redemption of which the former deliverance was but a symbol and a suggestion.

The exaltation and power of the Messiah have been dwelt upon in this portrayal, but we know not all the wonders of this Messiah, until we are told of His wonderful humiliation and suffering for our sakes. But the prophet well knows that few will believe the report that this humble and suffering One is that same Messiah, who will subdue the enemies of His people, and rule over the nations of the earth. And yet the words of this chapter can be applied only to Messiah. "It is certain that both ancient and modern Jews interpret this chapter of the Messiah."—*Dean Allox*. With regard to these two aspects of the Messiah's character, R. Payne Smith says: "The Jews could not understand this contradiction, and they divided the prophecies between two Messiahs. To one, the son of Joseph, they gave all those passages which speak of Christ's humiliation and rejection and death. To the other, the son of David, they applied all those which speak of His kingdom, and triumph and glory. In Jesus of Nazareth all these passages are combined in one harmonious yet unexpected solution."

Prophecy a preparation for Christ.—South says of the chapter forming our lesson "This chapter declares the circumstances of our Saviour's suffering so exactly that it seems rather a history of His passion than a prophecy. And it is so undeniable a proof of the truth of Christianity, that the bare reading of it and comparing it with the gospel history, hath converted some infidels."

EXPOSITION.

V. 1. Who hath believed. There were not many at first to receive the Gospel of a Saviour suffering for us. The world knew Him not, and His own received Him not. Yet, in the end, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many." Christ is the Arm of the Lord, strong for our salvation.

V. 2. For. This word introduces the reason why so few recognize the Messiah. They who looked for splendour and magnificence, could not see through the veil of His humility. Before Him, that is, before God. As a tender plant. A shoot or sucker springing up from an old, decayed stock. As a root out of a dry ground. "The idea here is, that the Messiah would spring from an ancient family decayed, but in whose root, so to speak, there would be life. . . . Even then, He would not be like a plant of vigorous growth, supplied with abundant rains, and growing in a rich and fertile soil, but He would be like the stunted growth of the sands of the desert. Can anything be more strikingly expressive of the actual appearance of the Redeemer, as compared with the expectations of the Jews."—*Barnes*. No form nor comeliness. There is no reference in this to the absence of personal beauty. It simply means

that He came humbly, without the insignia of royalty, with no hair on His brow, no magnificence in His surroundings, only the beauty of perfect holiness, which their sin-dimmed eyes could not perceive.

V. 3. He is despised and rejected.—that is, left alone, deserted by men. A man of sorrows. Sacred name, which has drawn many a stricken heart closer to Christ! He was a man of sorrows. 1st, Because He was sinless in a sinful world, and who can imagine the anguish a perfectly pure heart must experience, when placed in daily contact with the black and perverse badness of a sinful world. 2nd, He was a man of sorrows, because of His sympathy with the sorrows of others. "In all their afflictions He was afflicted;" He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. 3rd, The shadow of the cross lay along the pathway of His life. 4th, Men rejected Him. They gave Him insult, scorn, poverty, a crown of thorns, a death of shame and agony. This was their reward for His patience, His love, His self-sacrifice. Oh, how His heart must have pined for the ingratitude of men. We hid as it were our faces. Or, He hid His face. Probably the meaning is the same, whichever translation we take. We hid our faces from Him as hamed to own Him, or He hid His face, at all ways, when covered with confusion at such treatment of him.

V. 4. He hath borne our griefs. This is the explanation then, of His stricken and sorrowful appearance. It *our* sins, *our* sorrows that press upon Him. "Ye *we* did esteem Him stricken, &c. This is *our* view of it. We thought God regarded Him with disfavour, with anger, for some wrong done by Himself. We knew not that for us He suffered."

V. 5. But He was wounded for our transgressions. The word rendered *wound*, signifies *bruise, pierced through*. There may be reference to the actual piercing of the hands and feet of Christ. He was bruised, literally *crushed, broken to pieces*. The most terrible severity of suffering of body and mind, expressed by the words, "How the description of the agony endured by our Lord. The chastisement of our peace. "He took upon Himself the sufferings, which would secure the peace of those for whom he died—those which, if they could have been endured by themselves, would have secured their peace with God."

Barnes. By His stripes. The reference is to the marks made by blows or lashes, or in scourging. How literally this was fulfilled. "In the prediction, nothing is vague and general." It is in particular and minute, as He saw what was done, and the description is as minutely accurate as if He was describing what was actually occurring before His eyes."—*Barnes*. We are healed, Christ has not only taken upon Himself suffering due to our sin, but He has healed our spirits of the disease of sin. Its power is at once broken within us, and we shall soon be free from every trace of it.

V. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. Christ did not suffer without necessity. We had wandered from God, we were lost. Like sheep without a shepherd, we were the easy prey of the roaring lion. We had given up the Lord's way for our own way. It was necessary that one should come to seek and to save that which was lost. The Lord hath laid on Him, etc. The margin says: "hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him." "The sense is, that He was not overcome by His own sins, but that He encountered *ours*, as if they had been made to rich to meet Him and prosecute Him." That is, He suffered in *our stead*.—*Barnes*. "It is impossible to find stronger language to denote the fact that His sufferings were intended to make expiation for sin."—*Barnes*. The death of Christ was not simply "loyalty carried to the point of self-sacrifice." It was not merely simply to "set forth the spirit of self-sacrifice with an

energy never known before." It was the innocent one taking the place of the guilty one, and dying in his stead. From this death flowed pardon, and also purity for the sinner.

V. 7. He was oppressed, &c. He bore the heavy burdens laid upon Him uncomplainingly. No murmurings escaped His lips. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. In the midst of His agonies, He prayed for His murderers: He spoke comfort to the dying thief, He remembered His mother; but to complain or to revile, He opened not His mouth. "With all power at His disposal, yet as quiet and gentle as though He had no power."

V. 8. He was taken from prison and from judgment. Christ was a prisoner, though not in prison. There was a form of justice gone through. The prophecy is quite definite. Christ suffered under a judicial sentence, though an unrighteous one. Peloubet takes this to mean, "He was suddenly snatched away in haste, even from judgment or justice. They gave Him no fair trial." Who shall declare His generation. It is not certain what this means. Some refer it to His eternal existence; others to the indifference felt by the Jews at His untimely death. Barnes thinks the probable meaning is "He shall indeed be cut off out of the land of the living. But His name, His race shall not be extinct. Notwithstanding His generation, race, posterity, shall be so numerous, that no one shall be able to declare it." He was cut off. This denotes a violent death. The word translated *cut off* never refers to death from natural causes.

V. 9. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death. Most critics seem to think this means, that His grave was appointed (by His executors) with the malefactors, but yet it was in the grave of the rich, not of criminals, that His body lay. Some say, "Hengstenberg renders it, they appointed Him His grave with the wicked, (but He was with the rich in His death), although He had done, etc." How striking was the fulfilment of this, although He had done no wrong. Even Platte called Him "the just one, and could discover no fault in Him." "No, nor yet Herod, Luke 23: 14-15. Of what other dweller on the earth can it be said that there was no guile found in His mouth." Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

V. 10. But it pleased the Lord. It was not contrary to the Divine will; it was part of God's great plan that Christ should suffer. It pleased Him, because Christ willingly endured the suffering, to demonstrate the justice and mercy of God, and save an innumerable multitude of sinners. And this humiliation and suffering was to result in greater exaltation and glory. Philippians 2: 6-11. When thou shalt make, etc. The margin says, "When His soul shall make," and this reading is generally considered correct. An offering for sin. His death was not merely a martyr's death. It was a death of propitiation, Rom. 3: 25. It was for the remission of sins, that God might remain just while justifying sinners. He shall see His seed. To the Hebrew mind a large posterity was the greatest proof of God's favour, and to live to see one's descendants so multiplied, was an additional blessing. Though the Messiah was to be cut off suddenly, yet He should live again, His days would be prolonged and He would see the multitudes of His redeemed. The will of God would be triumphantly carried out under His administration.

V. 11. He shall see of the travail of His soul. He, "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." When the vast company of the faithful are gathered together in glory around the Redeemer, He will be satisfied with the fruit of His sorrows. This implies that a great multitude, a mighty, innumerable host shall be saved. The battalions

of sin shall be few and feeble, compared with the ranks of the army of the Lord. By His knowledge, that is, by the knowledge of Him, by knowing Him, and His work for us, we are justified. He shall bear their iniquities. Not that He became a sinner, but the *sin-bearer*, taking upon Himself the consequences of our sins.

V. 12. Therefore will I divide Him, etc. When the spoils are divided, He shall take rank with the mighty, the most valiant; to Him shall be given a rich and goodly portion. He hath poured out His soul. The life was thought to reside in the blood, and to flow out with it. As a reward for this sacrifice, He would inherit the world for His kingdom. Numbered with the transgressors. Christ was placed among criminals, as though Himself criminal. He made intercession, etc. This is the present work of the Messiah, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." "Not in the restricted sense of prayer for others, but in the wider one of meritorious and prevailing intercession."—Alexander.

REMARKS.

1. This prophecy was uttered 700 years before the birth of Christ. It is a very strong and evident proof of the *living* inspiration of Scripture.

2. It has been asked, in reference to the substitution of Christ, "Would not the offender see a more touching mercy in a free forgiveness, springing immediately from a parent's breast, than in this circuitous remission?" Those who have read Joseph Cook's lectures on the atonement, will perhaps remember an illustration which may serve as an answer to this. A teacher, of the name of Bronson Alcott, made a law in his school, that when any pupil broke a rule, the punishment should be borne by the teacher himself, as a substitute. At the first infraction of the rules, after the law was made, the offender was called before, and he placed in his hands. The teacher stood before the boy ready to receive the chastisement from him. The whole school looked on with profound interest. "Strike," said Alcott. The boy hesitated. Again the master told him to strike, but the boy stood, his face quivering with emotion, unwilling to lift the rod. The third time the master spoke, and at last the boy brought the rod down once on the master's hand, and then threw it away and burst into tears. The boy was a changed boy from that time. That scene was no more times repeated in the school, so powerful was the effect of it. Nothing else could have inspired the boys with so strong a determination to observe law and order. The master, they could see, would let no offence go unpunished, and though he could not *become the offender*, nor could the blame of wrong-doing be imputed to him, yet he bore the punishment due to their offences, and so upheld the honour of the law. His example, righteous and kind, affected both mind and heart, and before long the enthusiasm of right-doing, pervaded the whole school.

May 11.—The Saviour's Call.—Isaiah

55: 1-11

GOLDEN TEXT.

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink, John 7: 37."

INTRODUCTION.

The wonderful promise in the fifty-third chapter, of a Saviour who would redeem His people by His own sufferings, is followed by a consolatory address to the people of God. They shall enlarge their boundaries and be established in peace. At the close of the rich promises of the fifty-fourth chapter, we are told, "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord." The fifty-fifth chapter (our lesson) invites all men to enter into this

heritage. Of this delightful chapter, Barnes says: "There is not to be found in the Bible a chapter more replete with rich invitations, than this, nor perhaps is there anywhere to be found one so more exquisite beauty. . . . While this precious chapter remains in the book of God, no sinner need despair of salvation who is disposed to return to Him; no one can plead that he is too great a sinner to be saved."

EXPOSITION.

V. 1. Ho. A call to excite attention. Every one. Not only the rich, the great, the intelligent, the amiable, but *every one*. Is there no invitation? Only that which follows; that thirsteth. Every thirsty one then is invited to come to the waters. Thirst is an imperious sensation. Extreme hunger is said to be more easily endured than extreme thirst. A thirsty man looks everywhere for water to satisfy him. The agree then represents a great need, and a strong desire to satisfy that need. Every man is afflicted with this thirst until he drinks of the fountain of living waters. But often men try to satisfy themselves with other waters, which can never take away their thirst; just as mariners on a long voyage, when their stock of water runs out, might try to drink salt sea-water, but would find as the result, only a more intense, raging thirst consuming them. No man can find his soul satisfied, save with God. Come ye to the waters. God has made abundant provision for the thirsty ones. He has what will refresh every spirit. No matter what the great need of any soul, He can satisfy it. He that hath no money. No claim to this supply, no equivalent to give for, nor just as mariners on him but his thirst, nothing to encourage him come but that soothing invitation—*come come*. Come ye, buy and eat. The invitation is repeated. Buy, that is, get, procure. Yea, come ye. Again the invitation is repeated. How earnestly God offers us His salvation. Surely He desires us to possess it. Buy wine and milk. The simple wines of the East were regarded as wholesome and necessary articles of diet. Milk represents all necessary nourishment. The gospel cheers and nourishes the soul, and its blessings are given, not sold, to us.

V. 2. Wherefore do ye spend money, rather weigh money. See Gen. 23: 16; for that which is no bread. "For the no-bread," and your labour for that which satisfieth not. This is what the world is doing. Men spend busy, anxious, weary lives, and end them without having attained any thing which is worthy of an immortal spirit, and without having satisfied the hunger and thirst of their souls. The hungry soul repents, leaving its all behind it—friends, wealth, reputation, everything which it had sought to satisfy itself. God has so made man, that nothing but God Himself can fill his spirit. Man is not infinite, and yet he must needs possess the Infinite before he is content. How foolishly we are, leaving things which are mere means to an end, the end, these means. When a man attains them all, his heart says, "They are not bread, I hunger still." Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good. He who writes, knows that He can satisfy all who come with good. Fatness, in the Scripture, denoted the best and richest food. God will not merely give the bare necessities of spiritual growth. He is a bountiful giver, and has plenty for delight as well as for bare life.

V. 3. Incline your ear and come unto Me. We are by nature away from God, turned from Him. Hear, and your souls shall live. That is, hear and heed. Accept my invitation, come to Me. An everlasting covenant, a permanent relation between Himself and all that would come. He, undertaking to be their Saviour, protector, and benefactor. Even the sure mercies of

shall fall down before our Lord, ye, all nations shall serve Him. Instead of sending to one another angry challenges to battle, and bloodshed, the nations will invite and stimulate one another to the worship of God and to the acquisition of Godly knowledge. Let us go down. "It is up to goodness and heaven. It is up to sin and hell. But God's drawing upward is stronger than the natural inclination of fallen nature to go down. There is implied here also the principle that we must go with those we would invite to heaven. It is in vain for parent or teacher to say 'Go,' while he himself remains behind." *Pelotow.* He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. God is at all times willing to instruct us, but we are not always willing and ready to obey. That will be a glorious time when the policy of nations shall be, to find out the paths God has made, and to walk in them,—knowledge of God's will followed instantly and unvaryingly by obedience to that will. What a happy state of things that would be! and to such a state the nations will aspire in those days. For out of Zion. The prophet's words, Jerusalem was the centre from which the knowledge of Christ. The apostles began at Jerusalem. Barnes says that as Zion was the source of religious truth to the ancient world, so the Church is, and shall be, to the existing world.

V. 5. And He shall judge. Jehovah, the God of Jacob, by the Messiah, and shall rebuke. He shall judge, as an umpire, reproving the nations for their wicked passions and angry contentions. He shall settle all difficulties, and, as a result, they shall beat their swords into plough shares, etc. Barnes gives a quotation stating that the Syrian plough is of very light construction, and easily carried in one hand by a moderately strong man. "The ploughshare is a piece of iron, broad, but not large, which tips the end of the shaft, and much does resemble the short sword used by the ancient warriors, that it may, with very little trouble be converted into that deadly weapon, and when the work of destruction is over, reduced again to its former shape, and applied to the purposes of agriculture." Their spears into pruning hooks,—or sickles, or scythes. The word used may mean any of these. The figures use, here denote the return of settled peace after war. Such figures are often used by the prophets. In Joel 3: 10, we have the opposite figures denoting preparation for war. *Beat your plough shares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears. Nations shall not lift up.* A remarkable prediction of universal peace. This time has yet to come; but when the nations engage into the ways of the Lord, and walk in His paths, they shall find that all His paths are peace. War is a terrible monster, swallowing millions of victims, and consuming the riches that might have been spent in pouring blessings into every needy spot on the face of the earth. It is calculated that \$40,000,000 are expended every year by the great powers of Europe in simply maintaining their standing armies in times of peace. And this is merely to be ready to begin war, should it come. Who can estimate the good that might be done by this money, that shall be done by peace, when the Prince of Peace shall reign undisturbed Lord of all the earth. Here the parallelism with Isaiah ends.

V. 4. But they shall sit every one under their vine and under his fig tree. A proverbial expression to denote peace and prosperity. The fig tree with its spreading branches and large leaves affords a grateful shade. It is said that in Moorish court-yards the vine and fig tree are invariably found. None shall make them afraid. Each family shall then dwell securely, and the land shall be full of happy homes. And it will not be simply a fortunate day to be ended by any one of the thousand troubles that now shorten our peaceful moments, but it

shall be a time when the Lord of Hosts shall maintain peace, according to His own decree.

V. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god. This is not a prediction of the Messiah's times. It is rather a statement of the tenacity with which heathen nations adhere to their false gods. Israel had not been so steadfast to the true God. See Jer. 2: 11-13. But in that good day the people of God purpose to walk for ever and ever in the name of the true God. God is worthy to be taken for our eternal portion. Only when we thus choose Him does He truly give Himself to us.

V. 6. Her that halteth. "At that time the Lord will gather to himself the halting, i. e., the lame, the smitten, the scathed, and long-rejected remnant of His people, and He will make them a strong nation."—*Cowley.* P. See Ezek. 34: 17-17. Her that is driven out. "The Lord gathereth together the outcasts of Israel."—Isa. 14: 2. "They shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount of Jerusalem."—Isa. 27: 13. Her that I have afflicted. "Behold I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."—Jer. 32: 37-38.

V. 7. A remnant... A strong nation. The collecting of the enfeebled and dispersed Jewish captives from Babylon to Jerusalem, and their subsequent increase into a considerable remnant, and then into a strong nation, under the government of the Lord, formed but a faint shadow of the rapid increase of the Christian church amidst all her persecutions and afflictions in the first age after Christ; and this was only an earnest of the coming, pursuing, increasing, and prospering of the church which we wait for, when the kingdom of the Lord shall be conspicuously set up, the Jews shall be re-admitted into the church and restored to their own land, and the fulness of the Gentiles converted; and this reign of Christ shall continue till it is succeeded by the everlasting kingdom of God."—*Scott.*

V. 8. And thou, O tower of the flock. Lodges or towers were built in vineyards and sometimes in the fields for the shelter of those who were watching the vines or the flocks. The tower here is supposed to be the symbol of the house of David. Scott says, "Mount Zion was the tower of the Lord's flock under the old dispensation, the centre of their union, and the special residence of their Protector; and the temple in Jerusalem, the Church of Christ, the Shepherd and Ruler of His people came and there first He set up His Kingdom. . . . The Son of David would come to Jerusalem and establish His Kingdom, and thence its influence would extend to other nations. And though that city would soon after be destroyed, yet the evangelical church, the spiritual Zion, would succeed to it, in which Christ reigns for the benefit of His people; and His cause must prevail even to the end of the world."

REMARKS.

1. A soul at peace with God, in harmony with His divine will, loving all His ways, is a fit subject of the Prince of Peace. But a soul full of jealousies and bitterness, hating God's ways, and hating its own way, is a soul that must be changed and renewed before it can enter the Kingdom of God or find any happiness there.

2. When righteousness presides over the earth, happiness will prevail too. Goodness and happiness are indissolubly joined together. The children of men may and do find afflictions linked with His service here, but these are only the ebbs of the last wave of sorrow that shall ever

touch their spirits. The paths of righteousness lead straight to happiness, and, just as certainly, sin leads straight to sorrow.

3. The very things which are now used for the service of sin, shall be exalted into means of producing the happy state of things by-and-by. When our railroads and telegraphs and ships, when our statesmanship, our educational systems, our newspapers, are all employed in the service of God, what delightful results will follow, and they shall be so employed.

May 25.—The Holy Spirit Promised.—
Joel 2: 28, 32.

GOLDEN TEXT.

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Acts 1: 8.

JOEL AND HIS BOOK.

Nothing is known of Joel save what may be gathered from his book. He probably belonged to Judah, as he speaks only of persons and things in that kingdom, making no mention of Israel. As he does not refer to the Babylonian, Assyrian, or even Syrian invasion, he probably lived before the earliest of them. The date of his prophecy has been variously surmised, most commentators placing it as early as B. C. 800, some as early as B. C. 800; Isaiah 13: 6 appears to be a quotation from Joel 1: 15; Joel foretells a terrible plague of locusts, perhaps typical of the Chaldee invasion. He exhorts to prayer and repentance with promises of restored prosperity. He then goes on to predict the glorious times of the gospel dispensation and the judgments of God upon His enemies. Competent judges pronounce Joel's style to be very beautiful and exceedingly smooth and lucid, and combining in a remarkable degree the pathetic and the sublime. Read his wonderful description of the locusts, chapters 1 and 2, as a specimen of his style, and it will be seen that even in the translation, it retains great beauty and force. "There is not a more splendid piece of poetry extant." *Bishop Newcombe.*

EXPOSITION.

V. 28. And it shall come to pass afterward. Almost the whole of our lesson is quoted by Peter, Acts 2: 17-21 and applied by him to the occurrences in the midst of which he stood. The prophecy then began to be fulfilled, Peter says; and it shall come to pass in the last days. That is, in the last dispensation which had not long begun when he spoke. I will pour out. To pour out is to give freely, abundantly. My Spirit. The third person of the adorable Trinity. Christ had promised the Comforter, the Spirit to His people. We know that the people of God had not been without the Spirit until that day of Pentecost spoken of in Acts ii, but He was then poured out, as it were, upon them. A large measure of His influence was then communicated to them, and this influence was to continue with them, though not always conferring miraculous power. The general operation of the Spirit upon the heart is to convey to it all spiritual blessings. "Hence He renews the heart, John 3: 5, 6. He is the source of all proper feelings and principles in Christians, or He produces the Christian graces, Gal. 5: 22-25; Titus 3: 5-7. The spread and success of the gospel are attributed to Him, Isaiah 32: 15-16."—*Barnes.* Miraculous gifts are upon all flesh, all persons, or men, not Jews only, but Jews and Gentiles, and poor, masters and servants, all classes and conditions of men. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Women as well as men were to be qualified by the baptism of the Spirit for prophesying. They were also to say "come." They also are after their testimony to the excellence of God's salvation. This does not provide for the way of prophesying, whether

public or private, by the voice or by the pen. Of course we here understand *brothering* to mean the teaching of the things of God, not of necessary predictions. Your old men shall dream dreams. Probably this means that God would in some way reveal His will, as He had formerly revealed it. In olden times it was often by dreams. In the new dispensation the revelation was given. There are two instances of significant dreams in the New Testament—Joseph's dream in Matt. 2 and the dream of Pilate's wife Matt. 27: 19.

See visions. Another way of communicating the will of God. Visions occurred either during sleep or in the waking hours, and were distinct appearances presented to the soul by supernatural agency. We are not told of literal visions on the day of Pentecost; but visions did not cease until the full revelation of God's word was given forth. After that, they were superseded by the clear light of that word.

V. 29. Upon the servants. This seems to imply that the lowest classes of society would be rescued in the outpouring of the Spirit. This of course is true, but it is implied in Peter's rendering of the passage in Acts 2: 18. He says: "On my servants," that is, on the servants of God. The Septuagint and the Latin vulgate so render it. Upon God's servants and handmaids, in the last days, the Spirit would be richly bestowed. They would have in a great degree the means and the ability to tell the truths of God to the world.

V. 30. Wonders in the heavens and in the earth. The fulfilment of the prophecy in our lesson begins on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, but its complete fulfilment extends throughout the last days. The words of 30 and 31, seem to apply to the close of the dispensation. Some suppose they refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but, although that may be included, the prophecy seems to contain suggestions of mightier convulsions, and more terrible desolations. These convulsions may extend to the physical world, and even beyond our world, but we are sure that there will be fearful commotions in the political world. Blood and fire and pillars of smoke, all emblems of war and scenes that accompany it, the burning of cities and towns.

V. 31. According to Barnes. "The day of the Lord is the day when God shall manifest Himself in a peculiar manner; a day when He shall be so strikingly seen in His wonders and judgments, that it may be called *His day*. Thus it is applied to the day of judgment, as the *day of the Son of Man*, the day in which He will be the great attractive object and will be glorified. Phil. 1: 6; 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Pet. 3: 12." "The frightful carnage, sacking and burning of Jerusalem, but faintly illustrates that most awful day of the Lord, when the Lord Himself shall come to judge the world."—*Pierce*. We know that before the judgment day, there shall be perilous times on the earth. The powers of evil shall make their last grand rally, and the long struggle of ages between good and evil shall reach its awful climax. The sun shall be turned into darkness. It is not necessary to take this literally. The darkening or withdrawing of the sun is used in many passages as an emblem of calamity. Jer. 15: 9; Ezek. 32: 7; Amos 8: 9; Rev. 6: 12 etc. It sometimes represents the calamities of war, "when the smoke of burning cities rises to heaven and obscures the light."

And the moon into blood. The word *blood* here refers to that obscure sanguinary colour, which the moon has, when the atmosphere is filled with smoke and vapor, and especially the lurid and alarming appearance which it assumes when smoke and flames are thrown up, by earthquakes and fiery eruption. See Rev. 6: 12; 8: 8. The figures used are indicative of war, and conflagrations, and unusual prophecies of earthquakes.—*Barnes*. Before the judgment day these signs shall occur; Josephus assures us that such signs preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, a fiery

sword, and also comet, were seen suspended in the heavens above the devoted city for a year before its destruction. A marvellous light shone upon the temple in the night. The heavy gates which required the strength of twenty men to open them, suddenly opened of themselves, and a mysterious voice was heard saying, "Let us go hence." The Jews were in constant warfare for some time before the siege of 311ns. The Christians understood these tokens, and fled from the city to Albia, and so escaped the general destruction. We may expect solemn portents of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

V. 32. This verse comes in as a bright relief, — the dark predictions of the preceding verses. Even in the midst of the troublous times, in the last days at the end of time even then—

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered. Every one that hears this promise may find himself included in that wide *whosoever*. Whatever the trouble that may assail us, to call upon the Lord is to find ultimate deliverance. But alas for him who will not call upon the Lord! God's offer of deliverance is so good, so free, so easy to accept, that he who scorn it, deserves the fate his rejection brings. There is no promise of deliverance for him. This verse is quoted by Paul in Romans 10: 13, and is by him applied to Christ. We may be sure that Peter intended the same application of it. "In Joel," the word translated *Lord* is *Jehovah*, the incommunicable and peculiar name of God; and the use of the passage before us in the New Testament shows how the apostles regarded the Lord Jesus Christ; and proves that that he had no hesitation in applying to him the names and attributes which belong only to God.—*Barnes*. In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem. This was the place where our salvation was wrought out. From Jerusalem went forth to all quarters of the earth, the story of the *Redeemer*. In the remark, Peloubet says: "It means the first those who had the pity to return from their exile, and build up again Jerusalem, the temple, and its worship; who thus became the type of the true Israel of God." It extends to the called of God throughout the last time. They are God's agents to carry His offers of salvation to needy souls.

REMARKS.

1. The Christian has made preparation for every possible calamity by putting his trust in God. Even the terrors of the last days shall not move him from his strong foundation. But for what has the sinner prepared?

2. Where the Holy Spirit is richly bestowed, there is exalted and happy religious life. We should pray for the Spirit, and then not oppose His entrance into our hearts by cherishing sins. 3. Our common dreams have not the least prophetic character belonging to them. It is well to show young people this. Our dreams may indeed indicate the state of health, or habit of mind of the dreamer, but nothing more. If God should choose to reveal something important in a dream. He would also leave the dreamer in no doubt as to the prophetic intention of the dream. But such dreams scarcely occur at all in Gospel times.

PRIMARY LESSONS.

Prepared by Mrs. J. C. Yale.

May 4th.—The Suffering Saviour.—Lesson, Isaiah 53: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT.—1st Pet. 2: 24.

REMARKS.

For the *when, where, etc.*, of this lesson, teachers and scholars are referred to that of last Sabbath.

It is not likely that the time of the two chapters is quite the same; but as it is impossible to give to either a precise and certain date, the time of the former may be deemed sufficiently near for all practical purposes.

This prophecy, like that of the former lesson, is a prophecy of Christ; that, referring specially to His character and work; and this, to His humiliation and suffering. Both, a. c. of the nature of *vision*—that is, things in the distant future are treated as present; and actually transpiring. In that, reference is made to Christ as *God's servant*, *His elect*, *His beloved*; and also to Christ's life of beneficence and love. In this, we see Him despised and rejected, stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and finally cut off out of the land of the living. Had the prophet stood by His side through all the shame and sorrow of the closing scenes of our Lord's earthly existence, he could hardly have painted them in more vivid coloring, and this, too more than 700 years before those events transpired.

LESSON TALK.

In this lesson we are shown:

- 1st. How God, and how men regarded (still regard) Jesus.—Verse 2.
- 2nd. What Christ's enemies did to him.—Verses 3, 5, 7, 8, 9.
- 3rd. What His friends did to Him.—Verses 4, 5, 9.
- 4th. What His Father did to Him.—Verses 10, 6.
- 5th. How Jesus bore it all.—Verse 7.
- 6th. What His reward shall be.—Verses 10, 11, 12.

(The first verse (1) of this lesson, while it really affirms nothing, like many of our Lord's interrogatories, implies a great deal. The stupendous import of the *answer* may be inferred from the fact that no answer is attempted. *Who hath believed our (the prophets) report? Who? Very few comparatively.* The great mass of men are, and have always been unbelievers. *Arm of the Lord—Christ. Revealed—made known so as to be seen as He is. To whom? Only to such as are born again.*)

1ST. HOW GOD AND HOW MEN REGARDED

(STILL REGARD) JESUS.

(2.) In God's sight, He was (is) as a *tender plant*, very precious, greatly prized, the only one of the kind in the universe of God; Ezekiel 34: 29; Rev. 6: 12, 13. In man's sight, He was (is) as a *root out of a dry ground*—without form or comeliness. Every one knows how a root taken from every day ground looks unshapely, crooked, unattractive. Thus the Jews, and all men *naturally*, see no beauty in Christ or His words—do not desire His *arm* until God opens their eyes. *Then He is the chief among ten thousand, the ONE altogether!*

2ND. WHAT HIS ENEMIES DID TO HIM.

(3.) They *despised*—scorned, scoffed at Him. *Rejected*—thrust Him away from them.—Luke 19: 42; 20: 15—caused Him to be more than ever before a *man of sorrows* and acquainted with grief. *He was despised*—treated with extreme contempt. *How?* By being spit upon; struck in the face; smitten with the palms of men's hands; buffeted, that is, struck with clenched fists; mocked, ridiculed.

(5.) *His skin was numbered.* How? With the thorns, the nails, the spear. *Bruised.* How? With the rods with which He was scourged, and with cruel blows. He received *chastisement* (whipping) and *stripes*—marks left upon His flesh by the rods with which it was inflicted. Ps. 22: 17. *Opprobrium*—they did not show Him the justice afforded to the vilest criminals. *Afflicted*—grieved with false accusations and the basest ingratitude. *Brought to the slaughter*—that is, crucified.

(9.) *About His grave with the wicked; or as otherwise translated.* His grave was appointed with the wicked." According to Jewish custom His grave was to have been with the vilest crim-

nals; but God would not allow it. *They must not touch His dead body, not even to take it down from the cross.*

Who shall declare His generation?—or rather, "His manner of life?"—of those un-answered questions. Who? It was customary, we are told, when one was condemned to die, for a crier to proclaim before him as he went to execution, what he had done, and who his witnesses had been; and to call upon any one who might know anything that would go to prove him innocent, to come forward and speak in his behalf. The cruel Jews did not allow Jesus even this—*there was no one to speak in His favor* then; there are many now.

3RD. WHAT HIS FRIENDS DID TO HIM.

(3.) *W*—His friends, countrymen, disciples—hid our faces from Him—we esteemed Him not, some who believed in Jesus were afraid to defend Him; one of the twelve betrayed Him; one denied Him; they all forsook Him and fled!

(4.) *W* did esteem Him strikings, smitten of God, etc. They thought God was putting all this sorrow upon Jesus—and so He was—but they never once thought why. If they had thought that Jesus was bearing their griefs, and carrying their sorrows; that He was (5) being wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities; that the chastisement was for their peace, and the stripes for their healing; and that, their iniquities having been laid upon Him, He was dying under their punishment; I think they could hardly have lived for the grief they must have felt. But they knew it afterwards; and many times their hearts must have ached thinking how they had treated this tender and loving Saviour. One thing they did for Him (6) but it was after He was dead; they gave Him an honorable grave and a costly burial. What rich men fulfilled this part of the prophecy? John 19: 38, 39.

4TH. WHAT HIS FATHER DID TO HIM.

(6.) *The Lord hath laid upon Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.* (10.) *It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.* (11.) *He (the Father) hath put Him to grief.* How did God do it? By delivering Him into the hands of cruel men, and letting them to do Him just as they liked. Could God have prevented it? If He had had the will to do so, He could; but He had not the will. It pleased Him not to prevent it. Why? Not because He did not love Jesus; not because He loved to afflict Jesus—oh, no, no!—but because HE LOVED TO SAVE MEN. HOW DID GOD SAVE MEN? By making Jesus their sin-bearer, and punishing Him for the sins He bore—that is, instead of the sinner, Jesus must die or men must be lost; and so God made the soul (life) of His son an offering (sacrifice) for sin. "He who knew no sin, became sin for us."

5TH. HOW JESUS BORE IT ALL.

(7.) *As a lamb etc.*—meekly, patiently, unresistingly *As a sheep in the shearer's hands—dumb—that is uttering no protest, no reproach.* But had Jesus done nothing to deserve it all? No, nothing. (9.) *He hath put Him to grief.* He had done no harsh deed, spoken no unkind word, never been false or deceitful or selfish—no, not once! Why then did He not resist?—had He not the power? He had not the will to do so. His will and His Father's will were one. He came to save sinners; and His was the only way He could do it—that is, by laying down His life; John 10: 18. If He had saved Himself, He could not have saved you. Think of that, dear children.

6TH. WHAT HIS REWARD SHALL BE.

(10.) *He shall see His seed—*His saved, His purchased ones. How many? Rev. 7: 9. He shall prolong His days. That is, so far from being destroyed, as His enemies thought; He was going to rise from the dead and

live forever more; Rev. 1: 18. Here is a direct prophecy of Christ's resurrection. *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper etc.* That is, all that it shall please His Father to have done in this world, Jesus shall prosper in doing, or shall do so prosperously.

(11.) *He shall be satisfied.* It will take a great deal we may be sure to satisfy the Lord Jesus for having (12) poured out His soul unto death; for having been numbered with transgressors (thieves) who were carrying the sin of money; for having made intercession (prayers) for the transgressors; but no matter how much it takes, He is going to be satisfied! He will see Satan and Sin and Death all conquered; the earth redeemed from the curse; His people gathered into the "place" He has prepared for them; the kingdom given up to His Father; and then, but not till then, HE WILL BE SATISFIED!

May 11th.—The Saviour's Call.—Lesson,

Isaiah 55: 1-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.—John 7: 37.

REMARKS.

In regard to the time of this portion of Isaiah's prophecy, the most that can be said with any approach to certainty is, that it could not have been spoken much less than 700 years before Christ; and it may well fill us with amazement to hear the events of our Lord's life so minutely told, and the Gospel call so clearly proclaimed so long before He came in the flesh. We may learn from the Apostle Peter the amazing value of these writings to us; and how much importance we ought to attach to them when He, after telling us that they (the apostles) were eye and ear witnesses of Christ's power and glory, speaks of them as being a MORE SURE WORD of prophecy; thus placing them higher than the testimony of even the bodily senses, and telling us that we do well to take heed to them, "as to a light that shineth in a dark place." It will be noticed that the 5th verse is omitted from this study of the lesson. The words are manifestly addressed either to Christ or the Church, thus breaking the connection between the former and latter portions of the lesson. Hence, as the lesson is sufficiently long without it, it has been omitted.

LESSON TALK.

In this lesson we have:
1st. God inviting men.—Verse 1.
2d. God expostulating with men.—Verse 2.
3rd. God entreating men.—Verses 3-11.

1ST. THE FREE INVITATION.

(1.) *Ho, every one that thirsteth etc.* Thirst is a physical want, and water what it demands. But these words do not refer to bodily thirst or to literal water. The word *thirst* is here used figuratively, and signifies the craving of every human soul for happiness. *Water* is also used figuratively for that which will allay the soul's thirst. This water, then, is Christ, Jer. 2: 13; *For ye have said, We will not be moved from the waters—*to the Lord Jesus—the fountain of life; *Zechar. 13: 1. He that hath thirst, come.* If you had ever so much God would not have it from you in payment for salvation.

Buy—that is, receive it upon God's terms as a free gift. Rom. 6: 23. *Without price—that is, without price from you; but do not forget it cost God the life of His precious Son; it cost the Lord Jesus a life of sorrow and privation, and a death of anguish upon the cross. Is not that a costly gift? And yet all God asks of us is to accept it.*

2ND. AN EARNEST EXPOSTULATION.

(2.) *Wherefore (why) do ye spend money (time, strength, effort) for that which is not bread?*

Here again we must not understand bread for the body, but bread for the soul; and this, too, means Christ. O how full the whole Bible is of Christ, if we but get its true meaning! Read John 6: 35, 37.

Which satisfieth not. Nobody is ever satisfied till he has Christ. He may be pleased for a little while with earthly things, but he is never satisfied. King David had about as many things to please and gratify him as any man ever had, but he did not expect to be quite satisfied until when? See Psalm 17: 15. *Hearken—that is, listen; do not close your ears to God's call.* What Does God say? *Hearken diligently—*do not miss a single word! *Eat ye that which is good.* This is as much as to say: Now do not be like the foolish prodigal, trying to satisfy yourself with sinful pleasures (vice hooks), but *delight yourself in fatness—that is, in the rich soul-food God has provided for you in Jesus Christ.*

3RD. A GRACIOUS ENTREATY.

(3.) *Join your ear.* (Listen eagerly) and COME UNTO ME! We can almost seem to see God beckoning to us with His hands, and hear Him say, do come to me, your Father, your Friend, your Redeemer! I am not your enemy; they tell you falsely who say I am; do not believe such a false cruel thing. Come to me, and see how much I love you! *Come and I will make a covenant (agreement) with you.* What is this covenant which God offers to make with you? It is to give you the sure mercies of David (Christ)—that is, Acts 13: 37-34 resurrection from the dead, eternal life.

(4.) *Behold—*take notice. Of what? *I have given Him—*Whom? Jesus. For (in order to be a witness to the people—all people.) A witness is one who testifies to something. What did Jesus testify to? *That all men are lost—*Luke 15: 6, 24; *that He is willing to save them—*Luke 19: 10; *that He is able to save them—*John 10: 28; that He will save them—John 10: 9. But He was to be more than a witness; He was to be a Leader and Commander. A Leader—John 10: 3; Pa. 33; 4; a Commander—Joshua 5: 13; 15; Heb. 2: 10.

(6.) We have all gone astray from God. God tells us to return to Him; to seek Him; and not rest till we find Him and become reconciled to Him Matt. 6: 7-8. *While He may be found.* He will not always be found. He will not always call; Hosea 5: 6; John 7: 34. How important, then, to make haste and seek Him while He may be found—that is, while by His Holy Spirit He is near. *Call ye upon Him.* Why? Acts 2: 21.

(7.) What shall the wicked and the unrighteous man forsake? The first his ways—sinful practices. The second his thoughts.

Bad thoughts are the beginnings of bad ways—the little roots from which spring great poison weeds. *Let them return to the Lord.* For what? *Mercy and pardon.* Cannot they get them without returning to God—that is, without repenting and forsaking their sins? No. Luke 13: 3. Are they sure to get them if they do? Yes; *He will abundantly pardon—*He will multiply to pardon."

(9, 10.) Some people think they do not need pardon; some that God cannot pardon; and some that God will not pardon. Well, God says, *My thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways My ways—that is, I do not think like you, and you do not act like Me.* What is the distance between God's thoughts and ways and our own? Can we measure the distance? Now mark. We see the rain and the snow come down to the earth, but we never see them turn round and go back. They stay and do what God intends they shall. Just so it is with God's wonderful thoughts (promises and threatenings). Whatever He tells us He will do, that He is certain to do; no matter what people think about it.

(12, 13.) *Ye—*those who seek and find God—*shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace.*

God will lead them; and they will never again be afraid of His wrath, for they will know that Jesus has washed away all their sins in His own blood. The mountains and hills shall all seem smiling and full of pleasant music; and even the trees will seem to flutter their leaves in gladness; and by and by God will make this earth all new for them, more beautiful and glorious than ever it was before. Read 2nd Pet. 3: 13 and Rev. 21: 1-5.

The Saviour's Kingdom.

May 18. Lesson, Micah 4: 1-8. Golden Text, Micah 4: 2.

REMARKS.

Little is known of the prophet Micah except that he lived in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and was contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea, and Amos. He is called the Morashite, probably from the name of his native place. Nothing is known with certainty in regard to his death. There is an account that he died by violence, which is not unlikely.—See Acts 7: 52.

Some of his prophecies, such as 1: 6; 3: 12, and 5: 4, have had a most literal fulfillment; and this, though not positive proof of the literal fulfillment of those which point to a time yet future, undoubtedly furnish an argument in its favor.

The *when* and *where* of many of Isaiah's prophecies must apply very nearly to those of Micah; since those prophets lived and prophesied during the same period of time, and some of their utterances are either identical, or so nearly so, as to make it a matter of doubt to which of the two they originally belonged. The present lesson is a prophecy concerning Christ's kingdom; and a portion of it seems evidently to apply to a time yet in the future, when the Gospel triumphs will be complete, and Christ's kingdom shall be supreme in the world.

LESSON TALK.

In the last days,—the time subsequent to Christ's coming in human flesh; probably embracing the whole period of the Gospel dispensation. *It shall come to pass*,—the things the prophet is about to make known. These are—

- 1st. The establishment of Christ's kingdom. Verses 1, 2.
- 2nd. Effects immediate and remote. Verses 3, 4, 5.
- 3rd. The restoration of Israel. Verses 6, 7.
- 4th. The Kingdom everlasting. Verses 7, 8.

1ST. THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST.

(1, 2.) *The mountain of the Lord's house . . . in the top of the mountains . . . above the hills.* This language is in harmony with that of Daniel 2: 35—"the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole Earth." The plain sense seems to be, that Christ's kingdom will ultimately be highest,—the dominant or controlling one in the whole earth. *The people shall flow into it—many nations shall come.* This is a prophetic announcement of the ingathering of the Gentiles to the Church. *Shall say come*,—referring doubtless to the eagerness with which the Gentiles would receive the Gospel, and their readiness to help others to learn about Christ. *He—the God of Jacob will teach us of His ways, &c.* The Gentile nations were very ignorant of God's ways. They were all idolaters before they received the Gospel; but God taught them by His Spirit and through His word concerning His ways, and a very great number soon learned to walk in His path. *For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* This was literally fulfilled. The Gospel was first publicly preached at Jerusalem, (Zion), and thence went forth to the surrounding nations.

2ND. EFFECTS.

(3.) *He shall judge and rebuke.* Before Christ came, God revealed His will and authority, more especially to the Israelites; after that, His laws were sent forth to all men. Mark 16: 15. No one, since that time, who has had the Bible, could say I do not know Christ's law—I do not know my danger. God has ever since been *judging and rebuking* among men continually; and He will continue to do so in the future. *Strong nations afar off* (from Jerusalem), have learned His judgments, and felt His rebukes; and nations who have received the Gospel are sending it on to other nations, so that all men everywhere may learn of God and His laws. These are some of the immediate effects of the setting up of Christ's kingdom; now follow those that are remote,—that is, yet future.

(4.) *Every one shall beat their swords and their spears* (implements of warfare) *into plowshares and pruning-hooks* (implements of husbandry). *Nation shall not lift up a sword* (proclaim war) *against nation; neither shall they learn war* (military science) *any more.* *Every one shall sit under* (have sure and peaceful possession of) *his own vine and fig tree*, (sources of bodily nourishment), and none shall make him afraid. There will be nothing to fear; for Satan shall be bound.—Rev. 20: 3,—and men will be at peace with each other. See again verse 3. This prophecy is sure to be realized on the earth for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(5.) *For all people will*—that is, for a very long time—*walk every one in the name of his God.* The prophet foresees that idolatry would live long and die hard; but that it will surely die, read Zeph. 2: 11. *Wt* (God's own people) *will walk in the name of the Lord our God.* How long? A few years? Nay; but forever and ever!

3RD. RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

(6.) *In that day*,—that is, sometime during those last days.—*See Verse 1.—I will assemble her that halteth*, (walks limping),—that is, the Jews, at that time shifting frequently from the worship of God to the worship of idols, and back again to that of God when some vigorous ruler became their leader,—*and I will gather her that is driven out*—scattered abroad—that is, Israel, (the ten tribes), then but recently carried into captivity, (2nd Kings, 17: 6). *And her that I have afflicted*,—that is, the whole Israelitish nation.

(7.) *I will make her that halteth* (the Jews) *a remnant*,—that is, a remnant whom God would sometime call into the kingdom of His grace, *2nd Kings, 11: 5,—and her that was cast off a strong nation.* Ezekiel 37: 19-22, Rom. 11: 26.

4TH. AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

(7, 8.) *And the Lord shall reign over them.* Where? In mount Zion. How long? *From henceforth, EVEN FOREVER.* *And thou, O tower of the flock, &c.* Jerusalem, including the fortified hill, Zion, was literally the stronghold of the daughter (lineage, posterity) of Zion. *Unto thee shall it come, even the FIRST DOMINION.* The first dominion of Israel was a Divine Theocracy—God was King. This dominion ceased when Israel, tired of being a peculiar people, demanded a king from Samuel; thus rejecting God from ruling (in a secular sense) over them. Here it is plainly foretold that the Divine Theocracy (first dominion) shall be re-established. *The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Zion.*

The Holy Spirit Promised.

May 25. Lesson, Joel 2: 28-32. Golden Text, Acts 1: 8.

REMARKS.

The precise time in which Joel lived and prophesied has been the subject of much controversy.

However, a number of critics and commentators agree in placing it in the reign of Uzziah, and not far from 800 years before Christ. Of his history nothing certain is known. Judging from his writings his mission was to Judah; and it is likely he was one of the first, possibly the first, who was sent specially to her. The prophetic survey which he takes is a very large one, sweeping on from the near events referred to in the first chapter, condensing the history of centuries into a few glowing sentences, and scattering gleams of light along the pathway of the ages down to the very time of the end.

LESSON TALK.

It shall come to pass afterwards,—that is, after the judgments, the deliverances and the gracious blessings before spoken of—that *I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.* We need be in no doubt about the right interpretation of this prophecy; for the Apostle Peter, speaking under the power of the Holy Ghost, applied the whole scripture contained in this lesson, except the last clause of the 32nd verse, to the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.—See Acts 2: 16-21. This simplifies our lesson down to one topic, namely:—

THE PROPHECY VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF ITS FULFILLMENT.

(28.) *Upon all flesh*,—that is, upon some of all nations, or the representatives of all nations of the (then) known world. This will be seen by referring to the list of nationalities enumerated.—Acts 2: 9-11—where we learn that all heard, each in his own language, the tidings of the Gospel. *And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy* (teach). *This gift of teaching*, is one of the special gifts of the Holy Ghost, bestowed, in greater or less degree, upon all who are regenerated; and, unlike some other gifts of Apostolic times, has remained the same, and will remain through all time. Christians should see to it, then, that they be not guilty of burying their Lord's money.

Your old men shall dream dreams—your young men shall see visions. Dreams and visions were among the special mediums through which God revealed His will in the early history of the Church. But as the Church gained strength, these gradually became less frequent, and possibly, they are no longer given. Persons, however, who assert that they are no longer sent for the same purpose as at first, should be careful to know they are right.

(29.) *Also upon the servants and handmaids, &c.* The gift of the Spirit should be free to all ranks. Men and women of every grade, from the lowest to the highest, and even little children, might be partakers of this blessed GIFT; and through Him might touch others the precious lesson of salvation through Jesus Christ.

(30.) This prophecy is supposed by many to refer to the various signs and portents that are said to have occurred shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem; and before the Christian religion was firmly established in the Roman Empire.

(31.) *The darkening of the sun and the turning of the moon into blood* are supposed to refer to the often political and religious, of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and the great and terrible day of the Lord, to the taking of the city and the sacking of the temple. This may be true; yet these verses, when carefully compared with other scriptures, seem clearly to have a broader meaning, and to shadow forth events yet in the future. If this is true, their ever being satisfactorily explained, except in the light of their fulfillment, seems doubtful.

(32.) *Whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord.* Peter applied this prophetic promise to the time in which he was speaking; and in fulfillment of it, about 3000 persons were saved and added to the church.

For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall he deliverance. The Gospel was first preached in Zion (Jerusalem) by the chosen remnant whom Christ specially endowed for the great work of beginning and carrying forward His work; and a very great number on the very first day of its proclamation were delivered from the bondage of unbelief, and made new creatures in Him. So far, at least, we have before us a *literal* fulfilment of the prophet's words.

Dear children these prophecies are given to teach you many things which, if you study God's Word, you will understand better as you grow older; but this, at least, you can understand and remember; that God, who said such wonderful things would come, and after so many years showed He remembered all He had promised by making every bit of it come true, will surely remember and keep all His other promises and threatenings.

Now He has promised in this lesson that *whoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered*, (saved); but He asks you to call on Him to-day, for He wants to save you *at once*.

Oh, haste, and come away!

For swift the moments flee,
And Jesus soon may cease to say
"Come—come—come!"

Whose blessed hands to-day
Are kindly stretched to thee;
To-morrow He may turn away,
And no one then be left to say
"Come—come to Me!"

Denominational Intelligence.

Baptisms reported during the month:—Alvinston, 9; Barrie, 7; Beamsville, 8; Brantford, *First*, 37; Claremont, 21; Goble's Corners, 33; Guelph, 9; Kingston, 11; Mount Forest, 14; McGillivray, 4; Orillia, 5; Paris, 4; Port Rowan, 4; Toronto, *College-st.*, 6, *Tarvis-st.*, 4, *Parliament-st.*, 6; Windham, 21; Wingham, 7. There have been baptisms also at Arthur, Salford, Simcoe, Welland, and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Pastoral Changes:—Rev. W. MCGREGOR has resigned the charge of the Newry and Lislowel, and accepted that of the First and Second Onondaga churches. Rev. Geo. EVERSON has left Hillsburg for Emerson, Manitoba, having accepted a call from the church there. The vacancy at Hillsburg has been supplied by Rev. S. CUNNINGHAM. Rev. ELIJAH CHESNEY has resigned the pastorate of the Euphemis church and accepted a call from Petrolia. Rev. Geo. EVERSON, who arrived from Ontario in Victoria, B. C. on the 13th February, has been called by the church there, and furnished with a parsonage.—Rev. J. H. TRALE having resigned two weeks previously, and accepted a call to Oregon City.

Ordination.—On Friday, March 21st, Bro. C. A. COOK, a graduate of the Pastor's College, London, Eng., was ordained by a council convened at the request of the Kingston church, to the pastorate of which he had been elected.

Chapel Openings:—On Sunday, March 23rd, the splendid new chapel of the Olivet church, Montreal, was opened. Rev. R. S. McArthur, of Calvary church, New York, and Rev. Thos. Gales, assisted the pastor, by a council, Gordon, B. D., in the services. A dedication hymn, composed for the occasion, by Mrs. G. B. Muir, was sung at the close of the morning service. A Sunday-school service was held in the afternoon. On Monday evening there was a public platform meeting, at which several gentlemen spoke.

On the same day the new tabernacle at Brockville was dedicated. Rev. Dr. Castle conducted three services; the audiences being very large. On the following evening a social meeting was held, at which Sheriff Patrick presided. A tele-

gram of congratulation on the occasion was received from the friends in London, Ont. We hope to give a more extended account of the services in next issue,—accompanied, probably, with an illustration of the very handsome new edifice.

Miscellaneous.—Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery and their daughters, of London, have made Mrs. Dr. COOPER a life member of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, by the payment of \$25.

The church at Goble's Corners has extended a call to Bro. S. B. Bates to become their pastor.

Miss Minnie Fysh, the retiring organist of the York-st. church, London, has been presented with a handsome silver tea-set and an address.

Hon. Wm. McMaster gave a generous entertainment to the Young People's Association of Jarvis-st. church, on the evening of Good Friday. The company assembled in the S. S. Hall at 8 o'clock, and after spending an hour in the enjoyments of music, readings, recitations, &c., an adjournment to the church parlour for supper, took place. The tables having been successfully relieved of their burden, another hour was spent in most happy and appropriate speeches, by the pastor (Dr. Castle), Mr. D. E. Thomson (President of the Y. M. C. A.), Dr. Jenny K. Trout, Rev. S. B. Rand, Dr. Buchan, N. W. Speller, John Vorston, T. Dixon Craig, W. Elliot, Hon. Wm. McMaster, and others. After singing "Blest be the tie that binds" at the request of Bro. McMaster, and devotional exercises conducted by the pastor, the company separated.

KINGSTON BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The anniversary of this school was held on the evening of Good Friday. Tea was served to the scholars in the school room at 6.30, and a public meeting was afterwards held in the church. The pastor took the chair, and, after opening the meeting, called upon the Secretary to read the annual report. The report stated, that although there had been a number of removals from the school, others had come in, and the numbers stood about the same as last year. During the past two months the numbers attending have *steadily* increased from 70 to 90.

The Bible class, conducted by the pastor, has, since he came, grown until there are now 40 names on the roll, and almost every Sunday some new name is added. After the report was read, the Chairman gave a short address in which he exhorted both teachers and scholars to work earnestly during the present year, and strive to make progress in everything good.

The remainder of the evening was taken up with singing, recitations, &c., and a large audience was thus pleasantly entertained by the scholars of the school. The meeting has been pronounced a success, and we can only note one thing that lessened our enjoyment. Two days before we buried a dear boy who was a member of the Bible class. This rested as a cloud over our meeting, and we knew we could rejoice even in that, for we yet we had gone to be with Jesus, where he will sing sweeter songs and have greater joys than with any earth can give.—*Com.*

MOUNT FOREST.

Surprise and Presentation.

Some little time ago Bro. Wm. Pickard, for quite a while deacon of the Baptist church, and latterly Superintendent of the Sabbath School, in this village, through the general depression in business, was forced to make an assignment, and feeling his position very keenly he resigned charge of the

school. That he should feel it his duty so to do all regretted, but complied with his request and accepted his resignation. The scholars, as well as the adults, felt the loss the school sustained, and put their heads together and decided to show their esteem for him in some more tangible manner than words. Accordingly on Wednesday evening, March 12th, the scholars met at the church and after forming in procession proceeded to Dea. Pickard's residence and took possession of the premises. The scholars had a number of baskets with them, well filled with good things, which a few of the young ladies distributed in liberal quantities to all present. After those present had partaken of the many good things provided by God out of His abundant fulness, a pleasant season was spent in singing and conversation. During the singing of one hymn a couple of the scholars stepped towards Mr. Pickard and, when the hymn was sung, one of them read an appropriate address and the other handed him a well filled purse. Mr. P. briefly replied, thanking the scholars for the honor done him, and then offered prayer.

Vote of Confidence.

On the following Thursday evening, March 20th, the regular business meeting of the church was held, at which a vote of confidence was passed in the honesty and integrity of Mr. Pickard as a business man, and sympathizing with him in his difficulties. Mr. P. while in business he made many warm friends, and his failure was not only felt by the Baptists, but many outsiders as well. It is hoped he may soon be able to again start.

Baptism.

Our pastor, assisted by Bro. Alex. Best, has been blessed by God at Currie's Settlement, a preaching station about six miles southwest of this place. Thirteen candidates, and one other from Miller's Settlement, were immersed by Mr. Bosworth last Sunday evening after an appropriate sermon on baptism.

New Chapel.

For some time past it has been felt that something must soon be done by the Baptists in Mount Forest towards securing a larger and more convenient place of worship. Nothing further than talking was done until about six weeks ago, when notice of motion was given in church meeting by one of the members that at next business meeting he would move in the matter of a new chapel. On Tuesday evening last, quite a large number of the church members and congregation, from country as well as town, met in a social gathering in the chapel. After partaking of tea in the vestry, the friends convened in the auditorium to talk over matters affecting the Baptist cause here. The pastor took the chair, and had on the platform with him Bro. Alexander Best, student, and Deacons Strel, McDougall, and Stewart. Among other things talked over was the new edifice. The matter was taken up in right good earnest by those present and well ventilated. A committee was appointed to secure a site immediately, and another to secure estimates of different styles of buildings, with what they considered sufficient capacity for the cause in the soon-to-be town of Mount Forest. We look forward to a bright future for the cause of Christ here. Oh that in our strength we may not forget to show the childlike humility which God requires of His children!—*Com.*

DIED.

In Guelph, on April 1st, WILLIAM HENRY FYFFE, only son of H. C. STOVEL, *Confederate* Officer, Mount Forest.