

## The Christian Helper.

A BAPTIST MONTHLY JOURNAL.

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### OUR FUTURE.

The present number completes volume I. of THE CHRISTIAN HELPER. For its steadily growing circulation, the kind expressions of favour it has met with from many of its readers, and the good it has been able to accomplish we are devoutly thankful. We are particularly happy in the knowledge that the Sunday School Lesson Notes, carefully prepared for its columns, are becoming increasingly popular with those for whose special help they are intended. Not satisfied with present attainments we shall strive in the future to make the *Helper* more worthy of the high praise already bestowed upon it in this department.

Our arrangements for the general conduct of the paper are not yet completed; but we have very great satisfaction in announcing the Rev. JOSEPH D. KING, formerly editor, with the late Dr. Caldicott, of the *Canadian Baptist*, as one of the Editors of THE CHRISTIAN HELPER, commencing forthwith.

The purpose of the Journal will continue as in the past:—to stimulate to nobler aspirations, deeper piety, and intenser zeal for the cause of Christ.

As set forth in the first number, "*Our object* will be to further the cause of spiritual religion,—*our care* to avoid everything that may hinder it. *Our aim* will be to heal and to edify, not to hurt or destroy.

We hope to make our further announcements next month.

### SEED TIME.

How interesting is the present season! It is the season of preparation. The plough is doing its work. Man goeth forth to his labour. The farmer walks along with measured tread and casts his seed into the faithful bosom of the ground. The harrow follows and carefully covers in the precious grain.

This is the season of expectation. The farmer sows in hope. He casts his seed into the ground, not to be lost there, but that it may spring up and ripen, and bring forth much fruit. Calculating on the certainty of harvest, he spares not cost nor toil.

Youth is the seed time of life. To future years it bears the same relation that seed time does to harvest; it is the season of ardent hope—of preparation—of busy activity. Of what importance is it that this preparation should be for good, and that this activity should be rightly directed! What would be thought of the farmer who slept when he should sow, who should expect a crop without cultivation, or who should sow his ground with the seeds of thistles and thorns? Greater far is the folly of wasting the golden hours of youth in vanity or vice. Greater far is the misery and mischief of abandoning the mind to ignorance and leaving it to crop itself with sinful passions.

Life is the seed time of eternity. What men sow now they must reap hereafter. The crop that is gathered from the field is the same in kind as the seed committed to the ground. Sow wheat and you reap wheat. Sow noxious weeds and you shall have a harvest of them in return. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" "No: let them sow sin now, and they will, according to God's unerring law, reap misery throughout eternity." "Be not deceived God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Now is the Christian's seed time. Then let him sow now: sow plentifully; sow diligently; "sow beside all waters"; sow the seed of God's imperishable Word upon his own heart and the hearts of those around him; sow the graces of the Spirit and all those "good works" which he is bidden "be careful to maintain." "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand;" "and let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." The Christian "sower" has his harvest; and harvest indemnifies for all its preparatory cost. He reaps, even in this life: a sense of the Divine favour, a peaceful

conscience, a hope full of immortality, the joy of seeing sinners saved, the love and confidence of the friends of Jesus—are not these blessings infinitely to be preferred to the guilty gains and pleasures of the wicked? But the full return is reserved for heaven. There is the fulness of joy. There shall it be seen that in proportion to the seed is the harvest; and he that soweth plentifully shall reap also plentifully.

"Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

### THE "HEAD" AND THE "BODY."

"He is the head of the body the church." This is a favourite figure with the Apostle Paul when he seeks to illustrate and enforce the doctrines of Christ's supremacy in his relations with his people, and of the essential union subsisting between him and them. That it is a very appropriate and beautiful figure a moment's thought will serve to show. We have but to reflect upon what the head does in the natural body, to see that it fitly represents what the spiritual Head does for the "mystical body."

The head, first, directs. The brain, seated within that wonderful arch, the skull—which might be called the electric telegraph room of the body—is in communication, through the medium of those fine white wires, the nerves, with every part, and, as the organ of the mind, exercises a direct control over even the most distant extremity. So also the Lord Jesus has the entire direction of his church. The members of the spiritual body are in his hands, and when they act aright are guided by his wisdom. His will is their law. The church, as a whole, moves by the impulses which he imparts.

The head also nourishes. If the nerves are once severed, all below the part severed becomes dead, for the communication is stopped between the head and the members. And if the communication be-

tween Christ and a member of his church were to cease, that member would instantly become paralyzed or die. We have life only in our Head. If in the natural body the communication, though not stopped, becomes imperfect, nutrition and development are immediately impeded, and the vigour of health gives place to weakness and disease. The same is true concerning the church: for all the spiritual nourishment which the mystical body receives is as directly through its vital union with the Saviour, as the nourishment of the natural body is through its living connection with the brain. The feeble Christian is he who does not abide in Christ.

Another important point. The head unites the members with one another. The hand and the wrist are next door neighbours, but, near as they are, it is only through the head that they sympathize. Were the nerves separated they would have just as much sympathy as two corpses laid in the same room. In like manner one hand holds fellowship with the other at the opposite side of the body; and by their relations with the head there is fellowship between all the members however remote from each other they may be, and however different the purposes they serve. Such also is the union of "the members of Christ." It is not mere neighbourhood that unites the nearest of them. Men may live next door to each other—especially in a large town or city—and know nothing whatever of each other's heart and life; they may be as indifferent to each other as the most absolute strangers. But believers are all "one in Christ," and by virtue of their union with him there is fellowship both between them that are far off and them that are near.

Let us notice one other point. We have said that the head nourishes; and, it is worthy of remark, that every part of our natural body is being continually added to—while in health. The daily waste is made up by the addition of fresh particles. The food we take is assimilated, and becomes part of ourselves: its different elements are carried into the blood, and this "stream of life" lands and deposits each cargo of supplies at the wharves along the shore. The very hub at the root of the

hair is fed, and without that nourishment it would not grow. "Now these supplies could not be furnished unless the head were united to the members; but it is by each member of the body receiving its supply, and doing its work, that the body thrives.

The supply is received in order that the work may be done; and as the work could not be done except the supply were received, so neither will the supply be given if the work be not done. All parts have not indeed the same office in the natural body, but each has its own allotted function, and the body will be healthy or not in proportion as each part does, or fails to do, its own work. So it is in Christ's body—the church. "The whole body," says the Apostle, "fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body." Every member has its own place in the body, and its own work in that place. When God endues any individual with the *graces* of the Spirit, it is not for his good only, but also for the well being of the body to which he belongs. And when he bestows the *gifts* of the Spirit it is not for the private uses of the recipient merely, but rather to serve as so many offices of love, and so many opportunities of profiting the church of Christ. The well-being of "the body" largely depends upon the consecration and fidelity of the members, in the cultivation and employment of their gifts and graces; and these, again, will flourish and abound as a close and living union is maintained with him who is our Head. The relation of each believer, therefore, to Christ and His church is one of great privilege, but of correspondingly great responsibility.

#### II. CHAPEL FOR BARRIE.

The Baptist church in the important and thriving town of Barrie is one of the youngest, as well as one of the most zealous, enterprising, and united in our Denomination. Very few churches, in so short a time, have been blessed with such rapid and solid growth in membership and influence.

It is not yet two years since the Toronto Association, at its annual meeting in

Orillia, bemoaning the desolation existing in the northern section of its limits, passed the following resolution:

"That the Association respectfully recommend to the Baptist Missionary Convention of Ontario to send a suitable man to work principally in Barrie, entirely independent of Baptist influence there, and to support him liberally for twelve months, and we pledge ourselves to give our active sympathy and pecuniary support to this cause."

We believe that never did brethren more earnestly plead with God for a blessing than on the occasion of the adoption of that resolution. A committee was appointed to look after the matter, who never lost sight of their responsibility; and in due time, with the Divine blessing and the liberal aid of the Convention, one who seemed eminently qualified for the field was found in the person of Rev. H. F. Griffin. Having accepted the appointment, he at once removed his family from Port Burwell to Barrie, and threw himself soul and body into the work of resuscitating the Baptist interest there. Gathering about him the few Baptists who exhibited any signs of spiritual life at all, they set to work, looking to the great Head of the Church for strength to toil, and courage to endure in the task that lay before them. A small but convenient hall was rented and furnished, with the assistance of kind friends. Lord's day congregations, which at first numbered scarcely more than a dozen, rapidly increased to seventy or eighty; and the little prayer-meeting of three persons soon grew to eight times that number. On the 22nd of February 1877, the brethren united together as a church of Christ, and the same day were publicly recognized as a sister Baptist church by a Council of brethren from most of the churches of the Toronto Association. From that day the progress of the Barrie Baptist church has been most marked; and it has altogether outgrown the accommodation furnished by the little Orange Hall.

There are, we believe, no wealthy men in the Barrie church; and yet its members have exhibited a liberality and self-denial both for the support of the gospel at home, and on behalf of outside work in connection with the Convention, that ought to shame many older and more wealthy churches. When a special appeal was made in aid of the Convention a year ago that church gave at the rate of

\$1. per member responding *literally* to the appeal, and showing the highest average for the special contribution."—(President's address, *Year Book*, 1878, page 13.)

But the Barrie church is in urgent need of a chapel. The plans have been prepared, and submitted to the careful scrutiny of the committee appointed by the Convention Board at its January meeting. That committee, (consisting of Revs. Dr. Castle and Joseph D. King, and the President of the Convention) have published their report in printed circular, and in the columns of the *Baptist*. From their circular we make the following extract:

"The said special committee now beg to state that they have carefully considered the plans of the Barrie Building Committee, and do most heartily "approve" and "endorse" them. They bespeak for the pastor, Rev. H. F. Griffin, a cordial reception and liberal response to his appeal for aid wherever he may go in quest of funds to supplement the self-denying contributions of his own people.

In the opinion of the committee the church edifice, which it is proposed to erect in the important and growing town of Barrie, will be unique, commodious and comparatively inexpensive, a credit to the denomination, and just what is needed to meet the requirements of the church present and prospective."

We need only say that pastor Griffin is at present canvassing the churches in behalf of this worthy object, and we trust he will meet that liberal response which the cause so justly merits.

#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

**SHOWERS OF BLESSING.**—A reference to the register of baptisms reported for the month on page 143 of the present issue, indicates the very gratifying fact that in 37 churches in Ontario and Quebec upwards of 230 converts have made profession of their repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly God is blessing Zion! A time of refreshing is also being experienced among our churches in the Maritime Provinces.

**THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN QUEBEC.**—In a recent note from our respected friend and brother, Rev. A. H. Munro, he says: "I enjoyed greatly my visit to Quebec. The little Baptist church there has but 60 members, but at a bazaar it raised the almost incredible sum of \$7800. Bro. Marsh (the venerable pastor) is very much beloved by all who know him. He merits the regard he receives: for he is just the Apostle John in the flesh."

**PERSONAL.**—Rev. A. H. Munro, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Montreal, is away at Atlanta, Georgia, representing the Montreal S. S. Union at the Great International Sunday School Convention at present in session there. Bro. Munro is being very much encouraged in his Montreal pastorate by tokens of Divine favour in the conversion of souls and increasingly large congregations.

**BINDING.**—We propose to print a limited number of the Title-page and Index to Vol. I of the HELPER, for the use of those who intend to have their numbers bound. Will all our subscribers who wish a copy send us their name and address as early as possible? Of course the Title-page will be furnished by us *gratis*.

Any Subscribers entrusting us with the binding of their *Helper*, will have it attended to with neatness and economy. Back numbers may be had.

**THE WOODSTOCK MEETINGS.**—This is Convention week at Woodstock. On Monday and Tuesday the Theological students of the Institute undergo their public *oral* examinations; and on Tuesday evening the graduating class deliver their valedictory addresses and receive the parting charge of the Principal, in the College Hall. These exercises are always interesting and well attended. On Wednesday at 8 o'clock in the morning the semi-annual meeting of the Trustees of the Institute takes place. The Trustees are of course early risers, and, like the early bird, we hope they may get the kind of worm they want. The remainder of the day on Wednesday from 11 o'clock will be occupied with the semi-annual meeting of the Home Mission Board. The present financial position of the Convention and other very important matters will occupy attention, and require very serious and prayerful consideration. When God is so abundantly blessing with *spiritual* increase many of our mission churches, we trust that those who have received bountifully His *material* blessings, will prove faithful to the Convention in its hour of need. On Thursday at nine a.m. the Foreign Mission Board holds its meeting, when business of equal importance will no doubt come before the members. We have reason to hope that at this meet-

ing a thorough and hearty understanding between the Board and the Woman's Foreign Mission Society will be arrived at.

We trust that brethren and sisters all over the Province will, in their petitions at the Throne of Grace, earnestly remember these very important Denominational Councils.

### Contributed Articles.

#### OUR FOREIGN MISSION AND OUR LADIES' CIRCLES.

In the CHRISTIAN HELPER for February, Bro. Timpany writes:

"Foreign Missions cover *all* the objects for which we have many societies at home. Supporters of the different home societies forget this fact when they compare a *very* one of these societies, and the income thereof with our Foreign Mission Society and its income."

We most heartily endorse this part of his article; and because Foreign Mission work includes so many objects therefore we have *one general* Foreign Mission *Fund* on which we ask our Missionaries to draw for *all* the objects Bro. Timpany names. Bro. McLaurin's estimate as passed by the Board for the current year includes, not less than twelve different objects. These annual estimates include everything—women's work and all—for which funds are required for the year therein named. From this it will be seen how important it is to the future success of our work to educate our churches and friends of the Mission to sustain the *general fund* and not, as a rule, to designate their gifts to any specific object, but to leave it to the good sense of our Missionaries on the ground to apply it to what may be most pressing as the money comes to their hand from our Treasurer.

As inquiries have been frequently made of late as to the relation which the Ladies' Societies sustain to the General Society, I propose to state the case as I understand it.

1. According to the Constitution of the Ladies' Societies they are *strictly independent*, as the following articles show, viz:

1. The object of this Society shall be the evangelization of the women of heathendom by (a) the employment of native agencies for this work; (b) aid to lady missionaries married or single; (c) provision for suitable means for work.

11. Missionaries shall be at full liberty to write to circles, and obtain help from them, and circles shall be at liberty to designate their funds specifically.

111. Funds not designated specifically shall be forwarded as the society may deem best to the lady missionaries, who may divide and use them as they think proper.

These articles are part of the constitution of the Ladies' Missionary Society of Ontario, and from these it appears that their constitution does not make them auxiliaries of the General Society, but quite independent, giving them the power to exercise all the functions of distinct Foreign Mission Societies. Surely this was intended neither by Bro. Timpany who gave the constitution, nor by the Societies who adopted it. If not intended the constitution should be changed; if intended the General Society ought to know it, as this would certainly divert thousands of dollars from finding their way into the *general fund*, Bro. Timpany and Sister Phoebe to the contrary notwithstanding.

2. The members of the General Board so far as I know *deeply regret* the wording of the constitution, and feel that they cannot recommend the formation of circles in our churches until the constitution be so altered as to make the Ladies' Societies, auxiliaries of the General Society.

3. The assertion frequently made that the General Board is opposed to "circles" is *misleading*, because the Board is *not* opposed to circles as such, but *only* to circles as *now constituted*. It is quite evident that the General Board should have a voice in the final ordering of the funds, if we are to prosecute the work harmoniously and successfully. Bro. Timpany, I think, admitted this before the Board in Toronto, and Bro. McLaurin is fully of the same opinion, as the following extract from one of his letters of August 15th, 1877, shows. Writing to me on the subject of Ladies' Societies he says, "I think that so long as they work in connection with and under the direction of the Board that they will do *good* in spreading information and fanning zeal, but should they feel that they have a *separate* vocation, such as *school work* or *zenana work* or girls' schools, or anything distinct and separate, then I think that the real gain will be small. Schools, zenanas and everything else ought to be subordinated to the work of preaching the gospel." Bro. McLaurin could not make use of language which would more fully express the mind of the Board than the above does.

4. It would be very wrong to close this article without stating the *fact* that the Ladies' Societies both East and West have so far taken up work of which the General Board either has already approved, or of which, I am satisfied, it can approve, but suppose they had seen fit to do *otherwise*, we could say nothing against it, for their constitution does not require them to do anything, for or in connection with the General Society.

5. Could not a joint committee composed

of so many members from each of the societies, be appointed to amend the constitution? Then at the annual meetings of the societies let it be adopted, thus bringing the matter to a final settlement satisfactory to all parties concerned.

JAMES COUTTS,

Home Secretary.

Collingwood, March 8th, 1878.

#### NEARING ETERNITY.

Reader, have you ever listened to that heart as it throbbed within you, and never thought it had one throb less to beat? Have you never reflected, as you have admired the glory of a bright May day, that some morning you would be blind to all the beauty of nature; that your eyes would soon be closed in death's deep slumber, to open only in the morning of eternity? Have you ever stood by the death-bed of a beloved brother, amid a group of sorrowing friends, or followed all that was mortal of one who seemed dearer than life itself, sadly to the grave, without reflecting that you, too, soon would be on a dying bed; that you, too, would be shortly borne to that cold dark tomb? Have you never paused in the maddest, merriest whirl of this world's maze, to reflect that eternity is near? Have you never paused in the highest, brightest flight of earth's gay pleasure, to reflect that death is as certain as the morning sun? As you have watched the leaves fall one by one of an autumn day, has the thought never occurred to you, that in like manner, we are dropping one by one into the embrace of death? Yes, we are all nearing eternity; "our hearts like muffled drums are beating funeral marches to the grave." The fragile plant of life often droops ere the friendly rays of light have called its colors into bloom.

"Hope's gayest wreaths are made of earthly flowers,  
Things that are made to fade and fade away  
Ere they have blossomed for a few short hours."

Alike with nature's fairest flowers, our fondest fancies, our grandest monuments, must pass away, must perish and decay. It may or may not be that we are born for fame and place high in state; we may or may not be destined for a life freighted with sorrow, or for a life overcrowded with joy, but certain it is we are born to die. Each day finds us one day's march nearer the bar of that great assize, when we shall have to appear before the judgment seat of God. Nothing is so uncertain as life, nothing is so certain as death. You know it well, the unnumbered hosts that have passed on before bear it witness. You have seen death snatch its victims from every quarter, from every class, as well the light-hearted youth, in all

the buoyancy and hope of life's spring-time, as the one whose locks have been silvered by the autumn of increasing years. You have seen the departure of the faithful Christian in all the calm resignation of religious hope, with his faith firmly fixed on Christ; and you have seen the impatient unbeliever racked with mental anguish in all his dread uncertainties, hope in the present stifled in death, and no hope in the future.

Would you seek another path? You cannot find it? Every path leads to death and eternity. How trivial seem all the great things we have striven so hard for in this world, when we are on the verge of eternity! They all sink into nothingness when we hear the waves of that deep unfathomed sea breaking on the nearer shore. You know not how soon the silver thread of this life may be severed; you know not how soon the dread summons may be at your door. Should we then glide carelessly down the river of this life, flowing with its enjoyments, and ebbing with its disappointments, refreshed with the sweet-scented zephyrs of worldly pleasure, and driven hither and thither with the varying kinds of appetite and passion, only to shipwreck in eternity? Surely it is better nobly to stem the torrent with the banner of the Cross overhead, and with Christ as our pilot seek the strait and narrow course, buffeting awhile the petty storms of this existence, safely to anchor in the haven of eternal life.

#### EARLY MEMORIES.

CONTINUED.

Among the rather numerous company that lined the bank of the little river I observed one whom I knew to be a member and a deacon of the little Baptist church before mentioned. I was very anxious to speak to him, or rather, that he should speak to me, for then at the age of seventeen I was timid and bashful, and I had had no acquaintance with the good deacon. As we were returning from the stream I managed to cross his path when he very kindly greeted me, and observed that he had expected to see me among the candidates. I replied that I was convinced of the duty of baptism, and that I had nearly made up my mind to go forward on this occasion, but upon hearing Elder M. express himself so strongly against immersion, which in spite of myself appeared to me to be the *only* form known to the New Testament, I thought I would rather not receive it at his hands, but wait till I could meet with a minister who believed as I did, that it might be an act of mutual faith in him and me. After some further pleasant conversation, coming to where our roads parted, he invited me to attend their *Covenant Meeting* on a subsequent Saturday, which I promised to do.

Accordingly on the day fixed I set off

alone to attend a Baptist meeting for the first time in my life. For a mile and a-half after leaving the settlement in which I lived, my way led through a dark pine wood. The gigantic pine trees, 150 feet high, and some of them three or four feet in diameter, interlocked their branches overhead and nearly excluded the light. The road was a mere path from which the sapplings and underbrush had been cleared away to the width of 10 or 12 feet; sections had been cut out of the trunks of the fallen trees to the same extent, when they lay across the path, and the sections rolled aside, so that a wagon could barely pass. The primitive road-makers were not careful to follow the direct line, or allowance for road made in Governor Simcoe's survey, but frequently deviated from it, to the right or left, either to pass around a cluster of great pines growing too close together to allow of a passage between them, or to avoid wet or soft ground. After getting through the pines, I passed the log houses of four comparatively recent settlers, each of which had a few acres of clearing around them, when I came to the place of meeting. It was a new school-house, set down exactly in the angle of a field or clearing containing perhaps 8 or 10 acres which had been recently blocked out of the dense forest. On the two sides the tall trees, growing thickly together, approached within a few yards of the walls. The building had been constructed in a much better style than the average log school-house of the period. It had been erected since the formation of the church, and chiefly at the expense, or rather with the hands of its members, and had from the first been intended to serve equally as a church and school-house. The logs had been carefully selected, of pine of equal size, clear and straight. These had been carefully laid up and hewn down on the inside, i. e., after the logs were in place the inner surface had been flattened so as to make a smooth straight wall both vertically and laterally. The floor was of good, well jointed, but undressed planks, well nailed down. The ceiling was of dressed boards laid above the joists, which (the joists) were pine logs, nicely hewn four square. The fire place was of the primitive kind then usually seen, consisting of a straight stone wall, about eight feet long, and surmounted with the stick chimney. The furniture consisted of a few rough benches, a long writing desk fixed against the wall across one of the sides, a small pine table and a couple of chairs. The place was well lighted, and perfectly clean; the great open fire-place being lined with a profusion of cedar boughs.

I found the little church assembled when I arrived. The number was small,—under twenty; and now, calling up their names in memory, I find all have gone home except one, and what is a pleasing reflection, all continue to "witness a good profession" through their whole lives. The survivor of that company was then a young English girl; she was shortly afterwards married to a deacon of a neighboring church and for forty years she faithfully discharged the duties of wife and mother, (to another woman's children, she had none of her own) and now having survived her husband and being freed from family cares, she pursues her Master's work with all the zeal and fervor of a first love. Known to all the poor, and knowing all the sick and the unfortunate over her wide district, her

gentle ministrations bring peace and hope to many a wounded heart. She is *Grandma* to every body.

But to return to the Covenant Meeting. Shortly after my arrival the services commenced and were conducted on this wise: There being no Elder present, the senior deacon presided. He gave out a hymn, which was sung in excellent style, nearly all the members being well instructed in church psalmody as then practised, one of their number being an able teacher of that art. After the hymn the same deacon led in prayer and then followed another hymn. He then called on the Church Clerk to read the Articles of Faith. This being done the members were requested to express their approval of, or continued belief in, the articles by rising; which they all did. The clerk was then directed to read the covenant, upon which the deacon declared the meeting open, and that the brothers and sisters would now proceed to "speak on their covenant."

And now one after another each member rose and delivered a short address. As to the substance or matter of these addresses, they very much resembled each other, though in the manner of their delivery there was considerable variety. None of the speakers assumed the office of teacher in the slightest degree: very few even, ventured upon exhortations; but each appeared to "esteem others better than themselves." They generally commenced with a formal *renewing of their covenant* including renewed assurances of affection and fellowship to all the brethren. As to the rest they were chiefly made up of sketches of personal experience—for the most part—recent experience, since the last meeting. A few expressed the joy and pleasure in the service of the Lord, and the earnest desire they felt that all their friends and all men might taste and see how good He is. Several bemoaned their short-comings, the entanglements of the world, and the assaults of carnal desires, but expressed an unflinching determination to fight on, with the Divine help, and persevere to the end. Some alluded to the afflictions they had been called to pass through. One young married couple had lost their babe, their first born. The father touched upon the overpowering subject lightly—only a word or two, tremblingly pronounced, as though he dared not trust himself with the painful memory: but the mother, a young woman of interesting appearance, having once mentioned the *precious little one* so lately smiling upon her arm, seemed quite unable to repress the tide of tender thoughts, intermingled with crushed expectations, that pressed for utterance. The visitation, though so bitter, she knew must be intended in mercy, because it was the merciful Father who had made it, she knew it was her duty to submit and she longed to be able to say from her heart, "It will be done." Of the safety and perfect happiness of her sweet babe she had no doubt; she seemed in fancy, to witness its arrival in the abodes of the blessed, and the affectionate attentions bestowed upon it by the inhabitants, and yet, had it been possible she would gladly have drawn it down from thence that she might, for a single moment press it to a mother's wounded heart. "But" she concluded in the language of the bereaved monarch, "he cannot come to me, but I shall go to him." This was all delivered in most fervid language, accompanied with abun-

dant tears. Every heart was touched, and answering tears on every side witnessed the sympathy of all present.

After all had spoken, the deacon turned to me and enquired if I had anything I wished to say to the church. I found it a much more difficult matter to rise and speak before this assembly than I had anticipated. Among children and young persons of my own age, I had generally found myself able to express my views with some degree of fluency, but to address an assembly (though small) of "wise and reverend seniors," for so they really seemed to me to be, was a very different thing. And besides there was the awe inspired by the consideration that I was to address a church of Christ, in which He was supposed to be present, and I taking note of all I should say. These reflections nearly overwhelmed me with dismay. I succeeded however, in intimating to them in an imperfect manner, that I hoped that I had recently been brought to know the saving truth; that I was convinced of the duty of baptism as practised by them; and that if I could be received, I desired to become a member of the church. I was then told that the church would expect me to give a relation of my *experience*. I scarcely knew what that meant, but the deacon kindly explained that they desired me to relate to the church, what had been the Lord's dealing with my soul which had resulted in bringing me to the knowledge of the truth.

If the alarms, the admonitions and the demands of my conscience were to be regarded as the "Lord's dealings with my soul," the relations must include my whole life, as I could not remember the time when I was not the subject of deep religious impressions. It was true that recently I had been conscious of a great change both in my views and in my sensations. I had been brought to see my lost and helpless state as a sinner, to a degree that I had never before realized, and all my hopes which had been looking for a time, or for some change when, or on account of which I should be able, by a renewed life, to meet the requirement of the Divine law, had been abandoned. Christ alone, the precious gift of God, and His perfect righteousness had been presented to me as the only and sufficient remedy for the present, and the assured hope for the future.

I know not in what language I made my statement to the church, but it proved satisfactory, and I was received by a unanimous vote, and some weeks after, when an *elder came round*, I was baptized.

Such was my first Covenant Meeting, but from my subsequent acquaintance with other churches I found that they were universally observed nearly in the same form. Indeed the Covenant Meeting was regarded as an institution of prime importance, quite on a level, in several respects, with the Sabbath itself; and I think that a member was more liable to fall under the censure of his church for absenting himself from the Covenant Meeting than for neglecting the Sabbath assembly. It, (the Covenant Meeting) was made an article of faith, or rather, was included in the same article that respected the Sabbath, which was couched in nearly the following terms:—

"We believe that the first day of every week ought to be observed as the Christian Sabbath, on which day no work ought to be done, except work of necessity and

"mercy and that every church ought to assemble themselves together on that day to worship God, and show by their example that they esteem the day according to the command, 'Remember, &c.' And we believe that every church ought to set apart one day in every month to acknowledge their Covenant."

Two weeks afterwards I was again at the same place of worship, for we had been preaching; not by the same Elder, but by another with whom, as yet I had never met. We may call him Elder Hatley. Not only the whole church, but the whole settlement was assembled. The house was filled, and without, on the shaded sides of the building numbers of men, who had found seats within their wives, were waiting; but as yet there was no Elder. Within a few minutes after the hour (11 a.m.) however, a stranger is seen by those outside to dismount and tie his horse to a sappling near the door and walk demurely in. A few knew, and most suspected that this was the Elder. He patiently edged his way along through the crowd to the chair which had been left vacant for him behind the little table. Hitherto he had seemed to notice no one. But now he cast an anxious glance around upon the almost solid mass of upturned faces before him and the rows of heads peering in at the windows and door. For a moment he buried his face in both his hands above the table, and then he arose and gave out the hymn from Watts, (the only hymn book in use in that day, and I sometimes heartily wish we could have it restored to our congregations.) "Sweet is the work my God, my King." He then prayed. His manner throughout was very solemn. His prayer was short, delivered in a moderately low voice, his language very reverent, and yet it carried with it the seeming that it was addressed to a willing, present auditor. After the prayer another hymn was sung. And I may as well remark here that the reading of a portion of Scripture as a part of public worship was entirely unknown in our early churches; and the same is true of our Methodist brethren of the period. After the hymn he gave out his text:—"Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." Darkness, he said, might arise from either of two causes; the obscuration of the source of light, or the injury or destruction of the organs of sight. Every night when the sun sets it is dark; but if the sky is overcast with clouds and mist, or fog lies upon the earth, then it is darkness. The unfortunate neighbor who is belated on such a night finds it impossible to proceed with safety. Now he plunges into a bog hole; the next step, perhaps he stumbles over a log; and then dashes himself against a tree or a stump. [Illustrations very suitable to the state of the country.] But the darkness mentioned in the text would seem to be of the other kind, internal, *Ye were darkness*. Not the atmosphere—the fields,—the highway, but yourselves. Not for want of sun, moon, or stars, but for want of eyes. If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness. The apostle explains it—"The god of this world blinds the minds of them that believe not," &c. "We learn from the text," he continued, first, the state of man by nature, [so he pronounced it] here called "darkness," and second, the state to which we are translated

by the grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, here called "Light in the Lord." He then proceeded, in the simplest vernacular language, and in a modest colloquial style to illustrate these two great points of evangelical truth. He spoke for more than an hour, but no one thought it long. Upon taking his seat he said, "there is now liberty for all the brethren and sisters, and I hope every one will have something to say for the Lord, if it is no more than the psalmist said,—"The Lord is my light and my salvation." No one were the brethren and sisters slow to avail themselves of the liberty thus given. Nearly every member of the church, together with several Methodist brethren who were present, arose and spoke; some of them with very great earnestness and fervor, and at considerable length. The meeting continued through about three of the hottest hours of a very hot day, yet none seemed weary; but all,—even outsiders seemed to regard it as a very solemn, profitable, and pleasant time.

This manner of conducting public worship, strange as it may seem to you, was not an exception, but the general rule.—Yet, as you rightly observe, the practice was attended with some inconveniences even then. Now it would of course be altogether intolerable. But before deciding upon the propriety or otherwise of the order of these early churches we must take into consideration the circumstances of the time. It would be very unfair to judge them by our standards. The circumstances are greatly changed. The churches of the present day are duly and fully organized with all necessary officers and assistants; supplied with an abundant Christian literature and all suitable means of instruction and advancement; and especially with efficient pastoral oversight. Nearly all these were wanting fifty years ago. Our only Christian literature was the Bible; while the pastoral relation was unknown among us. We had Elders, but not pastors. Our Elders were ordained to the work of the ministry, but to no particular charge. They were in the receipt of no stipend, or salary. They were generally farmers, cultivating their own lands, and depending thereon for their support, and the support of their families. They ordinarily wrought in the field as many days in the week, and as many hours in the day, as any of their members. During slack seasons; between crops, or in winter, when farm duties were not pressing; or when their sons were grown up so as to be able to supply their places at home, these men often took long journeys to supply little destitute churches, or to plant the gospel in new settlements where it had not before been established. Where at home, the Elder was expected, as a matter of course, to preside in all the meetings of the church, whether for worship or business, and to preach once on Sunday. But to undertake pastoral duties in the ordinary meaning of the term, you must perceive was entirely out of the question. Under these circumstances, the practice we have alluded to was not only allowable, but perhaps on the whole most useful. Persons who thus so frequently and so openly became committed to a Christian life, could not fail to feel themselves under a constant obligation to observe its rules, and would be more likely, on that account, to increase in piety and grow in grace.

Thus far I have endeavoured to present to

you a faithful picture of early times. I am aware that I have omitted many things, the memory of which it might be well to preserve, and there remain many others which we have not been able to reach. If, at some future time, we shall be permitted, in the presence of God, to renew these interviews, I may perhaps resume the subject and bring my narrative down to the time when the past begins visibly to melt into the present, and the old gradually gives place to the new. For the present, however, our pleasant interviews must be suspended; and it only remains for me, after thanking you for so long and so patiently listening to the well meant but imperfect,—perhaps incoherent narrations of a garrulous old man; to bid you an affectionate adieu.

## Sunday School Department.

### International Bible Lessons, 1878.

STUDIES ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

#### SECOND QUARTER.

SUBJECT	GOLDEN TEXT.
1 Josiah's Early Piety, 2 Chron. xxxiv.	Ecd. vii, 1.
2 The Scriptures Found and Searched, 2 Chron. xxxiv, 29-32.	John vi, 37.
3 Jeremiah in Prison, Jer. xxxix, 1-19.	Jer. xxxix, 3.
4 The Reclamation, Jer. xxxv, 1-19.	Jer. xxxv, 13.
5 The Captivity of Judah, Jer. li, 1-17.	Lam. ii, 13.
6 The Captives in Babylon, Dan. i, 6-17.	Psaln cxi, 10.
7 Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, Dan. ii, 1-45.	Dan. ii, 38.
8 The Fiery Furnace, Dan. iii, 21-27.	Dan. iii, 77.
9 The Handwriting on the Wall, Dan. v, 1-31.	Dan. v, 27.
10 Daniel in the Lion's Den, Dan. vi, 1-17.	Dan. vi, 22.
11 Messiah's Kingdom, Dan. vii, 27-4.	Psaln cv, 2.
12 The Decree of Cyrus, 2 Chron. xxxvi, 22-23.	Isiah xl, 3.
REVIEW.	Isiah xlv, 19.

Prepared for the CHRISTIAN HELPER.

APRIL 21.—**Jeremiah in Prison.**—Jer. xxxiii. 1-9. B.C. about 590-588.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." Jer. xxxiii. 2.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

An interval of about 34 or 35 years intervenes between the date of our last lesson and this; and the history of this intermediate period should receive some very brief attention.

After renewing the Covenant between God and His people (2 Chron. xxxiv, 29-33), and celebrating a solemn Passover which had not been held since the days of its first institution (2 Kings xxii, 21-23; 2 Chron. xxxv, 1-19), good King Josiah does not seem to have carried his work of reformation any further;—and his reforms certainly did not affect the heart of the nation, which continued utterly corrupt.

The circumstances of the death of Josiah are recorded in 2 Kings xxv, 29, 30, and 2 Chron. xxxv, 20-27; and within four years afterwards Judah was made tributary by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 606), though the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Kingdom, did not occur till B.C. 587. The date of the seventy years' captivity is usually placed at B.C. 606, when Daniel and his companions were among those carried away to Babylon (Dan. i, 2; Jer. xxv, 1, 11, 12; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 6, etc.).

Dean Stanley says:—"Josiah was the last royal hero of Israel." With his death the history of the

Jewish monarchy might end, were it not for one great event, and of one great person that is well remembered,—the fall of Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah."

Josiah was succeeded on the throne by his youngest son by Hamutal, Jehoahaz (or Shaluum), but he only reigned 3 months, being carried away captive into Egypt by Pharaoh Necho. There he died, according to the prediction of Jeremiah (Jer. xxii. 10, 12; 2 Kings xxi. 34). The next king was Jehoiakim (or Eliakim), Josiah's eldest son, who was placed upon the throne, not by the people as in the case of his predecessor, but by the king of Egypt who had taken Jehoahaz captive, and who exacted tribute from Judah in an annual sum equal to about \$25,000.

The most important event of Jehoakim's reign, to us, is the beginning of the seventy years' captivity alluded to. "In B.C. 607, the third year of Jehoakim's reign (Dan. i. 1, 2), Nebuchadnezzar, who had been sent by his father Nabopolassar, king of the new Babylonian empire, to recover the 102 cities conquered by Pharaoh Necho, laid siege to Jerusalem as a capital of a part of those domains. The city submitted in the following year, the fourth of Jehoakim (Jer. xli. 2), the royal family, the princes (including Daniel and the 'three children') and many of the people being sent to Babylon. Jehoakim himself was also bound in fetters to be carried to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi. 6), but he obtained his freedom, apparently by offering Nebuchadnezzar a 'part of the vessels of the house of God,' and became a tributary to Babylon instead of to Egypt" (2 Kings xxiv. 1-2). Afterwards Jehoakim succeeded, by rebellion, in obtaining a certain amount of independence; but Nebuchadnezzar again besieged Jerusalem with a regular army, but Jehoakim died (Jer. xxii. 18, 19; xxxvi. 30, 31) before the city surrendered the second time, which event took place shortly after, Jehoiachim his infant son, aged 8 years, being upon the throne, and Nehushta the queen-mother being regent. With the plunder, and the "ten thousand captives" carried away was the child-king, who was put in prison confined,—a part of the time in chains (Ezek. xii. 9)—for nearly 40 years. After some time, however, Nebuchadnezzar seems to have relaxed his rigour, and permitted Jehoiachim to marry: for we are told that he had eight sons, including *Saltathiel*, through whom the royal succession was handed on to *Zerubbabel* (1 Chron. iii. 17, 18; Matt. i. 12).—*Blunt*. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar Jehoiachim was restored to liberty and honour, but it is not recorded how long he lived to enjoy his freedom.—2 Kings xxv. 27-30.

Zedekiah (or Mattaniah) was made king by Nebuchadnezzar. "He was a mere vicerey, governing an impoverished and disorganized remnant of the ancient people of Israel, and sitting on the throne which did not rightly belong to him, in the midst of a half-ruined city, which the great conqueror had only not destroyed, because of the reverence which his dream (B.C. 603) had given him for the God of Israel, and of his friendship for some of the Jewish captives whom he had raised to high positions."—*Blunt*. Zedekiah's reign witnessed a series of ineffectual efforts to break away from the Babylonian yoke, the king finally entering into an alliance with Egypt for that purpose, about B.C. 592. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both uttered their prophetic warnings against this course (Jer. xxvii. 12-22; Ezek. xvi. 16-21, etc.).

"This determined revolt against God and man, so that 'there was no remedy' (2 Chron. xxxvi. 16), brought on Nebuchadnezzar's *third siege of Jerusalem*, which began on the 10th day of the 10th month (about the middle of December) in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign (2 Kings xxv. 1; Ezek. xxxiv. 1), that is in B.C. 590. In the beginning of the following year the prophet Jeremiah was sent to Zedekiah, to predict the total destruction of the city and of his kingdom, and

his own captivity (Jer. xxxii. 27-44), which led to the prophet's imprisonment by the king (Jer. xxxii. 1-3) where he still continued his prophecy."—*Blunt*.

During this imprisonment Jeremiah received the Divine message contained in our lesson of to-day.

The title given by the International Lesson Committee is *GOD'S MESSAGE CONCERNING HIS SOVEREIGNTY*. We then get the following divisions: 1st. *God's Sovereignty Declared*; 2nd. *God's Sovereignty Illustrated by His Purposes*, (1) of *Judgment*, and (2) of *Mercy*; 3rd. *God's Sovereignty magnified in the Result*.

#### DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY DECLARED.—V. 1-3.

*V. 1.* Jeremiah was called to the prophetic office in the 13th year of Josiah's reign. For an extended account of his life and writings, the teacher is referred to the selected article in another column of this paper. The second time. See chap. xxxiii. 1, etc. In the court of the prison, "or, 'the court of the guard,' a part of the king's palace (Neh. ii. 25), probably, where the royal guard had his quarters. There would no doubt always be a picket on duty in the guard-chamber at the entrance of the court, but in his own apartment Jeremiah was probably left unmolested."—*Sp. Com.*

*V. 2.* Thus saith the Lord. This expression gives always increased weight and solemnity to what follows. The Maker thereof—"rather, the Door of it, namely, that which Jeremiah is about to prophecy, the restoration of Israel, an act which is thought now impossible, but which the Almighty will effect."—*Fausset*. That formed it,—that is, moulds His purpose into due shape for execution (Isaiah xxxvii. 26).—*Blunt*.

*V. 3.* Call unto Me. "Jeremiah, as the representative of the people of God, is urged by God to pray for that which God has determined to grant, namely, the restoration. God's promises are not to slacken, but to quicken the prayers of His people."—*Blunt*. Mighty things, or *Aidén things*, as in the margin,—things beyond, man's comprehension.

#### DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY ILLUSTRATED.—V. 4-8.

1. *By His purposes of judgment*.—v. 4, 5.

*V. 4.* Houses *v.*, thrown down by the moats. "In ancient sieges, as the walls of the enemy approached the walls, it was usual to build inner fortifications, and for this purpose houses were pulled down, both to give the vacant space necessary and also to supply materials."—*Sp. Com.* By the sword. In Ezekiel xxvi. 9, the word here translated *sword* is here translated *axe*, and they were used for breaking down the towers.

*V. 5.* They come,—that is, *The Jews come* (Jer. xli. 12). *Whom I have slain*. "The enemies' sword was His sword, and their anger His anger. But it seems the men that were slain were generally such as had distinguished themselves by their wickedness, for they were the very men for whose wickedness God did hide Himself from this city; so that He was just in all He brought upon them."—*Matthew Henry*.

2. *By His purposes of mercy*.—v. 6-8.

(a) *In temporal good*.—v. 6, 7.

*V. 6.* I will bring it health and cure—that is, "this city" (v. 5). I will cure them. "The first clause promised that the ruins of the city should be repaired; this gives similar comfort to the inhabitants. The sudden change from it, i.e., the city, to them, i.e., the people, is common in Hebrew."—*Sp. Com.* Truth, "i.e., stability; I will bring forth for them abundant and permanent peace,—that is, *prosperity*."—*Fausset*.

*V. 7.* The captivity of Judah and the

captivity of Israel. "This must respect the latter times, for the *ten tribes* did not return with the Jews at the termination of the seventy years."—*Adam Clarke*.

(b) *In spiritual good*.—v. 8.

*V. 8.* I will cleanse.—See Zechariah xiii. 1; John i. 7; Rev. i. 5; Eph. i. 7, etc. I will pardon.—See chap. xxxiii. 34; Micah vii. 18, 19; Isaiah lv. 7, etc.

#### DIVINE GLORY.—V. 9.

*V. 9.* And I'll—the city, as in verse 6. To Me a name of glory, a praise—and an honour before all the nations of the earth which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. No confinement can shut up God's people from His presence.—v. 1. Examples: Daniel, Paul, Bunyan.
2. In the gloomiest hours, the believer may be comforted with thoughts of the sovereignty of Jehovah.—v. 2.
3. God is able to do for us, in answer to prayer, far more abundant things than we can either ask or think.—v. 3.
4. God is angry with the wicked every day. His judgments are abroad in the earth.—v. 5.
5. God is merciful as well as righteous.—v. 6, 7. (See Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7). Righteousness is like health, imparting peace and life.—v. 6-8.
6. God has provided cleansing blood for guilty sinners, in the Lamb of God (John i. 29), and pardons the transgressors whose iniquities have been thus washed away.
8. The Divine glory is the work of redemption, v. 9.

#### APRIL 25.—The Rechabites.—Jer. xxxv.

12-19. B.C. 606.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord.—Jer. xxxv. 13.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

"One of the most singular facts in the history of Israel is the continued existence in the heart of the nation of a nomad race; partakers of its privileges, sharers of its worship, yet never wholly identified with the community. The origin of this strange connection between the chosen people and the Arab (or it might almost be called *Hythian*) tribe, was the marriage of Moses with Zipporah, from the land of Midian. Her father Jethro came to the aid of Moses almost immediately after the exodus (Exod. xviii), and her brother Hobab rendered important service to the Hebrew leader through the forty years' wandering. The encampment of the Kenites, as the tribe was called, was near that of Israel, although separate (Num. x. 29-32; xxiv. 21). After the settlement in Canaan, the association continued. The Kenites pitched their tents in the south country, in the wilderness of Judah; also in the north, where the wife of Heber the Kenite slew the fugitive Sisera, (Jud. i. 16; iv. 17-22). In the days of Agag, we find Kenites among the Amalekites, and they are warned by Saul to depart lest they should be involved in the destruction of that heathen tribe (1 Sam. xvi. 6). The fathers of the wilderness of Judah, we are told in the genealogies, came of one Hemath, the brother of the house of Reuben. The word 'Rechab' according as it is variously pointed, means 'Rider' or 'Chariot,' may stand either for a name or a symbol. When we read that Rehobah the son of Rechab, 'as an abettor of the overthrow of Abah's house, (2

Kings, x, 15-17), we may perhaps understand the title to refer to the wild, nomadic character of the clan.—S. G. Green, D.D.

"From the part Jehonadab took in helping Jehu to root out the worship of Baal, it seems as if he was a zealous adherent of Jehovah, and possibly, from the lasting nature of his influence, he was a religious reformer; and as the names of the men mentioned in Jer. xxxv. are all compounded with *Jeh*, the form which Jehu takes at the end of a word, it is plain that the tribe continued their allegiance to Him. The object of Jehonadab in endeavoring to preserve the nomad habits of his race was probably two-fold. He wished, first, to maintain among them the purer morality and higher feeling of the desert, contrasted with the laxity and effeminacy of city life, and, secondly, he was anxious for the preservation of their freedom. A tribe of wanderers in the open desert is very much out of the reach of danger."—S. G. Green.

In the 35th chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet utilizes this punctilious obedience to Jonadab's precepts "to point a useful lesson for his own people. We can quite imagine that their black tents, pitched in the open places of Jerusalem, had attracted no slight degree of attention, and while all men were talking of them, the prophet invited them into the temple, and brought out into clear relief their steady obedience to their ancestor's command."—S. G. Green.

Our lesson places in marked contrast the *obedience* of the Rechabites to the command of their ancestor, and the *disobedience* of the Jews to the laws of Jehovah their God; and then states the *consequences* of each course of action.

#### THE OBEEDIENCE OF THE RECHABITES.—V. 12-14

V. 12. Then—immediately after the test of the loyalty of the Rechabites recorded in the preceding verses of the chapter. The date was B.C. 606, in the reign of Jehoiakim, just before the first captivity, in which Daniel and his companions were carried off to Babylon (see verse 11, and Introduction to last lesson). Jeremiah. See last lesson.

V. 12. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The word for "hosts" in Hebrew is *Sabaoth*, (Rom. ix, 29; James v, 4). Sometimes it refers to angels (Eph. i, 21; Col. i, 16); sometimes to the stars (Jer. xxxiii, 22; Isaiah xl, 25); sometimes to the people (Exod. xii, 41).—"Lord of hosts" therefore includes all these, and is a grand term, expressive of Jehovah's majesty and power. Go and tell. "Jeremiah, accompanied, as it seems, by the main body of the Rechabites (v. 18, 19) went into one of the courts of the temple, and there addressed to the people the rebuke of which we have the summary in the following verses."—S. G. Green. The test of the Rechabites had been applied in a more private chamber. (v. 4.) Will ye not receive instruction? It is the mark of the wise we receive instruction; see Prov. i, 7; 8; iv, 13; 33; xv, 33; 33; Jer. xxxiii, 32; 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17.

V. 14. The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab. These words are recorded in verses 6 and 7 of this chapter. For his object in making this rigid enactment, see Introduction. Commanded his sons not to drink wine. "The drinking of wine was not probably forbidden so much on the merits of the question, whether it is good or bad, as on the fact, which also appears in the saying and building, that producing it implied fixed habits, settling upon landed property, making vineyards, a slow process, as one may see by Isa. v, 1, 2, and supplying wine-presses and other fixed arrangements, and time for wine to get "old." Nomadic races make the water of the rock or spring and the milk of their herds their drink. Though there are historic records of nations who forbade corn-planting, fruit-trees, and houses, yet as we see by Gen. xxvii, 25, wine was used by them, and corn could be raised,

(Gen. xxvii, 12.) And while we do not find in this account of the Rechabites any positive opinion one way or the other, on the drinking of wine (for if we quoted this passage against wine, it might be replied that it is equally against building houses and growing corn, yet the reasons for abstaining from wine in our time are not the weaker. The evils of drunkenness are so many and so dreadful, that a Christian man may well be a teetotaler, and expel it to foreign parts; he has a right to, for the sake of opposing a dreadful vice, and strengthening the weak against it." Dr. John Hall in the Sunday School World.

Are performed—"are established, i.e., are maintained in full force."—S. G. Green. "Into this day—a period of more than two hundred years.

THE DISOBEEDIENCE OF THE JEWS.—V. 14, 15. V. 14. (continued). Notwithstanding. Here the contrast between the faithfulness of the Rechabites and the perfidy of the Jews commences. I have spoken unto you. "God Himself speaking late and early by His various ways of providence and grace. In verse 15, and in 2 Chron. xxxvi, 15, a distinct mode of address is alluded to, viz., God sending His servants."—Fausset.

V. 15. All My servants the prophets. "The Rechabites had had but one law-giver, the Jews had had a succession of messengers accredited unto them by God. Compare Matt. xxi, 33-37."—S. G. Green. Saying—These things only God required of His people: (1) Return, (2) Reformation, (3) Steadfastness; and offered them a glorious inheritance for their obedience. But ye have not, &c. They would not even listen, much less consider.

#### THE CONSEQUENCES TO EACH.—V. 16-19.

V. 16. Because . . . of their father. "This little company of Rechabites, in their fidelity to their ancestor's command, nearly 300 years, administered a terrible reproof to the nation which had disregarded the infinitely more august and solemn law of God. The sons of Jonadab rose up in that day of judgment to condemn the people of Jerusalem."—S. G. Green, D.D.

V. 17. The evil that I have pronounced—see Deut. xxviii, Levit. xxvi, Jer. xxv, 8-10. "Sinners imagine that, because punishment is delayed, it will not come; but these evils, announced more than 800 years before, came to pass at last." *Peloubat*.

Note.—The teacher, referring to the passages named, may catalogue some of the various evils that were to come upon the disobedient Jews, and impress these upon the attention of the class.

V. 18. The Rechabites—v. 18, 19. V. 18. Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father &c. The teacher will not fail here to inculcate filial obedience. Exod. xx, 12; Deut. xxvii, 16; Prov. x, 8; vi, 20; Eph. vi, 1, 3, &c.

V. 19. Shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever. Prof. Plumtree, in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, advances some striking facts in support of the view that "the Rechabites were solemnly adopted into the families of Israel, and were recognized as incorporated into the tribe of Levi"—the tribe whose office especially it was to stand before Jehovah (Deut. x, 8). But taking the prophet's word as denoting perpetuity of the Rechabites as a tribe, it has been singularly fulfilled. The late Dr. Wolff, in his journal says "the Jews of Yemen told him, in 1829, that he would find Rechabites living near Mecca. When he came near Senaa, he met with a tribe who identified themselves with the sons of Levi, and one of them, Mousa by name, Dr. Wolff conversed thus: "Whose descendants are you?" Mousa answered, "Come, and I will show you,"—and he read from an Arabic Bible

the words of Jeremiah, in this 35th chapter, and added, "Come, and you will find us 60,000 in number." You see, the words of the prophet have been fulfilled.

#### May 5.—The Captivity of Judah.—Jer. lii, 1-11; B.C. 588.

##### GOLDEN TEXT.

"Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore shall she be removed: all that honoured her, despite her, because they have seen her nakedness; yea, she sleight and hath backwaded."—Isa. l, 7.

##### INTRODUCTION.

This 52nd chapter is a sort of appendix to the book of Jeremiah, whose authorship, as there stated, ends with the last verse of the preceding chapter. It contains some additional details to those in chap. xxxix, and carries the history down to a later date. The writer of this additional chapter was probably Ezra, and it is almost identical with 2 Kings xxix, 18-20, and xxv. The captivity of which our lesson treats, is the third and last captivity (B.C. 588). It will not be necessary again to trace the steps in Jewish history, leading to the events here recorded, that having already been done in the introductory remarks on the lesson for April 21st—"Jeremiah in Prison"—to which the teacher will kindly refer again.

We notice in these eleven verses: 1. Zedekiah's Evil Reign; 2. Jerusalem Distressed; and (3) the King's Fate.

##### ZEDEKIAH'S EVIL REIGN.—V. 1-13.

V. 1. Zedekiah. The last king of Judah, made king by Nebuchadnezzar, when he took the child-king Jehoiachin captive, B.C. 599. Zedekiah's name was formerly Mataniah, and it was changed in accordance with the then custom of appointing tributary kings. His mother's name was Hamutal. He was therefore the brother of Jehoahaz (2 Kings xxi, 31), but his brother only of Jehoiachin (2 Kings xxlii, 1), and the uncle of Jehoiachin, and the son of Josiah. Of Jeremiah of Libnah. Nothing further is known of him. Libnah was one of the cities taken by Joshua from the Canaanites, situated in Judah about 30 miles south-west from Jerusalem. See Josh. x, 29, 30; xxi, 13; 2 Kings viii, 22; 18, 8, 35.

V. 2. Did that which was evil. Compare 2 Chron. xxxv, 12-13; Jer. xxvii, 2. "His chief recorded evils were (1) his refusal to be guided in his political conduct by Jeremiah's counsels, while nevertheless he admitted him to be a true Jehovah prophet; (2) Chron. xxvii, 12; Jer. xxvii, 2; and (2) his infraction of the solemn oath of subjection and allegiance to which he had sworn to Nebuchadnezzar, either at his succession or soon afterwards (2 Chron. xxxvi, 13; Ezek. xvii, 13-20). See Introduction. According to all that Jehoiachin had done. See 2 Kings xxv, 1, 2; 2 Chron. xxxv, 4-8. Jehoiachin had been the vassal of Egypt, and Zedekiah also courted an Egyptian alliance against Babylon, which had been declared to be offensive to God (Jer. xxvii, xxviii.)

V. 3. Through the anger of the Lord. "They provoked God at last to surrender them to their Chaldean foes. He might have done to Nebuchadnezzar and his army what He did to Sennacherib and his—withheld them by a glance, blasted them by a breath. But Zedekiah was not Hezekiah; the people of Jerusalem were not what they had been in earlier days. Jeremiah, unlike Isaiah, was not in power, but in prison; the fig-tree was become barren and must be cut down; the inhabitants of the land were ripe for removal, and God must cast them into a fiery furnace to be tried and purified, so that a residue should come forth in due time, to be used in the



construction of a new polity, and in the erection of a new temple."—*Gilman*. Rebelled against the king of Babylon. His chief rebellion was his alliance with Egypt, (see Introduction, April 21st). This occurred some three or four years before the events of this present lesson.

#### JERUSALEM BESIEGED.—V. 4-7.

V. 4. In the ninth year . . . tenth month . . . tenth day of the month . . . As the final catastrophe approaches, the historian becomes more close and exact in his dates, marking not only the year, but the month and the day, on which the siege began, no less than those on which it closed (v. 6). Compare 2 Kings, xxxv, 1, and Ezek. xxiv, 1; from which last passage we find that on the very day when the host of Neb. hadnezzar made its appearance before Jerusalem, the fact was revealed to Ezekiel in Babylonia, and the fate of the city announced to him (Ezek. xxiv, 1-14).—*Sp. Com.* Nebuchadnezzar. "A prince of extraordinary talent and energy; and he consolidated, if we may not say that he actually established the Babylonian monarchy. Having destroyed Nineveh, his next task was to recover that portion of his new conquest which the Egyptians had held in possession for two or three years. He then went to the Jehoiakin tributary, taking away certain captives (B.C. 606). He also took captive Jehoiakin, the son of Jehoiakin" (B.C. 590); and now his capture of Zedekiah and destruction of Jerusalem command our attention. We shall learn more of this great king in the lessons following, which are taken from the Book of Daniel. All his army. Compare chapter xxiv, 1, where the vastness of his army is very strongly marked. In 2 Kings xxv, 1, it reads, "All his host." Against Jerusalem. "The army camps at the city have spread itself over all Judah." It fought not only against Jerusalem, but against all the cities of Judah that were left; and especially against Lachish and Azekah (Jer. xxxiv, 7) two cities of the south, which probably had been strongly garrisoned in order to maintain the communication with Egypt."—*Sp. Com.* Built forts against it. Forts were probably moveable towers provided with battering rams. These were pushed against the walls, and thus placed the fighting men on a level with those they were besieging.

V. 5. Unto the eleventh year, etc. The siege lasted a year and a half. The Lamentations ii, 20, 21; iv, 3-20; v, 9-12 and Ezekiel (v. 10-12) show us how dreadful the sufferings of those within the city.

V. 6. Fourth month. Corresponding to our July. Famine. The city seems to have been overcome more through the famine than the active hostilities. No bread—compare chap. xxxviii, 9; Ezek. iv, 16; v, 16.

V. 7. Broken up—broken into. A breach was made in the walls, and the city was entered at midnight. (Ezek. xii, 2-12, and Josephus.) "Through the darkness of the night the Chaldean guards silently made their way from the street to street, till they suddenly appeared in the centre of the temple court, in the middle gateway which opened directly on the great brazen altar. Never before had such a spectacle been seen in the inviolable sanctuary of Jerusalem. A clang and rattle resounded through the silent precincts at the dead hour of night. The first victims were those who, whether from religious or superstitious feelings and duties, were habitually occupants of the sacred building. The virgin marble of the court ran red with blood, like a rocky wine-press in the vintage."—*Dean Stanley*. All the men of war—and Zedekiah with them (chap. xxxix, 4). King's garden—situated to the south of the city, in the valley at the base of Mount Zion. By the way of the plain leading from the city eastward over Olivet to Bethany and Jericho."—*Sp. Com.*

#### THE KING'S FATE.—V. 8-11.

V. 8. In the plains of Jericho.—About six hours journey east from Jerusalem. Scattered from him—each one looking to his own safety.

V. 9. Riblah. This was the headquarters of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and a most fertile and convenient spot for superintending the operations against Tyre and Jerusalem, while they were engaging his attention. It was situated in northern Palestine, at the upper end of the valley of Lebanon, about 20 days march from Jerusalem. (See map.) Gave judgment upon him. He had violated his oath, (Ezek. xvii, 13-19; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 13).

V. 10. Slew his sons . . . before his eyes. Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah that his children would fall into the hands of the Chaldeans if he continued his rebellion (chap. xxxviii, 23). Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah—literally "dug out." This was doubtfully and brutally cruel—his eyes made to witness the cruel slaughter of his children, and that to be his last sight. Carried him to Babylon. "Jeremiah had prophesied distinctly that he would be carried to Babylon (chap. xxxi, 5; xxxiv, 3). Ezekiel had said that he should not 'see Babylon.' (Ezek. xii, 13). His deprivation of sight before he was carried to the conqueror's capital, fulfilled the predictions of both prophets."—*Sp. Com.*

#### PRACTICAL LESSON.

The certainty of God's punishment of sin. Though long delayed, it will come at last—and no escape.

#### May, 12.—The Captives in Babylon.—

Dan. i, 8-17.—B. C. 606.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding hath all they that keep His commandments; His praise endureth for ever."—Psalm cxli, 10.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

For the next six weeks we are to have our attention directed to the Book of Daniel, in studying which, it is important to recognize its apocalyptic character. "To the old prophets, Daniel stands in some sense as a commentator (chap. i, 2-19); to succeeding generations, as the herald of immediate deliverance. The form, the style, and the point of sight of prophecy are relinquished upon the verge of a new period, in the existence of God's people, and fresh instruction is given them, suited to their new fortunes. The change is not abrupt and absolute, but yet it is distinctly felt. The eye and not the ear, is the organ of the Seer; visions and not words are revealed to him. The Babylonian exile supplied the outward training and the inward necessity for this last form of Divine teaching; and the prophetic visions of Ezekiel form the connecting link between the characteristic types of revelation and prophecy."—*Smith's Bible Dictionary*. The Book is usually divided into two equal parts: (1) Chapters I. to vi., are chiefly historical; while (2) chapters vii. to xii., are entirely apocalyptic.

Babylon. "Of all the cities that the pride or tower of man has built on the surface of the globe, Babylon was the greatest. Its greatness was secured by its natural position, on a platform of rock in the midst of the alluvial basin of Mesopotamia, defended on the south by a vast morass or lake, crossing the line of traffic between the Mediterranean coast and the Iranian mountains, just where the Euphrates becomes a navigable river. It was on the lowest computation, forty, on the highest, sixty miles round, and was really a country in miniature enclosed in city. Forests, parks, gardens, were intermingled with the houses; yet still the regularity and order of a city were

preserved. The walls are said to have been 300 feet high, and along the summit ran a vast terrace, which admitted of the turning of chariots with four horses, and which may therefore well have been more than 80 feet broad. The king's palace and the temple of Bel were remarkable structures. It may be remembered that this city was 'at the centre of a mighty empire, consisting of 120 provinces, each of which was a kingdom in itself. It may well be imagined that the state kept by its sovereignty would be most elaborate and grand. To one feature of it, our attention is especially directed in this lesson. We favoured boys, usually children of captive princes, were kept in personal attendance upon the king. Mr. Van Lempe, describing the state now kept by the Sultan and the Shah, speaks of '5,000 *gawls* (his slaves) who live in the palace and attend the person of the Shah wherever he goes. They are promising boys, stolen or forcibly taken from Christian parents, and brought up as Moslems. They are kept in the *straglio* (palace), under strict discipline, receive a good education and then have a partment in the civil and military service.'"—*S. S. Union Notes*.

In our lesson we have (1) a purpose; and (2) a text; and (3) a result.

#### THE PURPOSE.—V. 8, 9.

V. 8. Daniel.—"The richest prize that ever Babylon won from Jerusalem."—*Green*. It was of noble birth, if not of the royal family, (verse 3; 2 Kings, xx, 18); Josephus says that he belonged to the family of Zedekiah. His age when taken captive was probably from 12 to 15 years (B.C. 606). He was well educated in science and language by the king of Babylon (verse 4), and it is evident he had been carefully trained in Hebrew learning and taught in the religion of his fathers, before his captivity. Purposed to do in his heart. "The case evinces both his conscientiousness in reference to the law of his God, and his noble self-control in the matter of appetite. These are among the first and most vital elements in the formation of a character of noble promise for efficiency and usefulness."—*Green*.

Would not defile himself—either by eating what to a Jew was considered as *unclean*, or by partaking of that which had been offered to idols. The prince of the eunuchs—(see verse 5). His special duty was to preside over the male attendants of the ladies of the harem. The position was one of honour and influence.

V. 9. Into 'favour and tender love.—Compare the case of Joseph in Gen. xxxix, 21. His sterling uprightness and integrity would be the means used by Jehovah in inclining the prince of the eunuchs towards him. See Prov. xlv, 7.

#### THE TEXT.—V. 10-14.

V. 10. The king hath appointed your meat and your drink. Opinions differ as to the object of the king in the diet ordered. Some suppose his aim was to secure the very best mental and physical development possible. Others, again (Dr. Huxley, for example), think it was "an arduous plan to make them change their religion, and become thoroughly subservient to the Chaldean rule: (1) by changing their names, (2) by tempting them with luxurious living; (3) by compromising them with idolatry, through eating food offered to idols." Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar had both of these objects in view. Worse-looking—looking less healthy. Your sort—literally, your circle, age or class.

V. 11. Melzar means steward or chief butler. He was the man in special charge of the department. Hananias, Mishael, and Azarias. The first of these names means "Whom Jehovah hath favoured"; the second, "Who is to be compared to God?"; and the third, "Whom Jehovah has." Nebuchadnezzar had them all changed (see Daniel's *Go to my Father*—as well), to names connected with his own duties.—*Shadrach*

"illuminated by the sun-god." *Moshak* " who is comparable to Shak," (the goddess of Babylon) and *Abdageh*, "servant of the Shining Fire."—(see verse 7.)

**V. 12. Prove . . . ten days.** The trial would thus only be for a short time, but long enough to indicate the probable result of the entire experiment. "If during that period there were no indications of diminished health, beauty or vigor, it would not be unfair to presume that the experiment in behalf of temperance would be successful, and it would not be improper then to ask that it might be continued longer."—*Barnes*.

**Pulse**—Seed herbs, greens, vegetables. They proposed to confine themselves to vegetable diet, with water to drink instead of wine.

**V. 13.** The children that eat, &c. Evidently a number of other youths besides these four were under the same regimen.

**V. 14.** So he consented, and possibly he was not entirely disinclined in complying with their frugal desires for a much less expensive diet.

THE RESULT. V. 15-17.

**V. 15. Fairer and fatter.** Instead being "Worse looking," as had been feared, a marvellous change had taken place for the better. Of course the great secret of this rapid improvement was the Divine blessing on the means employed, just as God had before brought Daniel into favour and tender regard.—verse 9.

**V. 16. Took away, &c.** Thus granting all they wished.

**V. 17. God gave them knowledge, &c.** "We count it reasonable to look to the Lord for our daily bread . . . but how few are they who seek for the same aid from Him in matters of the intellect, in learning, in study, in thought!"—*Atto*.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. "To be singular when the call of duty and faithfulness to God demand, is the evidence of true piety."

2. The teaching "When in Rome do as the Romans do," is not Bible teaching.—Duty is, like God, the same everywhere.

3. "Make the world bow to your religion; never let your religion bow to the world."—*Polakot*.

### THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

1. The book of *Jeremiah* differs from that of *Isaiah* in this respect, that while it was the leading object of *Isaiah* to attempt the reformation of the Jews, the awful nature of *Jeremiah's* message was to proclaim the near desolation of his country, now hardened in impotence. This gives a peculiar feature, both to his character and writings, which has led to his being called "the weeping prophet" (see ix. 1). His name translated is, "He shall exhalt Jehovah."

2. *Jeremiah* was the son of *Hilkiah*, a priest of *Anathoth*, a small place in the tribe of *Benjamin*, not far from *Jerusalem*. Called to the prophetic office in the thirtieth year of *Josiah* (i. 2; xxv. 3), while he was yet a youth (l. 6), he prophesied under the reigns of *Josiah*, *Jehoaiah*, *Jehoiakim*, *Jehoiachin*, and *Zedekiah*. Some have thought that his father was the same *Hilkiah* the high priest who found the Book of the Law in the Temple, as is mentioned in 2 Kings xiii. and 2 Chron. xxxiv.; but this opinion is not held by the best critics. His personal history seems to have been sufficiently romantic. Unlike *Isaiah*, whose first appearance anticipated that of *Jeremiah* by about one hundred and thirty years, he weaves his own biography into the web of his prophecy. Thus, it would seem that he remained in his native village for several years, visiting, however, the

cities of *Judah*, for the purpose of announcing to the inhabitants the contents of the Book of the Law which had been found in the Temple; but that at length, probably in consequence of the persecution of his fellow-townsmen, and even of some members of his own family,—as well as, such as *Divine* direction, to take a wider field for his labours,—he left *Anathoth*, and came to *Jerusalem*. During the reign of *Josiah* he was, doubtless, a valuable coadjutor with that monarch in the reformation of religion. From his notice of *Isaiah*, or *Jehoaiah*, he probably prophesied without hindrance during that monarch's brief reign. But when *Jehoiakim* came to the throne, he was interrupted in his ministry: the "priests and prophets" became his accusers, and demanded, in conjunction with the populace, because he had denounced vice against their city, that he should be put to death.<sup>1</sup> The princes did not dare to defy God thus openly; but *Jeremiah* was either placed under restraint, or deterred by his adversaries from appearing in public. Under these circumstances, he received a command from God to commit his predictions to writing.<sup>2</sup> Having done so, he sent *Burach*, his faithful friend and amanuensis, to read them to the people on a fast-day in the Temple. The princes advised *Jeremiah* and *Burach* to conceal themselves, while they tried to influence the king by reading the roll to him. But it was in vain: the reckless monarch, after hearing three or four pages, cut the roll in pieces, and cast it into the fire, giving immediate orders for the apprehension of *Jeremiah* and *Burach*. God, however, preserved them; and *Jeremiah* soon afterwards, by *Divine* direction, dictated the prophecies to *Baruch* again, and added others.<sup>3</sup>

4. During the short reign of the next king, *Jehoiachin*, we find the prophet still uttering the voice of warning, though yet without effect.<sup>5</sup> It was probably in the reign of *Jehoiachin* that *Pashur*, chief governor of the Temple, seized him and put him in the stocks, but released him the next day.

5. Under *Zedekiah*, *Jeremiah* was often imprisoned. According to chap. xxxviii, he was consigned to a miry dungeon by the princes of the people; and though, by the king's command, he was delivered from that imprisonment, he was still kept in confinement till *Nebuchadnezzar*, who meantime had taken the city, released him, and gave him the choice of either going to *Babylon* or remaining in the country.<sup>7</sup> He preferred the latter alternative, and resided with *Gedaliah* at *Mizpah*. But when *Gedaliah* was murdered, he was forced to fly into *Egypt*.<sup>8</sup> In *Egypt* he still sought to turn the people to the Lord,<sup>9</sup> and predicted the approaching devastation of *Egypt* by *Nebuchadnezzar*.<sup>10</sup> He appears to have died in the fifth year after the destruction of *Jerusalem* (B. C. 583), in the very year *Nebuchadnezzar* came to *Egypt*—an event, however, which he did not live to see. According to a tradition, he was stoned to death by his countrymen at *Daphne*. His grave was subsequently pointed out at *Caïro*. In one of the apocryphal books of *Maccabees*, there are other traditions respecting him, all equally groundless.

6. *Jeremiah* was contemporary with *Zephaniah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*. His writings are in Hebrew, except the eleventh verse of the tenth chapter, which is in Chaldee; and those at least which relate to the seventy years of the Captivity were known to the prophet *Daniel*.<sup>11</sup> 7. The prophecies of this book evidently do not stand in chronological order; and it is not easy to reduce them to order of time, or to account for the present arrangement. In the Septuagint, the

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xli. 21; xlii. 6. <sup>2</sup> Jer. xxxi. 10-13. <sup>3</sup> Ibid. xxxv. 1-10. <sup>4</sup> Ibid. xxxvi. 1-17. The Jews to this day commemorate the burning of the roll by an annual fast.

<sup>5</sup> Comp. Jer. xxii. 24-30 with 2 Kings xxiv. 12; see also Jer. xlii. 1-17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. xx. 1, etc. <sup>7</sup> Jer. xxxviii. xxxix. <sup>8</sup> Ibid. l. ix.-xliiii. <sup>9</sup> Jer. xli. 1-10. <sup>10</sup> Ibid. xliiii. 6-13. <sup>11</sup> Dan. ix. 2.

prophecies against foreign nations (xli.-li.) are inserted after chapter xxxv., and follow each other in a different course, whilst there are numerous omissions. The following order may perhaps be adopted:—

I.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of the good King *Josiah* (i.-xii.).

II.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of *Jehoiakim*, the eldest son of *Josiah* (xiii.-xx., xxi., xxiii., xxv., xxvi., xxxv., xlv., xlviii., xlix. 1-33).

III.—The prophecies delivered in the reign of *Zedekiah*, the uncle of *Jehoiachin*, the youngest son of *Josiah*, and the last of the kings of *Judah* (xli., xlv., xxvii.-xxxv., xxxvii.-xxxix., xlix. 34-39, l., li.).

IV.—The prophecies delivered during the government of *Gedaliah*, from the taking of *Jerusalem* to the retreat of the people into *Egypt*; and the prophecies delivered to the Jews in that country (xl.-xlv.).

Chap. lii. was added after *Jeremiah's* death. It is a short historical account of the taking of *Jerusalem*, and is properly an introduction to the book of *Lamentations*.

7. The writings of *Jeremiah* correspond with his character. They are peculiarly marked by pathos, and abound in expressions of tenderness, and in affecting descriptions of the miseries of the people.

8. As, in the days of *Jeremiah*, the Jewish nation had filled up the measure of their iniquities, the chief duty of this prophet was to expose the heinous sins of all classes of the people, and to denounce impending judgments. But these subjects, which take up the greater part of the book, and necessarily to give it a mournful aspect, are accompanied with some cheering declarations of God's merciful designs, both as to the restoration of the Jews from their captivity, and as to their future history. There are also a few bright pictures of the times of the Messiah, to whom this prophet repeatedly applies the designation which *Isaiah* had formerly given to Him,—the Branch.

9. It is not necessary to consider the attempts that have been made to dispute the genuineness of certain parts of *Jeremiah's* prophecies, since all such attempts rest, not on critical grounds, but on the denial of the reality of prophetic inspiration. Men who deny that *Isaiah* could foresee the restoration of the Jews from the *Babylonian* Captivity, may well deny also that *Jeremiah* could limit the duration of that Captivity to seventy years. But with those who believe that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," such arguments can have no weight. It is well known that *Jeremiah*, particularly in his prophecies against foreign nations, made use of earlier prophecies, as those of *Isaiah* and *Obadiah*.

#### References to Jeremiah in the New Testament.

Chap. vi. 16. Matt. xli. 29	Chap. xxxi. 15. Matt. li. 17
Mark xi. 13.	31-34. Heb. viii. 8.
Mark xii. 13.	10: ix. 16, 17.
Luke xix. 46.	
15: 23, 24; 1 Cor. i. 9-31.	

#### 3. THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

1. This book is a kind of appendix to the former one, of which, in the original Scriptures, it formed a part. The book consists of five chapters, or elegies. Each of these has twenty-two stanzas, or verses, beginning with the several letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the third chapter, having sixteen verses, has three verses together, each commencing in the Hebrew with the several letters in order.

2. As a composition, this book is remarkable for the great variety of pathetic images which it contains. The last chapter, or elegy, is in some versions entitled, "The Prayer of *Jeremiah*."

—NEW COMPANION TO THE BIBLE.

1 Comp. Isa. xvi., xvi., with Jer. xlviii.; *Obadiah* with Jer. xlii. 7-17.

## Correspondence.

Letters intended for publication must be accompanied with the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but for the information of the Editor.

## FAITH'S RECORD.

DR. BUCHAN, Dear Friend:

Some time ago I sent you a short record of the way the Lord has answered prayer in behalf of the Hospital for Sick Children. Let me again tell how "They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength, run and are not weary, walk and faint not"—because, in the Lord Jehovah is their strength.

Day by day our daily wants have been supplied from His bountiful hand; & recently the work has so increased that it has been found necessary to move to a larger house, although it is only a year since we moved to where we are now, giving us then eight additional beds.

We asked the Lord to guide us, and in the quiet of the night, the house formerly occupied by the Protestant Sisterhood, on Elizabeth street, was suggested to us. Upon making application for it, we found it could be purchased for \$2,500 in cash, and that \$500 remained unpaid to the builders. We said the Lord had not limited us to asking only for our daily supplies, and He who for three years, has so regularly sent us all we have required for three hundred sick little children, could and would send us enough to buy this house. Trusting only in Him, we undertook the purchase, appointing 5 gentlemen as trustees, to hold the property for us.

Many alterations were required in order to make it suitable for our work. These, including the \$250, would amount to about \$500: this we agreed (Matt 18: 19) to ask from the Lord.

Feb. 28. The land upon which the house stands has been given to us.

March passed—no money "for the house." April came and spent four of her days, and yet no money; but God gave us especial strength to trust Him. On the 4th we met as usual at the H. S. C. Agreed to ask the Lord that that money might be to hand by the 1st of May, in order that all the world might see that He was "the same yesterday, to-day and forever;" and to assure us we were acting in accordance with "His will," he would send us before this day week some token, if only one dollar marked for the building.

We left the matter then at His footstool, deciding not to ask again, as we believed He would send it (Matt. xxi, 22). April 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th passed, still no money. On the morning of the 8th, the post brought a letter enclosing \$50.00 "for the immediate exigencies in connection with the Elizabeth street property."

The 11th: just one week to-day since we asked our Father to send us a token, and with grateful hearts, we knelt and thanked Him. Before the meeting closed, a lady came in to say her husband had some letters would send us by the first of May the sum required, \$500. Oh, "trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding," for "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength."

I simply make these statements, that all

the Lord's children may see and know that He who watches the fall of a sparrow, will redeem His promises." Only trust Him, only trust Him now!

We take possession of the house on the 1st. Many extras will be needed, as also the remaining \$2,000, but "The Same" will supply all our need.

Yours faithfully,

L. MCMASTER.

April 12th, 28/8.

## Religious Intelligenc.

## DENOMINATIONAL

## ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Baptisms reported during the month at: Ailsa Craig, 11; Alvinston, 21; Brantford, 12; 3; Brantville; Chatham; Claremont, 13; Durham; 3; Eugenia Falls, 4; Forest, 7; Grimsby, 7; Hamilton, Park St., 10; Kincardine, 5; London, York St., 20; Malahide and Bayham, 22; Manilla, 2; Medoms, 2; Midland, 2; Montreal, 12; 1; Oliver, 8; Mount Forest, 3; Notfield, 13; Port Rowan, 11; Priceville, 11; Smith, 7; South Gower, 5; Sparra, 2; Stratford, 6; St. Catharines, Queen St., 4; St. Thomas, Zion, 3; Toronto, College St., 21; Tyrus St., 18; Parliament St., 8; Yorkville, 2; Welland, 3; Whitty, 1; Wingham, 6; Yarmouth First, 15.

Pastoral Settlements.—Bro. G. B. DAVIS, of the C. L. Institute, has accepted the call of the Onondaga churches to be their pastor, and expects to enter upon his ministry in the latter part of this month. Bro. J. H. MARSH has returned from the United States, and settled as pastor of the church in Barstow, Que.

Ordinations.—Bro. A. M. ELEY has been publicly set apart to the work of the gospel ministry at Howick. Bro. THOMAS B. GREEN, of Bolton, Que., has been ordained as an evangelist at Egan, Que.

Church Recognition.—The newly organized church of baptized believers, at Ansonville, was publicly recognized as a sister Baptist church, by a Council that met for that purpose on the 6th March, ult. There are at present 18 members.

Chapels Dedicated.—BISMARCK.—A very neat frame chapel, costing \$1400, was opened for Divine service in this rapidly growing village, on the line of the Canada Southern Railway on the 24th of February. Rev. Prof. Torrance, of Woodstock, preached the dedication sermon.

OTTAWA—The basement of the new edifice being erected for the Ottawa Baptist church, was dedicated to the service of God on Lord's Day, March 17th, the sermons being preached by the Rev. J. L. Campbell, pastor of St. Catherine St. church, Montreal. Rev. A. A. Cameron, the esteemed pastor, and his people are to be congratulated on so soon moving into their new home. It is confidently hoped that the whole edifice will have been completed and dedicated before the forthcoming meetings of the Eastern Convention, to be held at Ottawa in September.

CHATHAM—On the same day (17th March) the completion of the Baptist chapel in Chatham was celebrated by appropriate dedication services, the preachers being Rev. Dr. Fyfe, of the Institute, Rev. J. R. Battisby (Presbyterian), of Chatham, and Rev. Dr. Davidson, Secretary of the Convention. Through the efforts of Dr. Davidson and the blessing of God, the handsome sum of \$4,800 was raised in cash and pledges during the various meetings connected with the dedication services. The Chatham chapel is a handsome brick building in the simple Gothic style, which, with ground, organ, furnishings, etc., is worth some \$18,000. The main audience-room will seat comfortably 1,000 persons, while the Sunday

School apartments will accommodate 400 scholars. The pastor is Rev. E. J. Stobo, formerly of Brampton.

Miscellaneous.—The Barrie Baptist church celebrated their first anniversary on the 22nd of February, by a very enjoyable Social. The annual report showed an increase in the membership of the church during the first year of its existence of 66 souls, of whom 20 were added by baptism, 15 by letter and 21 by experience. The amount of money raised by the church during the year was \$1,500. The Barrie church are a live people, with an earnest, eloquent and devoted pastor; and God is blessing them.

## MARITIME PROVINCES.

Baptisms reported during March: Aylesford, 10; Beaver River, 23; Billtown, 34; Bridgewater; Bridgetown, 2; Chepoggin, 20; Digby, 24; Elgin, 4; 1; Fairfield, 2; Lawrenceburg, 1; Long Reach, 5; Lower Sable, 8; Mabou, C. B., 8; Moncton, 12; New Germany, 14; New Glasgow, 3; Osborne, 2; Oak Bay, 14; Paradise, 24; Rosway, 8; Southampton, 4; St. George, 1; St. John's, 1; St. Margaret's Bay, 9; Sussex, 4; Tyron, P. E. I., 10.

Ordination.—Bro. J. B. WOODLAND was publicly set apart for the work of the gospel ministry at Cavendish, P. E. I., on the 28th of March, and has settled as pastor of the church in that place.

## MANITOBA.

The Church in Winnipeg is enjoying a season of revival, and several converts have been baptized.

## JAMAICA.

The following paragraph will be peculiarly interesting to those who know Mr. Philippo. Nearly forty years ago when his *(Christian Messenger)* knew him he was a fine portly gentleman, of apparently good years of age. He was therefore now be upwards of eighty years old! From Jamaica comes the news of an interesting baptismal service at Old Harbour Bay. On the Sunday, after services held during the greater part of the preceding night, and on the early morning of the Sabbath, when an immense congregation assembled, Rev. Mr. Philippo administered the ordinance of baptism to twenty-seven persons in the sea. According to the writer, the mass of spectators of all classes which lined the shore for a considerable distance, on foot, on horseback, and in different vehicles, added to the numbers that nearly closed the place of baptism, was beyond calculation. Services followed during the after part of the day to overflowing congregation, and the day closed amidst mutual congratulations of worshippers on the auspicious circumstances of the occasion, and with expressions of pleasing anticipation of peace, prosperity, and happiness for the year.

## ITALY.

Rome is now being visited by a party of Baptists who have gone under the special direction of Mr. Cook, the great conductor of travelling parties to the East. There were expected to be from 30 to 50 ministers and prominent brethren. The London Baptist of the 25th ult., contains a highly interesting letter from that renowned city. It says: "On Friday morning, the missionaries and evangelists who are labouring in Italy in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society, met in the Sala Christiana for prayer and conference. Drs. Underhill and Landels were present.

It was the first meeting of the kind which had been held in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society, and was naturally looked forward to with a considerable degree of interest. Mr. Wall had long wished that such a meeting could be held; and both Dr. Underhill and Dr. Landels were to be in Rome; it was thought that the time would be opportune for carrying out the

long-cherished purpose. The brethren, on Mr. Wall's invitation, came together from different parts of the country; and some who had never before had an opportunity of forming acquaintances and friendships which will prove lasting as eternity. From the extreme north came Dr. Laura, of Toronto, a noble-looking man, who has suffered much for the Gospel, and whose love for it has only been strengthened by what it has cost him. The extreme south was represented by two brethren from Sicily, one of them the Secretary and the other a member of the little church which has been recently formed in Trapani, whose zeal in the cause led them to undertake a journey of some three or four days, by sea and land. Signor Baratti, was there from Leghorn, and Stagnitta from Civita Vecchia; the different evangelists employed in and around Rome were there, of course; and the brothers Landels, with Signor Jathier, the evangelist from Naples. The conference lasted two days, beginning with a prayer-meeting at half-past seven on Saturday night—the intervening hours being so fully occupied that on Friday the brethren did not separate until midnight. Matters connected with the future conduct of the work in Italy were freely discussed, and resolutions unanimously passed.

The chapel at the Monte, built for Signor Grassi, chafed through the indelicate exertions of Mr. Thomas Cook, belongs to the General Baptists. Messrs. Wall and Grassi are as one in their work.

The new chapel is externally a neat structure; not imposing, of course, in this city of great churches; but neither sawdry or pretensions. It is oblong in shape, with a raised-off platform at one end. In the back part of this is an open baptistery, and in the front stands the preacher.

Mind and body are alike ministered to in the most beautiful manner in this glorious land. Would that its present inhabitants were worthy of their ancestry and their country. But, alas! to the Christian observer, there is that meeting the eye at almost every turn which tells that scarcely less than in the island cursed by heathenism, of which the poet sang:

"Here every prospect pleases,  
And our small joys comply."

—*Christian Messenger*, (Halifax).

**WOMAN'S BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY of Convention West. Received since the beginning of March:**

Jarvis St. ....	\$19.55
Whitby .....	4.00
Yorkville .....	17.76
Ingersoll .....	11.81
Brantford .....	22.16
Port Burwell .....	5.00
Paris .....	14.00
Alexander St. ....	12.85

ERSKINE BUCHAN,  
Treasurer.

Yorkville, April 9th 1878.

**GRAND LIGNE MISSION.**

*To the friends of the Grand Ligne Mission:*  
**DEAR BROTHERS!**—The Rev. John Alexander has been appointed by the Board of the Grand Ligne Mission Society its agent in Canada, the United States, and Great Britain, to advocate its interests and to collect funds for its operations. The members of the Board feel great satisfaction in committing such an important work to one so well qualified to attend to it as brother Alexander, a former President of the Society, and ever one of its most appreciative and val-

uable friends whom they now most earnestly commend to the fullest confidence and kindest consideration of all to whom he may present the cause of French Catholic Evangelization in Canada.

Respectfully,  
A. H. MUNRO,  
President of the Grand Ligne Mission.  
THEODORE LAFLEUR,  
Cor. Sec.

**Selections.**

**A SAILOR BOY'S LIGHT IN A DARK PLACE.**

Not long ago a lady missionary of the New York Port Society spoke to a mate on the subject of the great salvation. He was a hard, not to say a harsh man, and remained apparently unimpressed by her earnest appeal. At length, however, he said to her, "I must confess that one thing which occurred on a recent voyage made an impression upon me. We were lying in the port of Marseilles, where no vessel is allowed to have any light at night. One night when it was my watch I was walking the deck when I saw a faint light forward, which presently went out and in a moment was followed by another. Believing that something wrong was going on, I walked softly forward, and there under the top-gallant forecastle I saw a quiet lad, one of the crew, with a Testament on his knees (it was one you gave him, with your name written in it), with one finger on the page to keep the place, and a match in the other hand, by the light of which he was reading, while it lasted, and then striking another. "I must confess," he added in a softened manner, "that touched me, and I did not disturb him."

That tired and timid lad reading the Scriptures in that narrow, tossing closet, by match-light, would make a striking picture, which would need as a companion piece, to give it full effect, a view of the brilliantly lighted parlour, where the daily paper and the last novel are being diligently read, while the richly-bound Bible, with its heavy clasps—sad superfluities—figures only as a par-  
lour ornament.

**DR. DODD'S SERMON ON "MALT."**

*Preached to some Cambridge scholars extempore from a hollow tree.*

The following sermon was made and preached extempore by one Parson Dodd, who lived within three or four miles of Cambridge, and who having for high half a year, every Sunday, preached on the same subject, which was DRUNKENNESS, gave some of the Cambridge scholars occasion to be displeased with him, who thought he reflected upon them: they resolved to be even with the doctor when an opportunity should offer. Accordingly, chance one day led the doctor in their way: a company of scholars being walking, they saw the doctor some way off, coming towards them, and, all stopping at a gate that hung to a hollow tree, the doctor presently came up, and they spoke very friendly to him. "Your servants, Mr. Dodd," "Your servant, gentlemen." "Sir, we have one question to ask you." "What is that, gentlemen?" "Why we hear you have been preaching a long time against the sin of drunkenness." "I have, gentlemen." "Then, doctor, we have one request you must and shall satisfy us in." "What is that, gentlemen?" "Why, that you preach us a

sermon from a text that we shall choose for you." "Appoint your time and place, gentlemen, and I will do it." "The time is present, and the place is here, and that hollow tree shall be your pulpit." "That's a compulsion, gentlemen: a man ought to have time to consider what he is to preach." They insisted on a compliance, or they would use him ill; not minding any expostulations from the doctor, they accordingly forced him into the hollow tree. The word they gave him for his text was MALT! from which, he preached the following short, but eloquent sermon.

**THE SERMON.**

My brethren, let me crave your reverend attention: I am a little jnan, come at a short warning, to preach you a short sermon, to a thin congregation, in a unworship pulpit. Brethren my text is malt: now I cannot divide it into sentences, because there are none; nor into words, if being but one; nor into syllables, it being but one also; therefore, I must, and necessity will oblige or rather force me to divide it into letters, which I find in my text to be four, M, A, L, T. M, my beloved, is moral, A allegorical, L literal, and T theological. Moral, my brethren, is well set forth to show and teach you drunkards good manners; therefore, M my masters, A all of you, L listen, T to my text.

The allegorical, is when one thing is spoken of and another meant; the thing spoken of is malt, the thing meant is the oil of malt, or rather the spirit or strength of the malt, properly called strong beer; which you, gentlemen, make M your meat, A your apparel, L your liberty, and T your treasure. Now the literal is according to the letter, M much, A ale, L little, T thirst. Now the theological is according to the effects that it worketh, which I find in my text to be of two kinds: first in this, secondly, in the world to come. Now the effects that I find it worketh in this world, are, in some M murder, in other, A adultery, in all L looseness of life, and in many T treason. Now, the effects that I find it worketh in the world to come, are M misery, A anguish, L lamentation, and T torment. Now, my first use shall be a use of exhortation: M my masters, A all of you, L leave off, T tipping; or else M my masters, A all of you, L look for, T torment. Now, so much shall suffice for this explication. Next only, by way of caution, take this for an inviolable truth, that a drunkard is the annoyance of modesty, the disturber of civility; a spoiler of wealth; the destroyer of reason; the brewer's agent; the ale house's benefactor; the beggar's companion; the constable's perplexity; his wife's woe; his children's sorrow; his neighbour's scoff; his own shame; and a willful madman: by which he becomes a true and lively representation of a walking swill-tub, or a tavern Bacchus, in a monster of a man, by the picture of a beast. So, now, gentlemen, to conclude, I shall leave you, under the protection of the Almighty, to follow your own directions.—Facite Cambridgeenses.

A Boy in an Aberdeen school, in parsing the noun "sufrage," said it was of the masculine gender. "Why masculine?" asked the teacher. "Because there's no female sufrage," was the reply.