

SYNOD OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA.

The Synod of Montreal and Ottawa met in St. Andrew's Church, Perth, on the evening of Tuesday, 20th inst. Rev. Dr. McNish, the retiring Moderator, preached an able and lucid sermon, liberal in tone, on the polity of Presbyterianism, based on 1 Timothy v. 17. After announcing that it devolved on the Synod to appoint a successor, Dr. McNish expressed his thanks for the honour which had been conferred on him.

On motion of Rev. Robert Campbell, seconded by Dr. Bennett, Rev. Donald J. McL., B.A., of Arnprior, was unanimously elected Moderator for the current synodical year.

The first hour on Wednesday morning was spent in devotional exercises by the Moderator and several of the members of the Synod.

MISSION TO LUMBERMEN.

Dr. Moore, of Ottawa, submitted a report of the Committee on the Mission to Lumbermen. It showed that though the work was beset with special difficulties much good had been accomplished. The details and recommendations of the report led to an interesting discussion in which Messrs. J. A. F. McBayne, James Paterson, G. C. Heine, J. B. Edmondson, Joseph White, Professor Scrimger, and others participated. It was agreed to apply for grants in aid of the funds to the Home Mission Committee and the French Evangelization Board, and to commend the Scheme to the liberality of the congregations.

Dr. Moore presented a request to be allowed to retire from the Convenership of the committee, which was granted, and the Rev. William D. Armstrong, Ottawa, was unanimously appointed Convener and Treasurer.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

The Assembly's remit on Sabbath Observance was then considered. The Rev. Joseph Whyte stated that Sabbath work on railways had largely increased of late, and that advice had been taken as to the best way of diminishing unnecessary Sabbath labour. Messrs. J. B. Edmondson, Dr. Bennett, Robert Bell, and others, discussed the matter, when it was resolved that a standing committee of the Synod be appointed, with Mr. Joseph Whyte, Convener.

SUPPLY OF VACANCIES.

After deliberation, a committee, to advise with similar committees appointed by other Synods to mature a practicable scheme for the distribution of preachers, was appointed, consisting of Messrs. F. M. Dewey, Convener, F. W. Farries, D. Kellock and R. H. Warden.

APPOINTMENT OF NEXT MEETING.

It was unanimously resolved that the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa meet in Knox Church, Montreal, on the third Tuesday of April, 1887, at eight o'clock p.m.

STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. G. M. Clark, of New Edinburgh, presented a full and exhaustive report of the Committee on the State of Religion, which revealed on the whole a hopeful and encouraging condition of Church life and work.

Regret was expressed that returns from congregations were not so full as could be desired, and that in some cases the duty of sending returns had been neglected altogether. In most instances an increased attendance on and a greater interest in the means of grace and a growing liberality were reported. The report concluded with a recommendation that the General Assembly should prepare a series of questions on the State of Religion for the whole Church, and that Presbyteries be urged to hold conferences and that sessions should enjoin the maintenance of family worship, and that parents be exhorted to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

In the evening Rev. A. McGillivray, of Williamstown, submitted a brief and concise report of the Sabbath School Committee. Though the returns were incomplete, the statement showed that 145 schools had reported with 13,133 pupils on the roll and 1,430 teachers. The contributions were \$8,793, of which \$4,296 were for missions.

EVENING MEETING.

There was a large attendance at the evening meeting, and special addresses were delivered by the Rev. John Fraser, of Indian Lands, on the best way to interest the Church in Christian work; Rev. Henry J. McDermid on the maintenance of spiritual life; the Moderator, Rev. Donald J. McLean, on the need of the Church for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit; and Dr. Jardine, of Brockville, on the importance of the Christian training of the young. Short addresses were also delivered by Rev. Messrs. Campbell, W. J. Dey, James Watson, and G. M. Clark.

On Thursday morning the Rev. W. J. Dey, of Montreal, presented a full and carefully prepared report on

TEMPERANCE.

Sixty-four out of 154 congregations had reported. From these returns it was learned that there had been a perceptible decrease of intemperance wherever the Canada Temperance Act had been adopted within the bounds of the Synod. There was a manifest improvement in the habits and social condition of the people. The various Evangelical Churches had wrought earnestly for the promotion of the temperance cause. Regret was expressed that in some places the Act had not been enforced with sufficient strictness.

After discussion, in which Messrs. G. M. Clark, A. McGillivray, J. A. G. Calder, J. Watson, Robert Bell, Dr. Jardine, John Fraser, H. J. McDermid, G. C. Heine, took part, the various recommendations with which the report concluded were adopted, and it was agreed to forward petitions against the proposed wine and beer clauses in the Scott Act, and in favour of the more stringent enforcement of its provisions, to the Dominion and Provincial Legislatures, the former to be entrusted to Senators Scott and Vidal, Messrs. Joseph Jamieson, M.P., Robert Campbell, M.P., Dr. Ferguson, M.P., and Donald MacMaster, M.P.

EDUCATION.

Professor Scrimger submitted the report of the Committee on Protestant Education in the Province of Quebec. It recommended that the qualifications and salaries of teachers should be increased, and that the Bible should be used in all the Protestant Schools. The report was adopted, and the committee re-appointed.

LOTTERIES.

The committee appointed last year to consider the subject of lotteries reported through the Convener, the Rev. Robert Campbell, of Montreal. The anomalous laws of Quebec and Ontario relating to lotteries were cited, and their amendment strongly urged. The report led to a vigorous condemnation of all unworthy methods of raising money for religious purposes.

After the customary votes of thanks to the trustees of St. Andrew's Church, the people of Perth for their generous hospitality, and the railway companies for reduced rates, the Synod was closed with the benediction.

OBITUARY.

MARY RUSSELL.

On the 26th March, Miss Mary Russell, of Glasgow, Scotland, entered unto the rest which remaineth for the people of God. She had been for nearly thirty years actively connected with good works in Montreal. Several of the mission schools were greatly benefited by her services, and she will be much missed by many, who, from her kindly manner, were in the habit of addressing her by the familiar name of Auntie. The following words of a modern poet are most appropriate in her case:

"Who oft times will withdraw, as if by stealth,
To render good to others unawares—
Well known to them the haunts of poverty,
Clothed are the naked, and the hungry fed:
Oft take they place beside the patient's bed,
To cheer sad hours, to soothe keen agony.
These are earth's salt—they labour with a mind,
Distress relieving, lessening human woe;
In all their actions earnest, gentle, kind,
Leaving sweet impress wheresoe'er they go.
Theirs Heaven's reward: a crown upon each brow."

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY REV. R. P. MACKAY, B.A.

May 9,
1886.]

SOWING AND REAPING.

{ John 4:
27-42.GOLDEN TEXT.—"One soweth and another reapeth."
—John iv. 27.

INTRODUCTORY.

Recall the last lesson. The place was of great historic interest. The well from which Jacob drank—property once the inheritance of Joseph—the Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, where Joshua built an altar and formally set up the true religion in the promised land (Josh. viii. 30). That is the place where the conversation took place in which Jesus established the true religion in the heart of an abandoned woman, and spoke words that have ever since, and ever will be, amongst the most precious that fell from His lips.

He lifted her thoughts away from the satisfactions of this life to eternal joys, by creating a sense of need—of moral leprosy. He revealed His own Messiahship, and the broader nature of the new dispensation. In the greater light men would not need the crutches of Jewish ceremonial to enable them to worship God; but would anywhere and everywhere in spirit and truth offer acceptable worship to the God who is a Spirit. The woman was apprehended of the truth, that she could not apprehend it, and fell back on the hope that by and by, when the Messiah came, all would be made plain. That is a prospect in which the Church can still rejoice, for even yet we have only rays of the coming glory.

EXPLANATORY.

I. A Female Missionary. (Verses 28, 29).—The woman, upon the arrival of the disciples, went away, leaving her water-pot behind. Some have said that her reason was that she wanted to accommodate the Saviour and disciples by the use of it. She would, no doubt, be willing to do that if it had occurred to her; but she, probably, was so engrossed with the great matter that occupied her attention, and her desire to publish it, that she could think of nothing else.

All things, etc. A very natural instance of exaggeration. Jesus did not review her whole life, but He told her enough to lead her to believe that He knew all the rest. It is an inference we constantly draw. He did not tell us all about our own natures; but He has told enough to satisfy us that He knows all. So with the revelations of heaven and the future.

The Messiah!—She does not say it but believes it. The very suggestion was exciting to a waiting people. The very possibility of finding Christ should make us put ourselves about.

Come, see.—That is the true method of preaching. Not like the Pharisees, laying burdens on others they would not themselves touch (Matt. xxiii. 4); but saying, like Moses, "Come with us and we will do thee good."

Her message was accepted and greatly blessed.

II. The Disciples Instructed.—Long before the disciples came back to the well, they could see Jesus in conversation with the woman, owing to its elevated position on a spur of the mountain.

Marvellous. (Ver. 27).—They were astonished at such unrabbinical conduct. To converse with a woman, and especially such a woman, in a public place, was against the current code of propriety.

But Jesus was above ordinary propriety. To save souls is the greatest kindness and breaks through all custom.

What seekest thou?—They would like to ask Him whether He was seeking water, or bread, or to remonstrate with Him on such impropriety. Perhaps it even occurred to them that He might be seeking a soul. But they dared not ask. Here we see the majesty of our Saviour's presence, with whom even His most intimate companions could not indulge familiarity. With what reverence we should approach Him!

Master, eat.—He seemed indifferent to the food of which He stood so much in need, and they venture to ask Him to eat. They could not understand Him, but loved Him nevertheless.

I have meat to eat, etc. (Ver. 32).—In His earnestness to win a soul He forgot the wants of the body. Sometimes Christians have been so filled with the Spirit as to forget the most intense suffering. If we were always animated with holy love and zeal, much that now makes life unhappy would pass unnoticed.

Dulness. (Ver. 33).—They do not understand Him—like the woman (ver. 11), Nicodemus (iii. 4) and the Jews (ii. 20). That dulness did not disappear until after the Pentecostal outpouring. The Spirit brightens all our faculties.

My meat is to do, etc. (Ver. 34).—None but Christ could say this. Whilst many can say, that in many things they seek the will of God, none ever came to that fulness of consecration, that in every part the life was for God. With Him it was uppermost, possessing Him to the exclusion of even the wants of the body—necessary as they were.

He had the whole future in His eye—to do and finish. The prospect to Him was very bright, knowing as He did what the consummation is to be.

Rapid growth. (Ver. 35).—He asks them to look at the fields which would yet require four months before being ready for the harvesters. But not in the spiritual as in the natural world. The seed must get its usual time to ripen; but the spiritual seed often springs up and bears fruit in a very short time. Probably at the same time that they saw the fields they saw the inhabitants of Sychar coming towards them as the result of his conversation with the woman.

There are two kinds of work needed in order to get this harvest.

Sower and Reaper. (Ver. 37).—It is usually understood that certain men are sowers and others reapers; or that often one man is both sowing and reaping. Moses and the Prophets and Apostles and Christian workers in all ages have laboured and other men have reaped the fruits of their labours. Whilst there is truth in that yet, strictly the correct view is that Jesus Himself is the only Sower, and all others are reapers. He sowed Himself as the seed whence eternal life springs, and no soul is ever gathered until Jesus first sows—prepares that soul to be gathered.

The "other men" of ver. 38, will then be taken as another of these expressions of humility so frequent in our Saviour's addresses, in which He speaks indirectly about Himself.

Wages. (Ver. 36).—He that reapeth receiveth wages. He receives the joy of bringing souls unto the kingdom—the affection now, and the rewards of heaven hereafter.

Mutual rejoicing.—There is no room for jealousy in the service of Christ. That souls are saved at all, by whomsoever the Lord may work, should be a cause of rejoicing to all. But by taking Christ as the Sower, our thoughts are carried away in the future when He and all His servants will rejoice forever.

III. Diligence Rewarded. (Ver. 39).—There are two instances.

(1) The woman rewarded.—Many believed on Jesus because of the saying of the woman. Her simple testimony about what Christ did for her brought disciples to Christ. David frequently professes his intention to tell others what God did for his soul. We should not be ashamed to tell the power of grace when we know it. A simple testimony will often accomplish more than eloquent preaching.

(2) Samaritans rewarded. (Ver. 40).—They came and besought Him that He would remain with them. He gave them two days—the most precious gift they ever received. He taught, and on account of His words many more believed. How little after all we know of the words of Jesus! Only an occasional address or conversation recorded in these blessed Gospels. How much unrecorded transpired during these two days! If He thought it best for us He would have preserved them.

If we do, as the Samaritan did, beseech Him, He will come and abide with us and we shall be blessed. If so much can be got by importunity, why so little of it?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. We can rise above the world's inconveniences.
2. Put your religion into practice.
3. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him (Psa. cxxvi. 6).
4. Cultivate joy in the success of others.
5. The blessedness of having Christ abiding with us!

THE memory of Stonewall Jackson will be honoured by a costly monument, the sum required for it being contributed by the States of Virginia and South Carolina in particular.

It is probable that the Marquis of Breadalbane will be the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland this year. The Assembly has been summoned to meet on May 20.

THE Rev. Donald McCallum, Watnish, Skye, has been censured by the Presbytery for his action on the Crofter question, and he was also solemnly admonished to be more careful and guarded in his language in the future.

THE Rev. Wm. Pattison, for fifty-seven years minister of Second Church, Bangor, died lately in his eighty-first year. The death is also announced of Rev. Thomas Greer, Anahilt, who likewise had been upward of fifty years in the ministry.