

years, and Messrs. Wilson and Gracey were appointed a committee to draft a suitable obituary minute. A call was presented from Amherst Island in favour of Mr. James Cumberland, probationer. The salary promised was \$600, with manse and an acre of land. The call was sustained, and ordered to be forwarded to Mr. Cumberland. The decision in the case of the Rev. Joshua Fraser was re-opened for consideration at next meeting. An application from the Rev. John L. Stuart, of Trenton, for leave of absence for five months, on the ground of ill-health, was granted, and sympathy expressed with him in his affliction. The committee appointed to visit the congregations of Huntingdon reported that said congregations were willing to contribute \$230 towards Mr. Gray's support. In this way the Home Mission Fund is relieved. It was decided to send a student during the holidays to the terminus of the Kingston and Pembroke Railway, for the purpose of exploring. Steps are being taken to establish, if practicable, an ordained missionary in Carlow, and surrounding townships in North Hastings. The committees to examine the discourses of students, reported that Messrs. Bickell, Miller, Murray, Kellock and W. Smith had complied with the requirement, and the Clerk was instructed to furnish them with certificates. Messrs. Gracey and Matthews with their elders were appointed a committee to tabulate the returns on the state of religion. Intimation was given that the congregation of Roslin had decided to build a new church, and that the amount required for this purpose was subscribed. A committee, of which Mr. Chambers is convener, was appointed to consider the provisions of the sustentation scheme—to report thereon at next meeting. The committee appointed to take charge of the election and ordination of elders at Camden and Newburgh reported that the matter had been duly attended to. A session was constituted with Mr. Cornack as Moderator. The following were appointed to look after the interests of the several schemes in the congregations within the bounds. Namely.—Dr. Smith, the Home Mission Fund; Mr. Maclean, the Foreign Mission Fund; Mr. Young, the fund for French Evangelization; Mr. Wishart, the College Fund; Mr. Wilson, the Ministers', Widows' and Orphans' Fund, etc.; and Mr. Gray, the Assembly Fund. Dr. Smith was empowered to raise within the bounds the sum of thirty-three dollars, to meet a claim for arrears made by Mr. Beattie for services rendered at St. Columba.—THOMAS S. CHAMBERS, *Pres. Clerk.*

WE notice that a new departure has been made in business schools by the President of the British American Commercial College in this city, in granting gold and silver medals to the students who have attained the highest standard in the different departments of the Institution. These prizes will be awarded in the spring by the President of the Institute of Accountants and Adjusters of Canada. A leading position has always been taken by this school, and it has done much in preparing young men and ladies for business pursuits.

THE WALDENSIAN PASTORS AND PROFESSORS IN THE VALLEYS OF PIEDMONT.

To the Pastors of the Churches represented in the Alliance whose General Council was assembled in Philadelphia in September and October last.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The undersigned were appointed by the General Council to lay before the Churches in America the wants of the pastors and professors of the Waldensian churches, in the Valleys of Piedmont, Northern Italy.

These churches have, through long centuries of persecution and sufferings, held the faith in its purity, and at this day are among the most interesting and deserving of the members of the great family to which we belong. To them the whole Protestant Church owes a debt of gratitude for witnessing before the world a good confession, and maintaining the faith in the midst of general decay and defection.

Since 1847, the Waldensians have become a missionary church, and have planted stations in all parts of Italy and Sicily. But the pastors in their native valleys have been left with very inadequate support.

There are now twenty-two pastors and professors of the Waldensian churches in Piedmont. They are very poor. They receive a stipend of only \$300 each, annually, hardly enough to give them the necessities

of life. The proposition was approved by the late General Council in Philadelphia, to raise a fund to be invested in Great Britain under the charge of a committee, the income of which shall be applied to augment the salaries of these pastors so that they may receive \$500 each, annually.

The churches of Piedmont will aid in this cause, but about \$60,000 will be required for this fund from the Churches of Great Britain and America.

The first General Council at Edinburgh, in 1877, appointed a committee for the purpose of securing the amount required. The Council recently held in Philadelphia, have added to that committee the undersigned, to act in America.

The plan proposed is that one-third of the fund required, namely, the sum of \$20,000, shall be raised by the American Churches, and two-thirds by the Churches of Great Britain and by the Waldensian churches.

The Churches of Scotland have already made large collections for this object.

This fund, if raised, will be a fitting thank offering by the Churches connected with the alliance, for the great blessing of unity and Christian fellowship which have pervaded their Councils.

It will be the first practical result of our co-operation, a noble monument of our catholic spirit, and a harbinger of the great work which the grand Alliance hopes to accomplish in the future.

Your Committee have considered it best to recommend that a contribution for this object be taken in all the Churches connected with the Alliance, on the first Sabbath of January next, and after the reading of the Pastoral Letter addressed by the Alliance to the Churches, or as soon thereafter as possible, and they request the pastors to commend this first effort of the Alliance for practical co-operation to all the churches.

The collection should be forwarded to William E. Dodge, E-q., Treasurer of the Committee, No. 11 Cliff street, New York HENRY DAY, *Chairman.*

S. Irenaeus Prime, Wm. P. Breed, Wm. U. Murkland, John Hall, A. R. Van Nest, G. D. Mathews, W. J. R. Taylor, William E. Dodge, William Neely, *Committee.*

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON II

Jan. 9. } THE SONG OF MARY. { Luke i. 46-55.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."—Luke i. 46, 47.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke i. 18-25.....Dumbness of Zacharias.
Tu. Luke ii. 26-38.....Annunciation to Mary.
W. Luke i. 39-55.....Mary's Visit to Elisabeth.
Th. 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.....Song of Hannah.
F. Ps. ciii. 1-22.....Everlasting Mercy.
S. Isa. lxi. 1-16.....Blessings on the Godly.
Sab. Ex. xv. 1-19.....Song of Moses.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Six months after the announcement of the coming of John the Baptist (see Lesson I.) it was revealed to Mary, a Jewish maiden, descended from King David, but in a lowly condition of life, that a son should be born to her, whom she was instructed to name Jesus (Saviour) because He should save His people from their sins.

At the same time Mary was informed that the birth of John the Baptist should precede that of her own son; and she immediately set out upon a journey of about one hundred miles, from her home at Nazareth to some town in the hill country of Judea (perhaps Hebron), to visit her cousin Elisabeth, the mother of John, in order that, in the near prospect of the coming salvation, they might together praise God for His goodness to themselves and to others. Mary's beautiful hymn on this occasion forms the subject of our present lesson. Its divisions are: (1) *Praise to God for Personal Mercies*, (2) *Praise to God for His goodness to His People*, (3) *Praise to God for Executing Judgment*, (4) *Praise to God for sending the promised Messiah*.

I. PRAISE TO GOD FOR PERSONAL MERCIES.—vers. 46-49. Mary's song has been much admired by the Christian Church in all ages. It is known as the "Magnificat" from the first word of a metrical Latin version of it which has been set to appropriate music.

My soul doth magnify the Lord. The word "magnify" may be taken in its ordinary sense, not to make the object greater, but to make it appear greater than it formerly did. The Lord could not be made greater than He had actually been, but He could be made greater in Mary's estimation and in that of others.

My spirit hath rejoiced. There is no need here for any metaphysical distinction between soul and spirit. The intention evidently is to include the speaker's whole being.

In God my Saviour. Mary spoke under inspiration, and it is scarcely to be supposed that she understood the full meaning of the words she uttered (see chap. ii. 19, 48, 50, 51), but enough of their glorious import had been revealed to her to make her whole spiritual being with ecstasy. Mary here confesses her need of a Saviour, and in so doing, with her own lips contradicts the Romish fiction of her sinlessness. "It is a great thing," says the "Westminster Teacher," "when we can say 'My Saviour.' Many people can talk about Christ very beautifully and eloquently. They can linger upon the story of His life, and speak with tender accents of His sufferings and death. They can paint the beauties of His character, and tell of the salvation which He has provided. Yet they cannot say, 'He is my Saviour.' And what good does all this knowledge of Christ do them, if they are not saved by Him? I saw a picture of two little beggar children, standing on the pavement before a beautiful house, looking in at the windows, where they beheld a happy family gathered around the table at their evening meal. They saw the comfort that was inside; they could describe it; but they could not call it their own. And while they looked in upon the happy scene, the storm swept about them, they shivered in their thin rags, and felt the goings of unsatisfied hunger. So it is with those who know of Christ and his salvation but cannot say 'He is my Saviour.' They see the joy of others but around them the storm breaks, they stand shivering in the winter of sorrow, and their hungry hearts find no bread to eat. All our study about Christ will do us no good if we do not take Him as our own Saviour and learn to call Him 'My Jesus.'"

The low estate. "Estate" here means condition. Mary could see no reason in herself or in her surroundings why she should be chosen as the mother of Jesus, or why she should be saved at all. She attributes both to God's sovereign grace.

All generations shall call me blessed. So they have done, and so they do to this day. To call her "blessed," or made happy, is quite right; but to call her "mother of God" and "queen of heaven," as the Roman Catholics do, is idolatry.

II. PRAISE TO GOD FOR HIS GOODNESS TO HIS PEOPLE.—vers. 50. Putting aside all farther personal reference, Mary now praises God for the goodness which He manifests in His general dealings with His people.

His mercy is on them that fear Him. As already indicated, the words are prophetic, and refer first to God's goodness in sending His Son to work out Salvation, and then to the blessed results of His work, flowing down from generation to generation, and spreading throughout the world. Those who "fear" God, in the sense here intended, are, not those who are afraid of Him, but those who fear to offend Him, and who reverence, worship, serve and love Him as their God. It is by God's mercy, in their conversion that they were first enabled to do so, and after their conversion "His mercy is on them" still. Mercy is needed as long as sin remains.

III. PRAISE TO GOD FOR EXECUTING JUDGMENT.—vers. 51-53. God's holiness is manifested in this world by saving sinners from their sins, and also by executing judgment on the wicked. The process of separating good and evil has been going on throughout the ages. Either the individual has evil separated from him, or, if thoroughly wedded to it he is "driven away in his wickedness," and parted forever from all that is good.

He hath scattered the proud. It is easy to find illustrations of this in the history of Israel—the manner in which God dealt with Pharaoh and the Egyptians at the time of the exodus, with Sennacherib and his host, and with other enemies of the chosen people; but, in a special manner, it was by sending His Son to work out a salvation which should be "not of works but of grace" that God "scattered the proud." From no religion of human invention is pride completely shut out as it is from the Gospel scheme of redemption.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. The introduction of Christianity, of which there was then an immediate prospect, would effect a complete revolution in the standard of character. That which is great in the eyes of the ungodly becomes despicable in the light of the Gospel; and true worth, divested of meretricious surroundings, is most highly estimated where that light shines clearest. Is this what Mary meant? Perhaps not; perhaps, as already suggested, her words carried meanings which she herself did not perceive. It is possible that to the speaker these words had a very narrow sense, reaching only to the dethronement of Herod and the occupancy of the throne of David by the Messiah, who should reign merely as a temporal prince. This may have been the extent of Mary's view at that time, but the longer "she pondered these things in her heart" the better she understood them.

He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away. This again is one of the grand peculiarities of evangelical Christianity. The thought is found, either expressed or underlying, all through the Saviour's teaching, and through that of His apostles down to the description of the Laodicean Church given in the Book of Revelation. Do not these three verses (51-53) exhibit some of the prime characteristics of the Gospel dispensation, which distinguish it from every other system mentioned among men?

IV. PRAISE TO GOD FOR SENDING THE PROMISED MESSIAH.—vers. 54, 55. These two verses seem to have special reference to the coming of the Messiah for whom Israel had looked so long.

He hath opened his servant Israel. "Holpen" is old English for helped. There was but one way of helping Israel—"I have laid help upon One that is mighty" (Psalm lxxix. 19).

In remembrance of His mercy—that is of His promised mercy; of His pledge to Eve that her seed should yet prevail over the serpent; of the hope of a future atonement held out in the sacrifices offered by the saints of the early Church; of the covenant made with the father of the faithful, as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever.