

pointed to declare the church vacant on the 10th, and Messrs. Drummond (Convener), Abraham and Fraser were appointed a committee of Supply. It was also agreed to commend Mr. Drummond to the Committee of the Aged and Infirm Ministers. The Presbytery thereafter entered on the consideration of the Enniskillen difficulties. Petitions were handed in from some members of Enniskillen and First Cartwright in favour of their pastor, after careful examination of the case, Mr. McLaren gave in his resignation of the charge. The Presbytery agreed to take the usual steps and ordered the clerk to cite congregations to appear for their interests at the next general meeting to be held in Osnawa. Mr. Fraser, as requested at our last meeting, prepared an overture on Systematic Benevolence, to be presented to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston at its next meeting in May, which was now read and adopted by the Presbytery, and Messrs. Fraser and McLellan were appointed to support it on the floor of the Synod. The Presbytery now took up the remits. First, on appointing a secretary for the Sabbath Schools and second, on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund. The former they disapprove, the latter they approve. Mr. McMechan read a very interesting and encouraging report on the State of Religion, for which he received the thanks of the Presbytery. Said report was ordered to be transmitted to the Synod's Committee. A card from the Synod's Treasurer was read stating that \$11 was the proportion of Whitby Presbytery of the expenses of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston for 1889-1890. This account was ordered to be paid. A paper was laid on the table from Ottawa Presbytery on the License Act. It was referred to the Committee on Temperance to report upon at next meeting of Presbytery. An evening meeting open to the public was held for conference. Mr. Kippin introduced the subject of the "Higher Religious Instruction." Several members took part in the discussion, and thereafter Mr. Wm. Patterson, of Cooke's Church, Toronto, delivered one of his telling addresses on "Christian Workers," which was highly appreciated by all who heard it, and for which the meeting gave him a hearty vote of thanks. The Presbytery adjourned to meet at Oshawa on the 15th April at 10.30 a.m.—A.A. DRUMMOND, Pres. Clerk.

#### ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS.

At the annual meeting of the West Presbyterian Church, Toronto, lately held, it was reported that 137 members had been added to the roll and 127 removed from it, making the membership 720, which with twenty-three new members received about the same time make the present membership 743. The sum of \$22.35 was distributed among the Schemes of the General Assembly, being only \$7.50 less than the previous year. There were sixty-five baptisms and thirty-five funerals. Both the attendance and the income have been affected by a succession of wet Sabbaths, and during the last six weeks by the prevailing influenza as well as by a large number of removals to the north and west as well as out of the city, of old and good supporters.

The annual business meeting of St. James' Square Presbyterian Church, Toronto, was held last week in the elegant lecture hall of that edifice, the members of the Church turning out in good numbers. Owing to illness in his family, the pastor, Rev. Dr. Kellogg, was unable to attend. Mr. Thomas Kirkland, M.A., was voted to the chair, and Mr. John Paton acted as secretary. The first business was the reading of the Managers' report, in which was included the financial statement. The entire revenue \$5,152.11 was gathered from weekly collections. The report was duly signed by Messrs. S. F. McKinnon and W. M. Douglas, auditors. The congregation, says the report, has given generously to the support of the Rev. Mr. McGillivray, its missionary in Honan. Electric lighting has been introduced, and it is expected that in the course of a few months satisfactory arrangements may be made for its permanent use throughout the church building, thereby contributing not a little to the comfort of all who attend, especially those who occupy seats in the gallery. The report was adopted and the thanks of the congregation extended to the auditors and treasurer. The sum of \$7,568.90 has been contributed during the year from various branches and missionary organizations of the Church for religious and benevolent purposes to the benevolent fund, as compared with \$6,265.93 contributed last year. Of the former sum \$3,182.28 was contributed by the Missionary Association, \$495.40 by the Chinese Mission Fund, and \$749.62 by the Woman's Missionary Society. Dr. Kellogg and Messrs. Kirkland, Geo. Inglis, and R. M. Gray were appointed a committee to attend to the printing of the reports, and Messrs. John Paton and H. W. Nelson as auditors for the present year. After some discussion a motion was introduced and carried, appointing Messrs. John Cameron and D. S. Keith an Advisory Board with the Session in relation to the service of praise. A motion was also carried voting \$500 to the choir master and organist for the present year. The following are the names of the newly elected trustees:—Messrs. A. Nairn, W. D. McIntosh, James Paton, W. M. Douglas, J. V. Reid, Charles Thompson and James Baik. In reply to a request from St. John's Church, which is still somewhat dependent on St. James' Church financially for a continuance of the annual grant, it was decided on suggestion of the Session to grant it \$400 this year, \$300 next year, \$200 the following, and \$100 in 1893, after which all pecuniary aid will cease. A pleasing feature of the evening was the presentation by Mr. William Kerr, on behalf of the congregation, of a handsomely illuminated address expressive of the high esteem in which Mr. John Douglas and the members of his family are held by the congregation, and the valuable services rendered in conducting the Church's praise for a period of over thirty years by Mr. Douglas. The address was accompanied by a beautiful marble clock and a pair of statuettes to Mr. Douglas and a fine set of silverware to Mr. Wm. M. Douglas, who in the absence of his father, made a very suitable response.

The annual business meeting of St. Andrew's West, Toronto, was held last week in the lecture room of the church. There was a fair attendance, the pastor, Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, in the chair, the secretary being Mr. Mitchell. From the managers' report it appeared that the revenue of the church for the past year had been \$12,233.22. The report says: It is satisfactory to note that St. Mark's Mission Church has during the past year been organized into a separate congregation, with good prospects of becoming self-sustaining at no distant date. In the meantime this congregation continues to assist St. Mark's to the extent of \$1,000 per annum, a first charge against which being the payment of interest on the debt and the insurance on property. The members of the Board of Management were re-elected, Mr. Middleton taking the place of Mr. Sutherland, who retired. The report of St. Andrew's Sunday school gave the following statistics: Average attendance, 171; contributions, \$299.23, disbursed in various sums to many missions of the Church at home and abroad. The teachers number thirty-three, and Mr. Hamilton Cassels is superintendent. The Dorset Sunday school, of which Mr. James Strachan is superintendent, had during the year an average attendance of seventy-four scholars, with 150 on the rolls. The contributions during the year amounted to \$78, and the staff of teachers was fourteen. There is also a night school in connection with the Dorset Mission. The report of the Willing Helpers' Association showed an income of \$412.95, of which \$350 was paid to a Bible reader. The Women's Association report showed a slight decrease from the membership of the past year, and a slight increase in the funds raised for the various objects of the work. Membership, ninety-three; income, \$501. Much good had been done by the Association during the year. Upon the presentation of the report of the Dorset Mission, it was moved by Mr. W. A. Shepard, seconded by Professor McCurdy, that the con-

gregation record its humble acknowledgments to Almighty God for the signal success of the mission. The new building project was endorsed, and the congregation pledges itself to the hearty support of the project. It was announced that conditionally on \$10,000 or \$12,000 being spent on the proposed new building of the Dorset Mission on Nelson Street, a number of members had agreed to subscribe sums amounting to \$5,185. The subscription book was opened, and will remain so till the necessary sum is subscribed. The building, as by plans shown, will be brick, of three storeys and basement with ornamental arched doorway. The total income of the Church from all sources during the year, including \$1,248 raised for special Foreign Mission purposes, was \$78,320.29. Of this sum missions received \$3,453.47 by monthly offerings. Collections for augmentation amounted to \$1,557.52. To the session fund \$600.42 were contributed. Members paid \$6,604.70 toward the endowment of Queen's College during the year, and to wipe out the deficit in Home Missions, \$800; towards Rev. T. Charbonel's church at Ditchfield, \$110.25; to the church at Katrine, \$37. The membership stands at 800, as against 839 last year, 156 communicants having left for St. Mark's; 340 families were represented. Before the close Mr. Macdonnell briefly referred to the work of the various societies, and hoped that the church would continue to prosper.

The congregation of Knox Church, Elora, held its annual meeting on the 13th inst. The total amount raised during the year for all purposes was \$3,331.75. About \$420 of this amount was raised for missionary purposes. Fifty-seven new members were added during the year and ten removed, leaving the membership at present 264. This has been one of the most successful years in the history of this church.

The annual meeting of Caledonia congregation was held on Friday, January 24. There was an attendance of about 150. Highly encouraging reports were presented from all branches of work. There have been added during the year fifty-eight new members—forty-four on profession of faith. The present membership is 285. The whole amount raised by the congregation is \$2,000. There is a cash balance of \$386. The congregation have contributed \$740 to the schemes of which sum \$255 was for foreign missions, \$226 for Home Missions, and \$123 for French Evangelization—less sums for other schemes. Messrs. S. Moore, J. Thorburn, J. Patterson and C. Moses were elected new managers. The Board of Management were ordered to proceed to build a manse, not to exceed in cost \$2,000, and whatever the old church is worth.

The annual meeting of the congregation of Knox Church, St. Thomas, was held last week. The reports from the various departments of church work showed the church to be in a flourishing condition. Mr. J. McCrone, treasurer for the church, read the annual statement, showing that the total receipts for the year were \$4,364.48, with a balance on hand on January 1, 1889, of \$313.98, a total of \$4,678.46. The total expenditure for 1889 was \$4,558.11, leaving a balance on hand January 1, 1890, of \$120.35. The treasurer's report for the Sabbath school showed a balance on hand at last report of \$160.74; receipts to January, 1890, \$285.90, making a total of \$447.44. Disbursements during 1889, \$327.88, leaving a balance on hand of \$119.56. The report of the treasurer of the Ladies' Society showed the receipts to be, including balance on hand, \$790.25; expenditures, \$525.40, leaving a balance on hand of \$264.85. Number of baptisms during the year, children nine, adults seventeen, total twenty-six. Addition to membership, 109; withdrawals by certificate and death, sixty five; net gain, forty two; total membership at close of 1889, 580; total membership at present, 618. During 1889 twenty one who united with the church were from the Sunday school. The report referred to the loss the church had sustained through removal by death of some of the oldest and most esteemed members, and to the sorrow felt at the intelligence of the death of their former beloved pastor, Rev. Dr. Archibald. Upon ballot the following church officers were declared elected: D. M. Tait, E. Rowland, J. R. Campbell, A. McPherson, and J. B. Davidson. Mr. McCrone was unanimously re-elected church secretary and treasurer. Messrs. A. McCrimmon and Joseph Mickleborough were elected auditors.

The annual congregational meeting of Knox Church, Regina, was held recently. Mr. P. Lamont, chairman of Managers, occupied the chair. Reports were presented from the various organizations connected with the church, and from these we gather the following interesting facts: The report of the session, after touching upon the disability under which the session had laboured in consequence of the want of a regular moderator, and loss of Mr. Pirret, its Clerk, expressed its sense of obligation to the Rev. Mr. Taylor, its interim moderator, and devout gratitude to the Lord for the proofs of the congregation's spiritual growth, as evidenced by the additions to its membership of twenty-two by certificate and thirteen by profession, as compared with six and six respectively during the preceding year, and a marked increase of attendance at prayer meeting, especially during the fruitful ministrations of Mr. Russell last summer. It reported a nominal membership of 161, with average attendance of seventy, at quarterly dispensations of communion, also twenty-one baptisms. The report of the Board of Managers and treasurer showed the finances of the church to be in a most satisfactory condition. Besides paying current expenses and a salary of \$200 to organist, and at the rate of \$1,200 per year for pastoral supply, a gallery was erected in the church with a seating capacity of ninety, and the church cleaned and repaired at a cost of \$650; also a payment of \$400 made on the church debt, which is now reduced to \$1,600. Add to this the amounts mentioned in the reports of the Ladies' Society, Sunday school and Missionary Society, and the total amount raised by the congregation during the year will exceed \$4,000, an increase of fully one-third over the previous year. The report of the Sunday school was especially gratifying. Average attendance, 130, average collections, \$4.71, total amount raised for all purposes, \$445.04, amount raised for Sunday School Building Fund, \$263.50. The staff of teachers now numbers sixteen. A society of "King's Daughters" had been organized in connection with the school and was doing a good work. A children's prayer meeting had been carried on with marked success. Even members of the school had united with the church during the year. The Ladies' Association reported organization February 15, 1889. The town had been divided into districts for the visitation of sick and strangers. A bazaar had been held, the proceeds of which exceeded \$500. The total receipts for the year were \$656, of which \$350 had been donated to the managers to assist in making payment on the church debt. The report of the missionary society referred to its organization and work for the year. The amount collected for missions and schemes of the church was \$157.35, being about ninety dollars over last year's collections. The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour also made a lengthy report, showing membership to be fifty-nine, and the work to be progressing in a satisfactory manner. After the reports had been received the election to fill five vacancies on the Board of Management was proceeded with. The following were elected: D. Mowat, A. L. Lunan, J. L. McLellan, Dr. Cowan and Robt. Martin. Mr. Lunan was elected secretary and Mr. W. C. Fowler, Treasurer. A motion was unanimously carried authorizing the Board of Managers to purchase twelve lots between Lorne and Cornwall streets, facing the public square, as a site for church, manse and Sunday school building, and to proceed this year with the erection thereon of a brick manse at a cost not to exceed \$3,000.

## Sabbath School Teacher.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Feb. 16,  
1890.

#### THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

{ Luke 3:  
7-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.—Matt. iii. 2.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

The New Testament says little about the early years of John the Baptist. It tells about his birth and parentage, but its statements concerning the first part of his life, before entering on his public ministry as the harbinger of the Messiah, are summed up thus: The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel. His ministry was chiefly exercised in the wilderness of Judea, the thinly settled region bordering on the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

I. John the Baptist's Preaching.—John was specially prepared for being a preacher of God's truth. It was the work to which he had been consecrated from his birth, not by his parents only, for he was specially called of God. His training in the desert where he had communed with God, his Nazirite vows, and the presence of the Holy Spirit with him, had all tended to raise him high above all worldly and sordid motives. His was the voice of one crying in the wilderness with all the earnestness and fervour of the former prophets. He did not address the people of that day in sweet and courtly phrases. He did not seek to win the favour of his hearers by prophesying smooth things to them. He spoke in the tone of one who is thoroughly in earnest, and he spoke God's message. He was a fearless man. He was as ready to rebuke sin in Herod's palace as he was to tell the meanest sinner to repent. The preaching of John roused general attention. People from all quarters of Judea crowded to hear him, and many were deeply impressed by what he said. The subject of John's preaching was repentance—sorrow for, confessing and forsaking of sin. The baptism of John was a symbol of the soul's purification resulting from the forgiveness of sin. He uses strong language, calling out, "O generation of vipers"—descendants of venomous serpents. And yet it would be difficult to find words that could adequately describe the true nature of sin. It is a deadly poison that destroys the soul's life. It makes people cruel and treacherous, and exercises a benumbing effect on the conscience. Startling language is often needed to arouse the sinner to a sense of his danger. For the sinner there is wrath to come, from which, if he would escape, he must flee. Repentance is the first step. Where this repentance is genuine it will produce appropriate fruits in the life. To this he earnestly exhorts his hearers. Nothing but this will answer. It was of no use to them to boast of being descended from Abraham if they did not profess Abraham's faith and render obedience to God as did the father of the faithful. The stones lying around might as well claim to be Abraham's children, if the people who trusted in their relation to Abraham were living in sinful disobedience of God's law. Then John tells his hearers that destruction is the end of the unrepentant sinner, just as the tree that is hewn down is fit only for the fire.

II. The Effect of John's Preaching.—Many were deeply moved by the warnings addressed to them by John. They asked him in what manner they could best give evidence of their repentance. With clear insight he gave advice suitable to each case. Those who had the means, however humble their lot, should help others in their need. If a neighbour was in want of clothes or food they should relieve their distresses, and thus show their gratitude for God's forgiveness to their fellow men. To the publicans, that is, the tax collectors he said, "Exact no more than is appointed you." Henceforth they were to be honest. A repentant man cannot continue a thief. The soldiers were warned against the sins to which they were especially prone. In the discharge of their duty they were to be no longer cruel. "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any man falsely, and be content with your wages." John not only preached the doctrine of repentance, but he bore direct testimony to the Messiah. He preached Christ. The people wondered who John was. There was a general expectation that the Messiah was to appear, and some wondered if John might not be the long-looked-for Saviour. Though John was faithful in his office, and because he was faithful, he never desired to appear other than he was. There was a mightier One near at hand, for whom he was unworthy to perform even the humblest service,—to unloose the thongs of His sandals,—who should, instead of baptizing with water, baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Baptist uses striking and impressive imagery to express the spiritual truths he wished to teach. The Messiah was likened to an husbandman who winnowed with a fan the wheat from the chaff. In like manner he would separate the good from the bad. The good grain was stored in the barn, and the useless chaff burned. So the redeemed would be gathered into the heavenly inheritance, and the finally impenitent would perish in their sins. Herod Antipas, who ruled over Galilee and Perea, had wickedly enticed away his brother Philip's wife, and for this John courageously and faithfully rebuked him. Here it is stated that as a crowning act of wickedness that he had cast John into prison. He was confined in the fortress of Macherus, on the east of the Dead Sea, where he remained until, at the instigation of Herodias, he was beheaded.

III. The Baptism of Jesus.—The baptism of Jesus was different from the baptism of all others who came to John. For them it was the baptism of repentance. Christ could not repent, for He was absolutely sinless. In His case it was an outward symbol of His consecration to His Messianic work, and as a fulfilment of all righteousness. It was exemplary. For only through the gateway of repentance can we enter the kingdom of heaven. So baptism is the appointed ordinance for entrance into the fellowship of the visible Church. To this ordinance Jesus submitted, and while He was praying, in bodily shape like a dove, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and the manifestation was accompanied by a voice distinctly audible, saying, "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." The ministry of Jesus Christ from its beginning to its close met with the divine approval. On the occasion of His baptism, when entering on the work of publicly unfolding the truth of God, it is supernaturally attested by the symbol of the dove and by the voice expressive of the divine approval. When Jesus, accompanied by His disciples, Peter, James and John, was on the Mount of Transfiguration, amid the glorious things seen and heard, the divine voice once more uttered the words of God's approval of His beloved Son, and the command was added, "Hear ye Him." This was the fulfilment of the prophetic words of Isaiah, recorded in the forty-second chapter, and also of the second Psalm, Hear Him. He speaks as One having authority, and not as the Scribes.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

For every sinner God's immediate message is repent.

Repentance must be evidenced by its appropriate fruits,—obedience to God's holy will.

A pious ancestry will not benefit an unrepentant sinner.

John was God's faithful minister, yet he suffered martyrdom for his faithfulness.