

Coldsprings, came off on Friday evening, the 2nd inst. The Coldsprings people know how to get up a soiree, and their enthusiasm was roused to a more than usual degree by the object for which this one was set on foot, the sending of a New Year's gift to the church in Winnipeg. The Coldsprings people are interested in our enterprise there for two reasons: they have their share of the missionary spirit which rejoices in spreading the Gospel, and some of their own friends have already gone west, with more to follow before long. So the proposal to hold their annual tea meeting and devote the proceeds to the building fund of Mr. Ewing's church, was taken up at once, and the affair came off just a week from the first suggestion of the idea. The night was fine and the sleighing good, and people came from far and near; the Cobourg church being represented by seven or eight sleigh loads of good folks, who took advantage of the occasion to shake off the soberness of city life and enjoy a hilarious ride into the country. Tea was served in the Town Hall, and after doing justice to the excellent provision, the large crowd present adjourned to the Council Chamber up-stairs, where a most enjoyable programme was introduced by a few appropriate remarks by the pastor. The musical part was entrusted to the choir of the Cobourg Congregational church, and they were ably assisted by Miss Appleby and her two brothers. Miss Appleby in her solo, and in the rendering of her part in the duett and quartette, won golden opinions; and the whole musical entertainment was received with delight by the appreciative audience. The making of the speeches fell to the lot of Messrs Beattie, Daboe, and C. S. Pedley, the two former gentlemen being the Presbyterian and Bible Christian ministers of the neighborhood, who by their presence and kind words manifested the sort of sympathy which, coming from the ministers of the different denominations in Winnipeg, cheered Mr. Ewing's heart on his first arrival there. After the usual votes of thanks the meeting broke up, singing "God Save the Queen." Somewhere about \$50 was realized, and it is whispered that the Cobourg people intend, some time soon, to hold a concert, so as to increase this sum by a corresponding amount.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—A person calling himself a Congregational minister, is at present collecting subscriptions on behalf of the "Waubuno" sufferers, in some of the frontier towns.

It would be well to warn your readers against him, as he has no authority whatever to canvass on behalf of the Relief Fund.

G. W. HODGKINS,

Sec.-Treas. Waubuno Relief Fund.

Collingwood, Jan. 5, 1880.

Religious News.

It is said that the "Old Catholics" desire henceforth to be called "Christ Catholics."

THE first Protestant Church in the Tyrol was consecrated on the 2nd of November at Innsbruck.

THE Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain was founded in 1791, and the London Missionary Society dates back to 1795.

IN 1830 the native Christians in India, Burmah, and North and South Ceylon numbered 27,000. Last October there were 460,000.

THE Mennonites are about to establish a mission among the Indians in the island of Kodiak, six hundred miles west of Sitka, Alaska.

SEVEN Congregational churches in Alabama have grown out of missionary effort from Talladega College, and are ministered unto by students or graduates from its theological department.

A CONGREGATIONAL house of worship is in process of erection at Leadville, Col., and a church will be organized and a good and gifted man sought for its pulpit. The Greely Congregational church, Col., has made a contract for a convenient and tasteful brick edifice.

THE New Jersey Congregational minutes shew a list of thirty-one churches (eight of them in Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, or Virginia), having a total membership of 4,685, with a net gain of fifty-three for the year; total charities, \$15,055, home expenses, \$67,802.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON III.

Jan. 18, 1880. JESUS BAPTIZED BY JOHN. Matt. iii. 1-17.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 17.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Luke ii. 40-52. The Childhood of Jesus.
T. Mat. iii. 1-12. The Messenger Promised.
W. Luke i. 25. His Birth Predicted.
Th. Luke i. 57-80. The Prediction Fulfilled.
F. Luke iii. 1-22. The Ministry of John.
S. John i. 19-34. John's Testimony concerning Jesus.
Sab. Matt. iii. 1-17. Baptism of Jesus.

HELPS TO STUDY.

Having recorded the principal events connected with the Saviour's birth, Matthew, omitting a period of twenty-five years, takes up the history at the beginning of His public ministry.

Of the Saviour's History during these twenty-five years all we know is that, at the age of twelve, He was, a second time, taken to the temple at Jerusalem, this being the period at which Jewish boys became "Sons of Commandment," and were expected to observe the ceremonial law; and that He lived retired and unnoticed at Nazareth, assisting Joseph in his humble occupation (Compare Matt. xiii. 55 with Mark vi. 3).

For an account of the birth and parentage of John the Baptist see Luke i. He was six months older than Jesus, and is described in our lesson as making his first public appearance as the last prophet of the old economy, preaching the baptism of repentance, and introducing the Gospel dispensation. Our lesson naturally falls under two heads: (1) *The Baptist's Ministry*, (2) *The Public Appearance and Baptism of Jesus*.

1. THE BAPTIST'S MINISTRY.—Vers. 1-10. Under this head the following subdivisions may be found convenient: (1) The Preacher and his Subject, (2) A Religious Revival, (3) A Generation of Vipers descended from Abraham, (4) The Doom of the Fruitless Tree.

1. *The Preacher and his Subject*.—Ver. 1-4. The promised forerunner (Malachi iii. 1; iv. 5) now appears.

In those days: while Christ was living at Nazareth (Matt. ii. 23). Luke gives the exact time as marked by the national records, "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar" (Luke iii. 1).

Came John the Baptist, from the desert (Luke i. 80). The title "Baptist" distinguishes John from his fellow prophets of the old dispensation. He may be regarded as their representative, closing the ceremonial era, ushering in the Gospel, and pointing to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

That John properly belonged to the old dispensation is very plainly indicated in Matt. xi. 11; and in verse 14 of the same chapter he is identified with the "Elias" or "Elijah" foretold by Malachi. Even in his dress he resembled the Tishbite (2 Kings i. 8). His raiment of camel's hair and his ascetic mode of life constituted him the personification of repentance.

Preaching: proclaiming or heralding; in the wilderness: the uncultivated part of the country, uninhabited by men, but not desert or barren; his audiences followed him there.

Repent ye: change your minds, turn from sin to God. Why? Because you will be punished if you don't? Yes, that is true, but that is not the reason that John gives. He has a better reason... His is not a mission of despair but one of hope.

For the kingdom of heaven is at hand: there is hope; the Saviour is about to be revealed; He will save the penitent sinner; there is no occasion for your going down to destruction.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness. The prophecy referred to here is in Isaiah xi. 3. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Eastern monarchs on their journeys sent heralds before them so that the roads might be put in good condition. Does not this voice still sound in our ears?

2. *A Religious Revival*.—Vers. 5-6. John's preaching attracted multitudes, some, no doubt, from their knowledge of the scriptures recognizing him as the forerunner, others drawn by curiosity, see Matt. xi. 7: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see?"

Confessing their sins. In "the baptism of repentance" they confessed their sins, and therefore their need of a Saviour.

3. *A Generation of Vipers descended from Abraham*.—Vers. 7-9. The self-righteousness of the Pharisees and the infidelity of the Sadducees precluded them from honestly receiving the baptism of repentance as long as they held to their old principles. They were bitterly opposed to Christ and to the principles of the Gospel. Children are like their parents. Pharisees, Sadducees, and in fact all, while in their natural state, are in their character, not like God, nor even like Abraham, but like the "old serpent." In John viii. 44, we find Christ Himself saying to the Pharisees: "Ye are of your father, the devil."

Descent from Abraham could save no one; neither can

any sort of connection with the Church or with God's people, but real union to the Saviour, save anyone now. And still Abraham is not to be left childless, for

God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. To give a gentile a place among God's chosen would seem to a Pharisaic Jew as great a miracle as to make church members out of stones; and in one sense it is not even so? Can anything short of a miracle change the stony heart of either Gentile or Jew?

4. *The Doom of the Fruitless Tree*.—Ver. 10. The blow be struck at any moment. "Be ye also ready."

11. THE PUBLIC APPEARANCE AND BAPTISM OF JESUS. Vers. 11-17. The following sub-divisions may be made under this head: (1) The Announcement, (2) The Appearance, (3) The Baptism, (4) The Trinity Revealed.

1. *The Announcement*. Vers. 11, 12. John claimed no saving efficacy for his own ministry. His office and his aim was to direct attention to the Saviour.

Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. To unloose the sandals from the feet of a person who had just entered, and bear them away to be cleaned, was considered the most menial work; but to do this for Christ, John would consider an honour of which he was not worthy.

Whose fan is in his hand. Compare this with Malachi iii. 18 and iv. 1, and Isaiah xxi. 10. His wheat: the true children of God. The chaff: the wicked that are mixed with the good in the Church.

2. *The Appearance*.—Vers. 13, 14. In John i. 28, we find that John the Baptist was at Bethabara when Christ came to him. The Saviour was now entering the thirtieth year of his age. This was the age at which the priests entered into their office (Numbers iv. 2). John knew Jesus as his Saviour and was not willing to baptize Him or do anything that might be taken as implying superiority to Him. But Jesus overruled his scruples, giving as His reason, thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness; to attend to all proper ordinances, for the sake of example.

3. *The Baptism*.—Ver. 15, 16. When Christ insisted on being baptized, John yielded. Jacobus says: "A sense of personal unfitness should never keep us from performing any enjoined duty. He who commands also warrants and helps."

The preposition translated out of, in verse 16, is in most other places rendered from.

4. *The Trinity Revealed*. Ver. 16, 17. At the opening of His ministry, Christ received a public recognition from heaven as the Messiah. This seems to have been in answer to prayer (Luke iii. 21). The persons of the Godhead are nowhere more plainly distinguished than in this passage; the Son stands there in human form; the Spirit appears "in a bodily shape, like a dove;" and the Father speaks from heaven saying: This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

A SENSIBLE LADY'S REASONS FOR NOT DANCING.

1. Dancing would lead me into crowded rooms and late hours, which are injurious to health and usefulness.

2. Dancing would lead me into very close contact with promiscuous company, and evil communications corrupt good manners.

3. Dancing would require me to use and permit freedom with the other sex, of which I should be heartily ashamed, and which I believe to be wrong.

4. My parents and real friends would be anxious and grieved about me if I were out late and keeping company with they know not whom.

5. Ministers and good people in general disapprove of it, and I think it not safe to set myself against them. It is at least doubtful, and I wish to be on the safe side.

6. Dancing in promiscuous assemblies has a bad name, and I wish to study the things which are pure and lovely and of good report.

7. Dancing is generally accompanied with drink, and I see drunkenness produces much evil. I cannot countenance anything which leads to it.

8. I am told that dancing is a great temptation and a snare to young men, and I shall not have anything to do in leading them astray.

9. Dancing unfits the mind for serious thought and prayer, and I mean to do nothing which gets between my Saviour and me.

10. There are plenty of graceful exercises and cheerful amusements which have none of these objections connected with them, and of which I can innocently and profitably avail myself.

IT is stated that the Roman Cardinals have advised the Pope not to reopen the Vatican Council. It could not, they say, be held in Rome at present, and no other place could be thought of.

THE amount received on Sabbath, 28th Dec., in New York from collections in churches and other places for the benefit of the Protestant and Hebrew hospitals will probably exceed \$35,000.

ANOTHER important old manuscript has been found in a famous Greek monastery on Mount Athos, which it is believed may throw some light on difficult passages in the Epistles of St. Paul.

THE New Testament Committee of the American Bible Revision Committee held their last meeting on the 26th and 27th ult. It is expected the revised New Testament will be published by the English University Presses this year, which is the first semi-centennial of the publication of the Wickliffe Bible, the first translation into the English language.