

their enterprise and liberality. Considerable time was spent in discussing a proposed change in the manner of appointing commissioners to the General Assembly, and finally the matter was delayed till next meeting, which is to be held in Knox Church, Ingersoll, on the second Tuesday of March, at half-past one p.m.—W. T. McMULLEN, *Pres. Clerk*.

PRESBYTERY OF HAMILTON.—The Presbytery met on January 18. Reports were made of the successful union of the two congregations now forming the Presbyterian Church of Caledonia and of the two congregations of East Ancaster. Erskine Church, Hamilton, and Dunnville had been declared vacant, so that now there are, besides the four vacancies named, Niagara Falls, Welland, North Pelham, Wellandport, Merriton and Port Robinson, in all eight vacancies, within the bounds. Arrangements were made for conferences on Sabbath schools at the next meeting of Presbytery on March 15, from two to five p.m., and on the State of Religion on the Monday evening preceding at half-past seven o'clock. The supply provided for the several vacancies till next meeting of the Presbytery was reported. The report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was read, and was regarded as satisfactory. Mr. Fletcher gave notice of motion, nominating a Moderator for the next General Assembly; and Mr. Wells gave notice of a motion proposing that the election of commissioners be by rotation. The overture on the marriage question was approved, one minister and one elder voting nay. The remit on Co-operation in Missionary Work was laid over till next meeting.—JOHN LAING, *Pres. Clerk*.

PRESBYTERY OF WHITBY.—The Presbytery of Whitby met in Oshawa on the 18th January. Mr. A. Fraser, Orono, was chosen Moderator for the year. Mr. Carswell, from Barrie Presbytery, and Mr. Spenser, Bowmanville, being present, were invited to correspond. Missionary meetings had either been held or arrangements were made to hold them throughout the bounds during the winter. The Presbytery being informed of the sudden death of Mrs. A. MacLaren, Enniskillen, since last meeting of Presbytery, expressed their deep sympathy with their brother under his heavy bereavement, and forwarded him a letter of condolence. Great interest was felt in reference to a call addressed to Mr. J. A. Carmichael, Columbus, from the congregation of Bradford, etc., in Barrie Presbytery. After all the papers were read and the parties heard, Mr. Carmichael expressed it as his wish to remain in his present charge, and the Presbytery agreed not to translate. This announcement gave great pleasure to the large representation that was present from his congregation. The Presbytery's Woman's Foreign Missionary Society sent in their annual report, which showed progress in their operations. Messrs. Abraham and Craig were appointed to convey to the society, now met in another part of the building, the congratulations of the Presbytery and their earnest wish that their efforts in behalf of their sisters in India may be crowned with still greater success during the coming year. Mr. Leslie read the report on the State of Religion. Satisfaction was expressed at the generally encouraging nature of the report, and brief conference followed. Mr. Craig invited the Presbytery to hold its next quarterly meeting in the new church at Dunbarton, and the Presbytery adjourned to meet there on the third Tuesday of April, at half past ten o'clock a.m.—A. A. DRUMMOND, *Pres. Clerk*.

MONTREAL NOTES.

The annual meeting of St. Matthew's Church, Rev. W. R. Cruikshank, pastor, took place on Wednesday evening, and was largely attended. The report of the managers spoke of the envelope system as working in a very satisfactory manner, the receipts from this source being \$1,945; from Sabbath collections, \$295; from pew rents, \$261; and from other sources, \$246, making a total of \$2,747, with an expenditure of \$2,752. The sum of \$229 was given to Missions, in addition to about \$100 contributed by the Sabbath school. During the year, the congregation purchased building lots, on which they purpose erecting a new church soon. The lots cost \$3,087, all of which was raised chiefly by means of a bazaar, and a balance of \$845 remains on hand toward the Building Fund.

The Rev. Archibald Lee, of St. Andrew's Church, Sherbrooke, has had hemorrhage of the lungs, which will probably lay him aside from work for some time. Mr. Lee has been making steady progress since his settlement in Sherbrooke, and has gained a warm place in the affections of his people, who deeply sympathize with him in his affliction.

At a meeting of the corporation of McGill University, on Wednesday, returns were made, showing the number of students in the several faculties this session as follows: Law, 20; Medicine, 228; Arts, men, 156; Arts, women, 78; Applied Science, 57; McGill Normal School, 92; Morrin College, 25; St. Francis College, 16, making a total of 672.

In one or two of the Presbyterian congregations of the city the contributions for the Schemes of the Church were less in 1886 than in 1885. This was probably owing to the system adopted for raising the money, viz.: Combining missionary contributions with contributions for congregational purposes, and using one envelope each Sabbath for the two combined. However this may be, a change has been effected in at least two of these congregations this year, one of them using the two envelopes weekly, and the other retaining the weekly envelope for congregational contributions, and taking up missionary moneys monthly by collectors. Because of the small-pox epidemic in 1885, the Presbyterian anniversary missionary meetings did not take place. They were not held last year. It might be well to resume them in the fall of this year. Missionary meetings are held annually under the auspices of the Presbytery in all the country congregations with good results; they might well be held in the city churches too.

Is the missionary spirit dying out in the Church? The Conveners of two large Mission Presbyteries within the past week or two affirm that they believe that to some extent it is; for while quite a number of men offer their services for

the foreign field, it seems almost impossible to get men to take hold of destitute home fields, where the work is hard and the difficulties are great. Comparatively few of the students graduating from our colleges seem willing to go into the purely Home Mission districts, and build up struggling congregations, but prefer to settle down at once as pastors of self-supporting charges, and reap what others have sown. Is this to any considerable extent true? How many of the large number of students graduating next spring will volunteer to take an appointment for two or three years to some of the needy, widely scattered missions in the more recently settled districts of the country?

In the city and suburbs there are nineteen Methodist Sabbath schools with 3,546 scholars. The missionary contributions of these schools last year amounted to \$4,657 (an average of \$1.31 per scholar), and an increase of \$502 over the preceding year.

The Rev. Professor Campbell delivered a lecture on the "Umbrian Inscriptions," at the Celtic Society meeting, on Thursday last. He stated that in the year 1444 there had been disinterred in the neighbourhood of Gubbio, on the site of an ancient town in Umbrian Italy, seven bronze tablets. On these tablets were engraved characters of two kinds, the one Roman, and the other such as are found on Etruscan monuments. From the sixteenth century up to the present day many attempts had been made to interpret the meaning of these signs. The theory now obtaining is that although written in distinct characters, their language is one—a Pelasgic dialect akin to the Latin. Thus translated, they yield a historical meaningless mass of verbiage, relating to the worship of Jupiter and other Umbrian deities. Some two years ago Professor Campbell had his attention drawn to the five tablets in the Etruscan character and translated the tablets by the medium of the Basque language. In company with the learned professor of the society, he had studied the two tablets, which are in Roman character, and, using the old Irish Gaelic as their medium of interpretation, they had been able to make a continuous narrative of the whole. It contained for the most part an account of the wars of the Umbrians with the tribes around. The professor stated that many of the names of the tribes mentioned in these wars were the names of tribes mentioned in history as having located themselves in Britain in the early part of the Christian era. The tablets were made by order of the Umbrian king, A.D. 177. The paper is one of great interest, and is to be published in full in the "Transactions of the Celtic Society," which are now in the printer's hands. The cordial thanks of the society were given to Mr. Campbell.

OBITUARY.

MR. ARCHIBALD DEWAR.

Another of the more prominent residents of Komoka has lately passed away. Mr. Archibald Dewar died on the 16th ult., after a prolonged illness, which he bore with marked patience and resignation to the divine will. During last summer his health signally failed him, and in hopes of deriving benefit from change of air and scenery, he took a trip by water, so far east as Ottawa, in August, but finding no benefit as the result of that experiment, he concluded to return home without going any further. On reaching home, he was so much reduced that he went but little outside afterwards; he alternated between his bed and his sofa, but free from pain. His mind continued quite clear, and all his senses quite unimpaired. He fully realized his situation as a dying man; he then directed his attention to disposing of or settling his business, which consisted chiefly of a store which he had in the village. This he did, with as much calmness as if he intended only to move to another residence in a neighbouring township. He was always wonderfully calm, and often expressed his gratitude to God for His mercies to him, and dealing so kindly and gently with him. It was an unspeakable blessing to him that he did not put off preparation for death till he saw it now as the messenger, sent to summon him to his last account. The absence of bodily pain from his death-bed would scarcely be sufficient to account for its peaceful calm. One that knew so much of Bible truth would find it difficult to be so much at ease, without being pretty sure that he was resting on Christ alone for salvation.

The subject of this notice was born in the township of Beckwith in the year 1832. He and many others of his relations moved up to the township of Plympton, and settled there in 1851. Many of them were descendants on the female side of the Rev. Mr. Buchanan, a Presbyterian minister, who came out from Scotland in 1822, and was settled there as pastor of the congregation, and remained there as such till he died in advanced life in 1835.

It pleased the Lord to afflict Mr. Dewar with much heavy affliction for seven years past in his family. The first breach in it, if I am not mistaken, was by the death of his oldest daughter, a good many years ago. His wife, who was much esteemed for her mildness and gentleness and also for hospitality, died about four years ago, after being for about seven years an invalid, scarcely able to leave the house; since then, a son and a daughter died, about a year from each other, but the usual example of calmness and resignation was conspicuous.

He left behind him one son and two daughters to mourn his loss. He took a deep interest in Sabbath schools. He volunteered to gather the children of the village into a Sabbath school, and taught them regularly every Sabbath for several years, when it was difficult to get any assistance, and, when the school was put under the management of the Session, when formed, he countenanced and helped them, so far as his health permitted.

In one word, I may say that he was a cheerful giver in all the exigencies of the congregation, which will have cause to miss him in this respect; for, where exceptional obstacles lie between a small congregation and the surrounding community, the utmost diligence is likely to aid in drawing in new recruits, to fill vacancies even like this, not to speak of growth at all, and there is scarcely a possibility of growth and permanence.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Feb. 13, 1887. **GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM.** Gen. xv. 5-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."—Gen. xv. 1.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Question 9.—Creation is calling into being what previously did not exist. Only God can create; man cannot. The material out of which this wondrous universe is formed did not always exist. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. In the successive stages of creation it was by the Word of God that the worlds were framed. Let there be light; and light was. The Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, was the revealer of God in creation. "Without Him was not anything made that was made." In the space of six days. The best Biblical scholars and scientists are now at one in regarding the creative days as periods of extended duration, and some are of the opinion that the Sabbath period, or day that succeeded the creative work, still continues. God viewed with satisfaction His perfect work, and pronounced it good.

I. Abram's Despondency.—Abram was conspicuous for his faith, but he was subject to human weakness. He had his times of despondency, which might arise from his surroundings. Between him and the inhabitants of the land there was little in common. They would no doubt view him with suspicion. Then the years were going past, and though he had received manifold mercies from God, the special promise, which formed the guiding-star of his life, was yet unfulfilled.

II. Faith Strengthened.—Nature is full of spiritual meaning to discerning eyes. God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, comforts and encourages Abram with a new revelation of His merciful purpose. Under the clear and beautiful eastern sky, the Lord led him forth, and called on him to look toward heaven, and tell, that is, number, the stars. That he could not do. With the most perfect instruments, and the patient research of centuries, in our days, as in Abram's, the stars are innumerable. These were to him a sign that the Almighty would fulfil His promise. Every night that Abram raised his eyes to the starry sky, it would be to him the witness of God's faithfulness. As the stars were without number, so should his descendants be, both natural and spiritual. He believed in the Lord, and He counted, reckoned, imputed it to him for righteousness. Faith in God is the only foundation of righteousness. To give him increased confidence, God reminds him of His watchful care in the past.

III. Confirmation of the Promise.—Covenant of sacrifice was familiar in the East, even in those patriarchal days. God directs the manner in which the covenant is to be ratified. It is to be noticed that the animals used in the sacrifice were those afterward prescribed in the Levitical economy—a heifer, a she-goat, a ram, each to be three years old, signifying that God should be served with the best—a turtle dove and a young pigeon. These Abram took; and divided, and arranged the one half over against the other half. Two explanations for the division and arrangement of the animals are suggested; the contracting parties went between the parted animals, typifying their reconciliation to a unity; the other explanation is that it impressed those making the agreement with the fact that the covenant-breaker deserved death similar to that of the slaughtered animals. After all the preparations had been made according to God's command, Abram waited for His answer. The birds of prey hovered near the sacrifice, and Abram drove them away. In this may be seen that in sacred service impunity is ever ready to enter, and that the true worshipper must be watchful. After long hours Abram, at sundown, fell into a deep sleep, and lo! a horror of great darkness fell upon him. It may be that this profound sleep and the accompanying horror of great darkness were the necessary preparations for the gracious assurance that was to follow. The revelation now made to Abram outlines, more definitely than had yet been done, the mode in which the repeated promise was to be fulfilled. The character and duration of the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt is foretold. In that land they would be aliens; they were to be subjected to service and affliction for 400 years. Successive generations of Abram's descendants would sink under their burdens, and then die in the strange land; but God's purpose would continue unshaken. "That nation . . . will I judge." There is no haste and no forgetfulness with God. Judgment does not overtake nations only. Every individual shall receive according to his works. Abram's departure from the world is also revealed to him, "Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace." Here is an intimation of immortality, for "all live unto God"; then it is added, "Thou shalt be buried in a good old age"; that referred to bodily dissolution. He lived till he was 175 years old. In the fourth generation the Israelites were to return. The reason given why they should then come to the promised land is significant, "for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." God never acts arbitrarily. Time and opportunity are given for repentance, but if repentance does not come, the end comes. When God ceased to speak, the covenant is ratified by solemn and impressive symbols. The sun had sunk beneath the horizon, and darkness set in; a smoking flame and blazing light passed between the divided animals. These, so to speak, set God's seal to the covenant engagement, and the lesson ends with God's assurance that the land between the Nile and the Euphrates should be the possession of his race. During the reigns of David and Solomon these were the eastern and western boundaries of Canaan.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Faith is subjected to trial.
God is ready to help in the time of need.
Not by visions now, but by His Word and Spirit God makes His truth known to us.