

had been raised—one too which was to witness the brotherly re-union of the long-divided branches of the Presbyterian family in St. John's, so that, in many ways, "the glory of this latter house would be greater than the glory of the former." As the hour for worship drew near, eager worshippers crowded the approaches to the new church, from whose tower the sweet tones of a magnificent bell pealed forth a welcome to the house of God; and as its sounds floated all around on the undulating air, they awoke in all hearts the joyous response, "I was glad when they said let us go up to the house of the Lord." Doubtless many of the old generation who had aided in the erection of comparatively humble buildings, when it was yet "a day of small things" with Presbyterianism in St. John's, now felt "like them that dreamed" as they looked up to the lofty, graceful spire of the new structure, and entered the handsome porch, over which, cut in bold relief in the stone work "The Burning Bush" emblem of the Church of Scotland—appeared conspicuous. The edifice was filled to its utmost capacity by a congregation of reverent, earnest worshippers. The whole appearance of the church, when filled with worshippers, is pleasing and impressive. There is nothing gaudy, showy or highly ornamental in connection with the edifice; all is plain, chaste and substantial. The building seats seven hundred worshippers. The morning service was conducted by the Rev. L. G. Macneill, pastor of the church. The Rev. Job Shenton, of the Wesleyan church, occupied the pulpit in the evening. The collection at both services amounted to \$940. The total cost of the church is about \$40,000. It occupies an admirable central site, and is a substantial and ornamental structure. It is built of best pressed American brick, laid in cement, and faced with white freestone imported from Scotland. The basement, for evening services, Sabbath school and classes, will accommodate between 400 and 500 persons, and has a ceiling 14 feet in height. It is a most commodious apartment and has a number of smaller rooms connected with it. The Rev. Mr. Macneill commences his labours in his new church under very cheering and favourable auspices.

PRESBYTERY OF QUEBEC.—A regular meeting of this Presbytery was held in Morrin College, Quebec, on the 17th December. The attendance of members was not large. In absence of the Moderator, Dr. Cook presided. The Rev. R. P. Duclos, French Protestant minister of Quebec, requested to be admitted as a member of the Presbytery, and presented the necessary papers from the Presbytery of Montreal. It was thought advisable to bring the congregation of which he has charge under the supervision of the Presbytery, if possible, and a committee was appointed to inquire into the matter and report at next regular meeting. The Rev. James Hanran, of St. Sylvester, tendered the resignation of his charge. No action was taken in the matter, but a committee was appointed to visit the congregation of Lower Leeds village, with the view of uniting it with that of St. Sylvester, under the pastoral care of Mr. Hanran. Leave was granted to the congregation of Inverness to sell their manse and glebe, with the view of securing a manse in Inverness village. A number of remits from the Assembly were considered. 1. Anent the status of ministers who have been permitted to retire, because of age or infirmity, from the active duties of the ministry, and who reside within the bounds of the Presbytery to which they belonged, it was agreed that their names should be retained on the rolls of their respective Presbyteries. 2. Concerning the proposed "Presbyterian University of Canada," it was agreed that the Presbytery are not prepared to sanction the principle of such a University, and are of opinion that further consideration is eminently necessary before taking any action in the matter, especially as the plan proposed is, it is believed, without precedent. 3. Regarding the Home Mission appeal, several members reported that they had brought the matter before their congregations. The Presbytery adjourned to meet in Chalmers' Church, Richmond, on the 17th March, 1880, at half-past one p.m.—F. M. DEWEY, Pres. Clerk.

PRESBYTERY OF CHATHAM.—This Presbytery met at Chatham, on the 16th December. Liberty was granted to the First Presbyterian Church to build a branch church in North Chatham. On motion it was agreed that the rebate granted by the Grand Trunk Railway be remitted to the Treasurer, to be

retained by him till next year, and that it shall then be used to assist in defraying the expenses of the Commissioners from this Presbytery to the General Assembly. On inquiry it was found that the circular issued by the Moderator of the General Assembly had been read in nearly all the pulpits within the bounds of the Presbytery. On motion, those ministers that had not read the circular to their congregations were enjoined to do so. Mr. McKechnie reported that the travelling expenses of the delegates to the late General Assembly had been paid, and that he had a balance on hand of \$21. It was agreed that the balance should be held over till next year. Messrs. King, Logie and Chestnut were appointed to visit Tilbury West and neighbourhood, and report at next regular meeting of the Presbytery. Mr. McKechnie and Captain Taylor were appointed to strike the rate for the Presbytery Fund for 1880. The attention of the Presbytery being drawn to the fact that a Mr. McGregor from Galt, a member of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, was holding stated religious services in Dawn, in the midst of our people there, and the Clerk having stated that he had ineffectually written to Mr. McGregor, it was moved by Mr. Bartlett, seconded by Mr. McKemcher, and agreed to, "That the Presbytery having received information that a Mr. McGregor has taken up work within its bounds, and is interfering with the work of the church of which Mr. Armstrong is pastor, at the same time giving out that he is doing work in the Presbyterian Church, that the Clerk be requested to write to Mr. McGregor respecting the matter, calling his attention to the injury he is likely to cause in said congregation by raising up a rivalry between sections of said congregation, and stating at the same time that if he perseveres in that course the Presbytery must take further action." A call from Elmira, Illinois, to Rev. Neil McDiarmid, was read, but, inasmuch as there was opposition to the call on the part of some of the members of the church, and inasmuch as there was no commissioner from the church present, the call was laid on the table in the meantime, and the Clerk was instructed to write to the Session for further information. Having taken up the remit from the General Assembly as to the proposed Act for establishing the Presbyterian University of Canada, it was moved by Mr. King, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, and carried, "That the Presbytery sanction the principle of establishing a University under the control of the General Assembly, with power to confer degrees." Mr. King and Mr. Bartlett were appointed to visit Colchester, with the view of inducing them to contribute to the support of Rev. Mr. Smith, to elect managers, and if the way be clear to take steps to have a Session formed.—WILLIAM WALKER, Pres. Clerk.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

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. Mal. iii. 1-12.....The Messenger Promised.
- W. Luke i. 1-25.....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*.

I. 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 Caesar" (Luke iii. 1).

Came John the Baptist, from the deserts (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 is it 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 is struck at any moment. "Be ye also ready."

II. THE PUBLIC APPEARANCE AND BAPTISM OF JESUS.—Vers. 11-17. The following subdivisions 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 receives 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.