

bership now 224, against eighty-eight four years ago. Five adults were baptized during the year, besides fourteen infants. The congregation had been divided into elders' districts, and communicants' cards had taken place of the members' tokens. The report of the Sabbath school indicated that the attendance is now larger than it has ever been during the history of the school. A new library was purchased during the year, and \$130 was taken at the Sabbath school collections for the year. The pastor's Bible class now numbers over thirty members. The Ladies' Aid Society reported that it had been entirely reconstructed during the year and its membership greatly increased, there being now over eighty members on the roll. They also reported a balance on hand of \$104.50. This society is doing most valuable work in the church. The report of the Young People's Association showed that it had been flourishing during the winter in its useful work. The report of the Board of Management was submitted by the secretary, Mr. Cromar, and the auditors' report by Mr. Turnbull. Both were considered together. The receipts from ordinary sources of income were \$1,168.49, being an increase of \$58.28 over last year. A sum of \$475 was paid on floating debts, and the amount raised by the congregation for all purposes during the year was \$2,522.

At the late meeting of Synod held in Galt there was presented an overture from the Presbytery of Kingston in reference to the old United Empire Loyalist Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg. The overture set forth that the Rev. Robert McDowall came to Upper Canada in the year 1798 in response to a petition sent to the Classis of Albany by the band of United Empire Loyalists who landed in Adolphustown under Major VanAlstine in 1784; that he, Mr. McDowall, had itinerated from Brockville to the head of Lake Ontario when that vast region was almost one unbroken wilderness; that his old church is now in a dilapidated condition; that it was proposed to restore it, making it again suitable to be used as a place of worship and to erect a tablet near the pulpit commemorative of the life and labours of the pioneer missionary; that a small sum from each family within the bounds of the Synod, which really constituted his parish in so far as the country was then settled, would be sufficient to accomplish the work. The overture was supported by the Rev. Mr. Cumberland and Dr. Reid, and was very favourably received. On motion of Principal Caven it was adopted, and the following members representing the several Presbyteries were appointed a committee to co-operate with the Kingston Presbytery in taking the necessary steps to carry out the terms of the overture: the Moderator, W. Bennett, the Clerk, J. Gray, D.D., W. Reid, D.D., J. K. Smith, M.A., E. Cockburn, M.A., S. H. Eastman, B.A., W. A. Hunter, M.A., J. Campbell, M.A., and A. H. Scott, M.A. At a meeting of the committee it was decided that a circular be prepared, and sent to each minister within the bounds, setting forth the points of interest in connection with the scheme, and that the representatives of the several Presbyteries be instructed to bring the matter before their Presbyteries as soon as practicable, in order to develop as much interest as possible in the matter. The Rev. Mr. Cumberland, of Stella, Amherst Island, was appointed treasurer. It is understood that about \$300 have been already subscribed, and that it is the intention of the committee to set vigorously to work, and have the repairs completed in order that the church may be re-opened in September. As only about \$900 more will be required, a small sum from each family will enable them to complete the work, and thus preserve to posterity this historic church. Suitable plans have been prepared by Mr. John Faris, architect, Belleville.

#### MONTREAL NOTES.

THE annual Convocation of McGill University took place last week, in the presence of a large number of friends of the college. The graduating class in Arts numbered twenty-seven, the largest in the history of the college. Of this number twelve are theological students, nine of whom are Presbyterians. The Prince of Wales Gold Medal was won by Mr. Macdougall, one of our students. Of the two who received the degree of M.D., one—Mr. J. L. Morin—was a distinguished French student who graduated from the Presbyterian College last year, and a former pupil of the Point-aux-Trembles Mission Schools. Of the thirty-one students who passed the intermediate examination, eight are young women. There were 564 students in attendance at McGill this year, fifty-one of whom are ladies. The number graduating in all the faculties is ninety-two. In his closing remarks, Sir J. W. Dawson, the Principal, stated that the invested capital of the University was now \$721,000, of which the magnificent sum of \$336,000 had been received within the last five years from friends of the Institution. To increase the efficiency of the college, and enable it to maintain its position as second to none in the country, he appealed for an additional \$250,000, in the full confidence that it would be forthcoming.

ON Sabbath week the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was administered for the first time in Melville Church, Cote St. Antoine. The services were conducted by the Rev. R. H. Warden, Moderator of Session. The number of communicants was fifty-eight. The communion set was the gift of the Sabbath school children of the congregation.

THE Board of Management of the Presbyterian College here are advertising for the services of a suitable person as steward and janitor. The position is one of responsibility, and it is hoped that a good appointment will be made. A married man is a *sine qua non*.

THE Rev. James Gormack, of St. Andrew's Church, Lachine, who went South last month on account of impaired health, is regaining strength and hopes to return home about the end of May.

THURSDAY, the 6th inst., was the anniversary of the induction a year ago of the Rev. L. H. Jordan, B.D., as pastor of Erskine Church. The Young People's Association took advantage of the occasion to hold a conversation in

the lecture room of the church, which was filled to overflowing. The hall was tastefully decorated, and an excellent programme of readings, songs and duets was gone through. Among those taking part were Mrs. Weir, Miss Featherston, Miss McLea, Miss Ross, Miss Ritchie and Messrs. Common, Stewart and Weir. The Young People's Association has had a successful season, the attendance at the ordinary meetings as well as on public occasions being good, and the interest well sustained.

THE monthly meeting of the Montreal Presbyterian Woman's Missionary Society was held in Erskine Church on Friday last. An interesting report was submitted from Miss Watt, one of the Bible women and nurses employed by the society. Mrs. Dey, the president, read a paper on "Formosa," Mrs. W. Paul, on "Those Pennies," and Mrs. Mackay gave an account of the recent annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Western Section.

ON Sabbath next the Rev. Jas. Patterson is to be inducted, and Mr. J. B. Picken ordained and inducted, as elders in Knox Church here.

SABBATH railway travelling seems to be largely on the increase in Canada. Trains between Toronto and Montreal, leaving on Saturday evening, are extensively patronized, and it is no unusual thing for members and office-bearers of our Church to travel by them. Incredible as it may seem it is said that even ministers have been known to travel by these. Not long ago one who had been preaching in a large city church on a certain Sabbath was seen an hour after the close of the evening service in a sleeping-car on his homeward journey; and only recently two were recognized on board a train on a Sabbath afternoon, both of whom had been preaching that morning. To check this growing evil, it were well that the pulpits in Canada gave no uncertain sound on the question of Sabbath profanation.

It is understood that the receipts of the Common, or Union, College Fund are about \$500 less than those of the preceding year, and about \$5,000 less than the amount asked by the General Assembly. The college here is a sufferer to a considerable extent, and many of its friends believe that a very much larger amount would be obtained for its maintenance were the Common Fund abolished, and the former territorial system re-established or the college left free to secure its revenue as best it could. It cannot be doubted that many congregations would contribute much more largely to an institution in which they were specially interested than to a common fund from which the college with which they are most in sympathy receives but a small percentage of their contributions. On the other hand there are advantages in a common fund, not the least of which is its tendency to break down sectional feeling. Many ministers and congregations, however, have not given it hearty support, and some have even ignored it entirely and sent their contributions for theological education direct to the college of their choice.

## Sabbath School Teacher.

### INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY REV. R. P. MACKAY, B.A.

May 23, 1886.

### JESUS AT BETHESDA.

[John 5: 5-18.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Wilt thou be made whole?"—John v. 6.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

*The Feast.*—There has been a great deal of discussion—but fruitless discussion—as to which of the feasts is meant. The question is of chronological importance. If it is the *Passover*, then four passovers are named by John, and that makes His ministry extend over three years—about three and a half. But if it is one of the other feasts, then there is no chronological data for over two and a half years.

*Bethesda.*—In and about Jerusalem there were numerous springs, but the chief supply of water was from large reservoirs hewn in the rock, replenished by rains or water conducted by aqueducts from distant hills. The remains of eight of these reservoirs still remain, and Bethesda is supposed to have been the one at the north-western corner of the temple area. The *sheep-gate*, near which it was located, was probably the gate through which the flocks of sheep used in the sacrificial services were admitted.

In the R. V. the explanatory verse 4 is omitted. It is regarded as an instance of the superstitious interpretations given to natural phenomena in an unscientific age. Everything was explained by supernatural agency.

But even when the "angel" is removed from this narrative, there are other statements of fact that still leave mystery that science cannot remove. Ordinarily, mineral waters do good to *special diseases*, but these waters cured *any disease*. They only cured *one at a time*, and that not periodically, but at *irregular intervals*. These are not features of water cures. There seems to remain a supernatural element.

#### EXPLANATORY.

I. *Jesus Visits the Sick.* (Ver. 3.)—This was a great sanitarium—in which a multitude of sick, blind, halt and withered were assembled, waiting for that mysterious disturbance of the water that gave it healing efficacy.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem He visited that place. How like Him! His mission was to give *help*. He did not spend His time sight-seeing, or courting society. He went to the houses of mourning.

Just as He was going into Galilee (iv. 4) He *must needs* go through Samaria to save that woman, so He now *must needs* go to this hospital to save an impotent man.

That is the pure religion that He practised and taught, "To visit the fatherless and widow in affliction"—To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick, and to such spirits He will say: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me."

II. *A Miracle of Healing.* (Ver. 59).—This man was thirty-eight years a prisoner. The greater part of his life gone in idleness, and what made the cup the more bitter, it was his own sin that induced the disease (ver. 14). That is the condition of very many now—they are physical wrecks—useless—a burden to themselves and others—because of drunkenness and especially licentiousness. The bitterest element to all such is that it was brought on by themselves.

In the moral sense it applies to us all. We are weaklings in the Lord's work because of our own transgressions.

*Jesus knew, etc.*—As soon as He saw Him He made a complete diagnosis of the case. He knew the *time*, and the *mental condition* of the patient (ii. 25). That is the kind of physician we need.

*Wilt thou?*—That gives us a key to the man's heart. The case was so hopeless—and he became so accustomed to his lot—that he did not wish for a cure. Like many a prisoner for years in confinement, he loved and *hugged his chains*.

That is the state of many souls. They are bound in chains of sin, and on the road to eternal chains, and yet they are not willing to be released. If they were *willing* they might get freedom—the liberty of the Gospel.

*Be made whole.*—Christ purposes nothing less than *wholeness*, and that means both soul and body. That is the Saviour's own explanation of the case (vii. 23). Before He finishes His work His saints will be *wholly sanctified*. He asks us to *will—aim* at that and nothing less.

*Friendless.* (Ver. 7.)—He professes *willingness*, but is not *able* to seize the opportunity, and there is none to *help*. When he is coming, some one else, less afflicted, or assisted, gets ahead of him. The question stimulated his expectation and provoked faith. How like the world without a Saviour—not *able to save self* and none to *help*. But we have One who is omnipotent to save and offers His services.

*Word of power.* (Ver. 8.)—When we receive a command from Christ we at the same time receive a *guarantee of help*. He asks us to do everything *looking* to Him.

At the same time that this man was commanded to rise, the *invisible energy* went forth from Christ that vitalized his whole nature. He could now *will* and *execute* his wish.

*Rise, take up thy bed and walk.*—The man now carries the bed that formerly carried him. He leads captivity captive. It is a *reminder* to him of what he was delivered from. It is, especially, an *evidence* to himself and others of the cure. The bed was a light mattress or rug easily borne by a man in health.

All that we require to do is to *act*, in *obedience* to the divine command, and we will get needed strength in so doing.

III. *Hypocritical Scrupulosity.* (Ver. 10.)—The man went away carrying his bed. The Jews accosted and reproved him for carrying his bed on the Sabbath. They had not a word of congratulation on his recovery—no love for a suffering brother—but were sticklers for minute traditions of their fathers. No cruelty so inexorable as religious fanaticism. The scribes had built a *great system of hair-splitting regulations* as to what might and might not be done on the Sabbath, and these they would stand by even if it sacrificed life. They misunderstood the spirit of the Sabbath—which is to *be blessed*, and not to *afflict men*. "The Sabbath for man and not man for the Sabbath."

(1) *First answer.* (Ver. 11.)—The man's explanation is very natural. He that healed instructed him. Surely if He could do the one He was able to do the other! When Jesus saves the soul His Word becomes the *law of life*.

They inquired who it was that gave such a wicked command. They did not want to hear about the miracle. That was too godlike to be objected to.

The man did not know Jesus had disappeared in the crowd—perhaps to avoid the throng sure to follow such a miracle. He did not heal *all* in the place, because it would not be in keeping with the divine plan by which the world is to be ultimately redeemed. His compassionate heart would gladly have given His benediction to all if it had been the Father's will, which He came to *do* and *finish*.

(2) *Second answer.* (Ver. 15.)—Jesus met the man in the temple and exhorted him to caution, lest, by sin, a worse affliction might come. So, even in this life, affliction is connected with sin. But *all* affliction is not to be accounted for by sin (ix. 3). That was the mistake of Job's friends.

Now he knew Jesus and went immediately and told the Jews that it was Jesus that healed him. He no doubt thought this a complete vindication of himself, and also thought to introduce Jesus to the favour of the rulers. We cannot regard him, according to some, as trying to win the favour of the Jews at the expense of his Benefactor.

The rulers are more hostile than ever. They determine to kill Jesus because He broke the Sabbath.

They feel that His teaching—as did that of John the Baptist—is undermining their authority.

(3) *Third answer.* (Ver. 17.)—This is by Jesus Himself. We know not where given, but it goes to the root of the Sabbath question. He says: "The Father's Sabbath is *work*, and I do as the Father does." That is the solution. The Sabbath *rest* is not *idleness*. The Father's seventh day of rest is *work*—the Providence by which He supports the world, and completes redemption. So should our *rest* be the active enjoyment of God, and imitation of His loving care for man. They now have a second charge against Him; He made Himself the equal of God. They understood Him rightly and determined to kill Him.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Our need is our strongest plea for help.
2. Like Jesus, we should try and help the helpless.
3. Healing comes in the way of obedience.
4. After his release he went to the temple to praise God.
5. Sin bears fruit in suffering.
6. Rejoice if you are persecuted for righteousness' sake—so was Christ.