

through the Synod; that such overture ask the General Assembly to empower the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories to prescribe a course of study and conduct examinations for such missionaries engaged in the work of the Church as are not licentiates and are not able to attend college; that it be suggested in the overture that before any candidate shall present himself for examination he must produce a certificate from a Presbytery to the effect that he has laboured for a season with acceptance within the bounds of the Presbytery and has shown himself possessed of suitable gifts for the work of the ministry; and that a certificate from the Synod (or from any committee or board of examiners that may be appointed by the Synod for this purpose) setting forth that the required examinations in the prescribed course of study have been successfully passed be sufficient authority for any Presbytery to examine such candidate with a view to licensure and ordination. A committee was appointed in accordance with the resolution, with the superintendent of missions as convener.

PRESBYTERY OF TORONTO.—At the meeting of this Presbytery, on the 3rd inst., the General Assembly's remit on marriage was considered again, and disposed of, the result in substance being this, that the conclusions of the Assembly's Committee were carried by twenty-seven as against fourteen. From this decision the following members entered their dissent, viz.: Revs. A. Wilson, William Gregg, D.D., R. Monteath, J. Alexander, M.A., John Smith, W. Frizzell, and Messrs. Samuel Marshall and Joseph Gibson. The Presbytery then took up the resignation of Rev. J. Kirkpatrick, as tendered by him at the previous meeting. Various documents thereon were handed in and read. Commissioners and also petitioners from the congregation, the Session, and the dissatisfied party of Cooke's Church appeared and were severally heard. Mr. Kirkpatrick was also heard, when, after a variety of statements, he expressed the desire that the Presbytery would give him leave to withdraw his resignation. On motion made by Rev. H. M. Parsons, the Presbytery agreed to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, and to do so with closed doors. After sitting for some time, the committee rose and reported through their chairman, Rev. A. Wilson, that on motion made by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, seconded by Rev. P. McF. Macleod, they had agreed to recommend the following deliverance for the adoption of the Presbytery: "In view of the difficulties that have arisen in Cooke's Church, and of the statements made by the commissioners and petitioners today, the judgment of the Presbytery is that the resignation should be adhered to. The Presbytery accordingly accepts the resignation of Mr. Kirkpatrick, and dissolves the pastoral tie between him and the congregation of Cooke's Church. In coming to this decision, the Presbytery express the earnest hope that all members of the congregation will study things that make for peace, and will seek to work in harmony in promoting the cause of the Redeemer, as they value their own edification and the glory of the Church's Head. The Presbytery also, recognizing the many excellent endowments of their brother, Mr. Kirkpatrick, and assuring him of their personal regard, express the hope that the Master will soon direct him to a sphere of labour in which his undoubted abilities may be exercised in his own comfort in promoting the Kingdom of Christ." On motion of Rev. Dr. McLaren, seconded by Rev. Dr. Reid, the foregoing deliverance was adopted by the Presbytery, only one voting against it. Mr. Kirkpatrick thereupon, in his own name, and Mr. D. Murray, in the name of the commissioners from Cooke's Church congregation, protested against said decision, and appealed to the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, for reasons to be given in, and craved extracts. The appellants were then cited to appear for their interests before said Synod on the first Tuesday of May next. In the meantime Messrs. James Brown, T. Kirkland, J. S. Fyfe, G. S. Burns, and R. Merryfield are appointed as assessors to act with Cooke's Church Session, in place of others previously appointed, or, if need be, to act as an interim session. Notice was given by Rev. A. Wilson of a motion for next meeting of Presbytery, anent a collection for defraying the travelling expenses of commissioners to the General Assembly. A committee reported through Rev. W. Frizzell, anent the holding of a conference on Sabbath Schools, Temperance, and State of Religion, said conference to be held at Richmond Hill on the afternoon and evening of Monday, the 2nd of March, naming also speakers to introduce said subjects. The report was received and adopted by the Presbytery. Rev. J. A. McDonald was empowered to moderate in a call from the congregations of Shelburne and Primrose, when said congregations might be ready for the same; and Rev. Dr. Caven was invested with similar power on behalf of St. James' Square Church, Toronto. Next meeting of Presbytery was appointed to be held in the usual place on the first Tuesday of March, at 10 a.m., and commissioners to next General Assembly are to be appointed at 3 p.m. of that day.—R. MONTEATH, Pres. Clerk.

OBITUARY.

GEORGE OAL.

Mr. George Oal, whose death took place on the 13th inst., was well known to many of the ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church, having been employed for many

years in the office of Dr. Reid, the General Agent for the Schemes of the Church. He was a native of Wick, in the county of Caithness, Scotland. He was educated at the parish school of his native place. In early life, following the example of many young men in the northern counties of Scotland, he enlisted, and was attached to the 93rd regiment, or Sutherland Highlanders. This regiment was distinguished not only for its bravery and for its achievements in the field, but also for the good conduct of its soldiers, most of whom were Scotchmen and Presbyterians, and many of them men of Christian character and of decided piety. The regiment was ordered to North America in 1837, and its first station was Halifax. After remaining a few months in that city, the regiment was removed to Upper Canada, where the rebellion had broken out, and was stationed in Toronto, and for a time at Drummondville. In Toronto a number of the men applied for their discharge, and settled in Toronto. Among these was Mr. Oal, who had attained the position of sergeant. On leaving the regiment Mr. Oal, now a married man, was variously employed; and by his fidelity, intelligence and good conduct, gained the respect and confidence of all who knew him. He was from its organization a member of Knox Church, and for several years discharged, with intelligence and fidelity the responsible duties of church officer. After a time he was employed in the office of the Schemes of the Church and of the *Record*, which was then published in Toronto, and of the distribution of which he had charge. He continued in the same position to the time of his death, and very many of the ministers and members of the Church had occasion to meet him when they came to the office on business. He held the office of elder for some years in Knox Church; afterwards he joined Cooke's Church, when Dr. Robb was pastor, and at the time of his death was a member and elder of the Presbyterian Church in Carlton Street, under the pastoral charge of Rev. Andrew Wilson. For many years he was a Sabbath school teacher, for which position his intelligence, piety and acquaintance with the Scriptures peculiarly fitted him.

Mr. Oal was a man of the strictest integrity, painstaking and faithful in every duty, and accurate in his work. His military training could be recognized to the last in his walk and bearing, and especially in his strict and undeviating adherence to his instructions. He was extensively read in theology, and strongly attached to the old orthodox faith. He knew the truth, and he was ever found walking in the truth. In all the relations of life he was most exemplary, and few have enjoyed more fully the respect and confidence, not only of his friends, but of the community at large. His last illness was of short duration, scarcely over a week. It was hoped at first that it would not be unto death; but it pleased the Master to terminate his earthly career, and remove him to the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

A widow and three daughters, one of them the wife of the Rev. A. C. Stewart, of Belmore, survive him. They have the sincere sympathy of a large circle of friends, in whose memories George Oal will long live in loving remembrance.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Feb. 22,
1885.

PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

{ Acts 23:
1-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"And the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said: 'Be of good cheer, Paul.'"—Acts xxiii. 11.

TIME.—May, A.D., 58.

Introductory Review.—1. Why did Paul at this time dwell on his own early training and zeal for the law? 2. Why did he relate the steps of his conversion? 3. What was the first result of Paul's conversion? 4. What is the qualification for work, as stated by Ananias? 5. Why did Paul wish to labour, first in Jerusalem?

INCIDENTAL TOPICS.

I. Council of Sanhedrim.—This was the supreme judicial court amongst the Jews, both for civil and religious matters, which gave it an exceedingly extensive jurisdiction. Although not known by the name, Sanhedrim (which is of Greek origin), until about 140 B.C.—the council was really originated by Moses. Numbers, xi. 16, 17. There is some doubt as to the exact number of persons who constituted this court, but probably there were seventy members and a president—seventy-one in all. These members were drawn from three classes, often mentioned in the Gospels: "The Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders." The "Chief Priests" were, partly, those who had once filled the office of High Priest, and partly, the heads of the twenty-four classes, into which the priests were divided. The "Elders" were the heads of tribes and families. And the "Scribes" were those learned in the law.

The Sanhedrim was distinguished for the justice of its decisions, in comparison with Gentile courts, although there were sad exceptions, such as the instance under consideration, in which the case was prejudiced.

II. Ananias.—An infamous man, very different from him of the same name, referred to in the last lesson. All we learn of him in the New Testament is this act of scandalous injustice toward Paul. From Josephus it is learned that he was a violent and wicked man, and that he came to a violent death—having been assassinated in the street.

EXPLANATORY.

In the address, delivered from the top of the stair, the hated word, "Gentiles," created such an uproar that he could proceed no further. Like an ordinary Oriental mob, they yelled, swung their garments and cast dust into the air, so as to make the mystified Captain wonder what could be wrong. As he was about to subject him to torture, according to Roman custom—to extort confession. One quiet question from Paul changed the whole situation. A Roman citizen may not be even bound before he is condemned, much less scourged. The Captain is uneasy, and next morning calls a meeting of the Sanhedrim, in order to find out if possible the true situation.

We may look at Paul's appearance before the Council as an interesting succession of kaleidoscopic views of character.

I. The Dignity of Integrity.—*Earnestly beholding the Council, etc.*: Paul does not quail before his judges. He can look calmly and boldly in their faces—the courage of conscious innocence. The man who wants to develop a steady eye and easy manner must cultivate a pure heart. Paul was probably so intent on promoting Christ's work, by this opportunity of addressing the Council, that he forgot self for the time. A high purpose gives unconscious dignity.

I have lived in all good conscience, etc.: Both before his conversion and after. Always a sincere man, although his conscience was not enlightened. Although sincerity alone will not save, it is an important step. "If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." John vii. 17.

This sentence might be taken as the application of his address in the last chapter. The change in his life so offensive to them was made before God. A good motto: *Thou God seest me.*

II. Righteous Indignation.—The High Priest, offended, at what to him looked like impudence, that a criminal at the bar should dare to claim brotherhood with the Council, and innocence for himself, commanded some of the servants to smite him on the mouth; an act expressive of abhorrence for his words. Our Saviour was thus treated. John xviii. 22.

Paul flashed at such an act of injustice, and retorted the scathing prediction of ver. 3. The *whited wall* or *whitewashed wall* is the same figure used by Christ when he compared the hypocritical Pharisees to "whited sepulchres"—an attractive exterior, but a deadly interior. Paul scores a point, in showing that he has more reverence for the law than his judge, who professed to administer the law.

III.—Humble reverence for the Word of God. Although Paul could not respect the man, and abhorred the injustice, he revered the divine institutions, and at once apologized, as soon as he discovered that he transgressed the divine will regarding it. The man who cannot apologize thinks more of himself than of the truth.

Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. A law that should, in very large letters, be hung in every newspaper office. The ruler is in a manner God's representative, and as such should be respected, and, moreover, disrespect towards him, tends to develop disrespect for the law he administers. That element would regulate and greatly modify criticism.

I wist not, etc.: Different explanations offered.

(1.) Paul would not own such a man as High Priest. (2.) That he was not really installed into office. (3.) I did not think before I spoke, or I would have been more careful. (4.) Paul's imperfect vision prevented him from recognizing the speaker. The white robe of the High Priest indistinctly seen, suggested to him the "whited wall."

IV. Tact, the wisdom of the serpent. Paul throws the apple of discord amongst his enemies. The central point in the gospel Paul preached, and for which he was persecuted, was the *risen Christ*, the "first-fruits" of the resurrection. Although the Pharisees did not recognise the connection between Christ and the resurrection, yet they held the great doctrine itself and Paul announced himself as one with them on that point. Instantly the majority of the Council is upon his side. Tact is one of the greatest gifts in dealing with men, but is in danger of degenerating into questionable policy.

V. Irreverent insincerity. Paul's Pharisee allies, who a moment before would have torn him limb from limb, without a trial, now talk piously about the danger of "fighting against God," because they expect some party advantage.

How much denominational zeal is mere partyism, as low, and unworthy as any political scheming, and will bring quite as little reward.

If a spirit or angel, etc. Reference to Paul's conversion as stated by himself, and a hit at the Sadducees.

VI. God a present helper. The excitement became so great that the Chief Captain feared Paul might be injured. He sent soldiers to the rescue and brought him into the castle. After the tension of these days there was a reaction. Paul's spirits fell, and the Lord appears to comfort him. The sight of his Lord would be enough. But he is assured that he will get through all these dangers and yet see Rome. In Paul's life this was not uncommon. At Corinth, at Jerusalem, on the Mediterranean Sea, he had similar experiences and probably on other occasions not recorded.

It is one of the most delightful thoughts in our religion that Jesus shows himself to his saints in their times of need. Our constant request should be, "We would see Jesus" in all the pleasant and unpleasant affairs of life. Once He is discovered, we are "of good cheer."

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS.

1. Do you live in a good conscience before God?
2. Do you feel moral indignation in the presence of sin, Rom. i. 3-22?
3. Are you willing to confess, as soon as you discover yourself in error?
4. Are your efforts in connection with the work of God, actuated by love to Christ?
5. Have you hope in the resurrection?
6. Do you see Jesus in times of darkness?
7. Do you keep these in remembrance for future use?