

was laid on the table and extracts therefrom read. The progress of the canvass was shown and congregations urged to complete it. The representation of Presbyterians in connection with the working of benevolent institutions was dwelt upon and a plan suggested for accomplishing this. The Presbytery received and adopted the report as amended. Mr. G. W. Stephens, M.P.P., President of the Associated Charities of Montreal, and Mr. Drake, Treasurer, appeared as a deputation and addressed the court as to the nature and working of the association and urged the importance of united effort in connection with charitable work and kindred subjects among Protestants. The Moderator thanked the deputation in the name of the Presbytery for the information given, and the Presbytery, having heard the deputation, recommended to all churches and individuals in the Presbytery the importance of discrimination and examination in the distribution of all charities. A circular was received from the Committee on Augmentation of Stipends, urging, among other things, that the sum of \$5,500, assigned to this Presbytery, should be raised for the current year. The Home Mission Committee were instructed to apportion the amount among the congregations of the Presbytery. Conveners of missionary deputations reported from the several districts in which missionary meetings were held. The reports generally were of a very encouraging nature. Rev. R. Campbell, of St. Gabriel Church, Montreal, reminded the Presbytery that this is the centenary of Presbyterianism in Montreal, and a committee consisting of the Moderator of the Presbytery, the ministers and representative elders of St. Gabriel, Knox and St. Paul, with Rev. Messrs. Warden and Jordan, and Mr. Warden King, was appointed to consider this matter, and to make the necessary arrangements if a celebration be decided on; Mr. Campbell, Convener. Rev. Professor Coussirat reported that only two of the members appointed to take part in the ordination of Mr. Lefebvre, at Joliette, were able to be present. The Presbytery, whilst regretting the irregularity, resolved to sanction the action as reasonable in the circumstances. Rev. C. A. Doudiet asked the appointment of a committee to consider some features of the marriage law of this Province, with the view, if deemed necessary, to press them upon the attention of Parliament. The following committee was appointed: Dr. McVicar, Robert Campbell, L. H. Jordan, Dr. Smyth, and the mover; Mr. Doudiet, to be Convener. The reports from the General Assembly were held over for consideration at the next quarterly meeting. The report of the examining committee was read, and in terms of its recommendations the Presbytery agreed to certify to the Senate of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, the following young men:—Dougall McKaskill, James Naismith, Joseph Francis Langton and Charles Arthur Campbell, all having the ministry in view. The Presbytery resolved to hold its next quarterly meeting in this place on Thursday, the 11th of March, at ten o'clock a.m., due intimation of which was given, and this meeting was closed with prayer.—JAMES PATTERSON, Pres. Clerk.

MONTREAL NOTES.

THE arrangements are now completed for the opening of the Cote St. Antoine Church. On Sabbath next, the 21st inst., the Rev. J. Fleck preaches in the morning, and Rev. A. B. Mackay in the evening. In the afternoon, at three o'clock, an open meeting of the Sabbath school takes place, to be addressed by Rev. J. McCaul and Mr. J. Murray Smith. On Tuesday, the 23rd inst., a social meeting will be held, to be addressed by Rev. Messrs. Barclay, Warden, R. Campbell, Wells and Dr. Smith, and Mr. A. C. Hutchison. On the following Sabbath, the 28th inst., the Rev. L. H. Jordan preaches in the morning and the Rev. W. R. Cruickshank in the evening. Special collections for the building fund will be taken at all the services. It is hoped that many will be present from the city churches to show their interest in this new congregation. The ladies' sale of work on Friday last, in the house of Mrs. A. C. Hutchison, was quite a success, and realized nearly \$100.

THE annual soiree of the Knox Church Sabbath School was held on Friday evening, Mr. Walter Paul, superintendent of the school, in the chair. After refreshments had been served the annual report was read by Mr. Henry. The school numbers thirty-one teachers and 195 pupils. The missionary contributions, amounting to \$248, were appropriated to the missions of the Church, including the support of a cot in the children's ward of the General Hospital. The lady teachers regularly visit the occupants of this cot. During the evening recitations and dialogues were given by the children, and addresses by the pastor, Rev. J. Fleck, Alderman Mooney, Messrs. Brown and Aikman. The lecture room was most beautifully decorated with flowers, which were greatly admired by all.

ON Thursday evening the annual social meeting of Taylor Church was held and was largely attended. The chair was occupied by Rev. T. Bennett, the pastor. The annual report, read by Mr. Campbell, was a most encouraging one. Notwithstanding the death during the year of their former pastor, and the prevalence of the small-pox epidemic in that section of the city, the receipts were in excess of the previous year; and after meeting all claims there was a balance on hand of about \$70. The Sabbath collections at present average \$21.50, and are on the increase. The congregation is steadily growing, as is the Sabbath school. The church property is free from debt and the prospects never seemed more bright. After electing new managers, addresses were delivered by Messrs. Fleck, Cruickshank, Warden and Brown. The choir sang a number of anthems and other pieces, and Prof. McLaren two hymns with power and sweetness. Before the close of the meeting, on motion of Mr. Murray, a hearty vote of thanks was tendered to Rev. J. Fleck for his services as moderator during the vacancy. Under Mr. Bennett this congregation will soon be self-supporting, and in addition contribute its fair share to the Schemes of the Church.

For the month of January the contributions of the Juvenile Missionary Society of Chalmers Church were upwards of \$50.

Those of Erskine Church Juvenile Missionary Society were nearly \$60, a marked increase in both societies over January, 1885. For the whole of the past year the former contributed \$495 and the latter \$550 for missionary and benevolent purposes.

RUSSELL HALL (St. John's Church) was on Tuesday last filled by a large congregation, including about one hundred French Roman Catholics, at a concert of sacred music. The attendance at this church is again as large as usual, having suffered somewhat during the prevalence of the small-pox epidemic.

ON Thursday evening, 18th inst., a social gathering of the Rev. A. Internoscia's Italian congregation is to be held in Russell Hall, when it is hoped a number of the English-speaking friends of the mission will be present. Mr. Internoscia is doing a good work among the Italians, and deserves encouragement at the hands of the Christian people of the city. Those present may count upon hearing some good music from several Italian musicians. The meeting begins at eight o'clock.

THE Rev. Dr. Gregg's History of Presbyterianism in Canada is deservedly meeting with a large sale here. The sketches given of the lives and labours of the missionaries who first unfurled the blue banner in the several Provinces of the Dominion about a hundred years ago are most interesting and instructive. It is hoped that Dr. Gregg may in a subsequent volume continue the history of Presbyterianism from 1834 to the present date. The Church is under a deep obligation to him for the volume just published.

THE annual report of St. Matthew's Church (Rev. W. R. Cruickshank, pastor,) was submitted at a meeting on the 27th ult. The receipts for ordinary fund were \$2,752, of which \$1,926 were obtained by weekly envelopes. After meeting all expenses there is a balance of \$20 on hand. The envelope system has worked most successfully, and proved far superior to the method formerly adopted for raising the revenue. The number contributing by means of envelopes is 166. There were fifty-seven communicants received last year, the present membership being upwards of 430. The Sabbath school numbers forty-two teachers and 400 scholars, the average attendance for the last month being upwards of 320. At the close of the congregational meeting, Mr. Hugh Russell, the financial secretary, was presented with a handsome gold chain and locket, and a copy of the Oxford Teachers' Bible, in appreciation of his services. The congregation are greatly hampered for want of accommodation, and steps have been taken to secure a suitable lot, and erect a new church edifice. The Ladies' Association have already on hand \$721 towards the new building.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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

Feb. 23,
1886.

NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

{ Neh. 1:
1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man."—Psa. cxviii. 12.

INTRODUCTORY.

Shushan.—This was the capital of the country called Elam in Scripture—which lay east of the Tigris—on the Chaspes River. It is of interest to us because Daniel either lived there, or was transferred thither in vision (Dan. viii. 2). It is there also that *Esther* and *Mordecai* lived as well as *Nehemiah* with whom we are engaged in this lesson.

It was made the chief capital by Darius, King of Persia, and in it was the most magnificent palace. About 200 miles north was *Ecbatana*, another summer residence, situated on the Orontes Mountains, and about as far south was *Persepolis*, the magnificent capital that was destroyed by Alexander the Great, in a fit of drunkenness. Besides these the Kings of Persia often spent portions of their time in Babylon and other cities, especially *Pasargadae*, the most ancient of their capitals.

The great palace in which Nehemiah lived was built on a mound 1,000 feet square and raised to the height of fifty feet. In the centre was a hall 200 feet square supported by thirty-six columns sixty feet high. On the outside of this were three porticoes, 200 feet wide, supported by columns, and separated from the central hall by a wall eighteen feet thick. A hall 100 feet square, north of the northern portico, is supposed to have been the *King's gate* where *Mordecai* sat.

Alexander the Great discovered immense wealth—gold, silver, purple, etc., in the city, when it was taken by him. It afterwards, after the fall of Persia, became the capital of *Parthia*.

Nehemiah.—These facts about the city and palace will help us to understand the character of *Nehemiah*. He was cup-bearer to *Artaxerxes* the King—a chief officer at court, in the enjoyment of royal luxury,—but was not satisfied so long as his own country and people were afflicted. He gave it all up and came to Jerusalem to restore the walls and remove the reproach from his brethren.

That is an illustration—happily not uncommon—of the devotion that ought to characterize the followers of Christ. He, who came from heaven to save men, is the greatest example of such sacrificing love.

EXPLANATORY.

Nehemiah was the son of *Hachaliah*, and it is inferred from his position that he was of royal blood. He was the cup-bearer of *Artaxerxes*, who reigned from 465 B.C. to 423 B.C. Daniel in the service of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Obadiah* in the service of *Ahab*, and *Nehemiah* in the service of *Artaxerxes*, show that men cannot be judged by their positions. We shall find in the last Great Day that the first shall be last and the last first.

I. *Nehemiah's Patriotism and Piety*.—These do not always go together, but they were closely allied—in fact, identical,—in the Jewish theocracy. To love the cause of God was to love Jerusalem and the favoured land. We may have a strong love for the Church, without any very strong love of country, although it also is desirable.

(1) *Anxious inquiry*. (Ver. 2.) When his brother *Hanani* (i. 2) and some other men came from Jerusalem—perhaps in order to get some assistance for their people—he at once inquired about the returned of the captivity, and about Jerusalem. He could not forget Zion's welfare (Psa. cxxxvii. 6), and looked eagerly for information.

His brethren, who travelled 1,000 miles, would be encouraged by this manifest interest on the part of so influential a man. If we love Zion we shall not remain ignorant willingly, but seek to know her successes and reverses. We shall ask our brethren how the Lord's cause prospers with them, and they will be encouraged by the inquiry.

(2) *Afflicted*.—He was afflicted in their affliction. The intelligence was distressing. He was told that by public reproach—the contempt of their neighbours—they were greatly afflicted, and that the walls and gates of Jerusalem were yet as *Nebuchadnezzar* left them a hundred years before.

This condition of affairs was not so much owing to the contempt of neighbours as to the want of enthusiasm on the part of the Jews themselves. Only 50,000 of them returned from Babylon, whilst there must have been hundreds of thousands, if not millions of them. And besides some of them that did return were not loyal, but in sympathy with the enemy.

Is it not so in the Lord's work now? The real difficulty is not the opposition *without*, but the unfaithfulness *within* on the part of its members. But that is no reason why we should not take interest in her prosperity. We should be more devoted to that account.

Nehemiah was overcome with sorrow and sat down and wept, and mourned for days and fasted and prayed.

Fasted.—It was commanded in connection with the services of the Day of Atonement, but on all other occasions was voluntary. But Jewish traditions imposed many burdens upon the people and this amongst them. It is a natural expression of sorrow. Desire for food ceases. It also can judiciously be used to stimulate wholesome sorrow for sin. It was not *total abstinence* from food for so long a time.

Days.—This continued for three or four months, from *Chisleu* (ver. 1) to *Nisan* (ii. 1)—i.e., from the ninth of the first,—or from December to April.

The true heart will not let go until the blessing is received. Many instances of such persevering prayer.

II. *Nehemiah's Prayer*.—Prayer is defined in the Shorter Catechism to be "an offering of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies."

The prayer of *Nehemiah* corresponds with that definition.

(1) *Unto God*. (Ver. 5).—That means more than simply the name. When *Nehemiah* thought of God he appreciated in some degree His attributes and was correspondingly affected. *Of Heaven*.—More than the earthly creature—the Ruler of the universe.

Terrible God.—Awe-inspiring. Before Him angels veil their faces. When Job saw God, he was overwhelmed. He said: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." That is the reverence and holy fear with which we should ever think of Him and especially address Him. It is very painful to hear the familiarity and boldness—even impudence—with which many address God in prayer. It shows that their hearts are not right—they have not seen God.

(2) *Desires*.—The earnestness of *Nehemiah's* desire is seen by the weeping and fasting and perseverance of his prayer. He has one special desire (ver. 11)—that he might get permission from the king to go to Jerusalem, and try and answer his own prayers. That is the best test of the sincerity of our prayers—that we are willing to put ourselves about in order to get an answer.

Co-operation. (Ver. 11).—Another evidence of intensity. He united his prayers with others who desired the same thing. Where two or three are met, etc.

(3) *Agreeable to His will*. (Ver. 5, 9).—He claims the promise of God, given to Moses, that when the people repented He would forgive. When we can lay our hands on a promise, we are on a sure place. We know then that there is no difficulty on God's part—all that is needed is that we should perform ours in the exercise of believing prayer.

(4) *In the name of Christ*. (Ver. 5).—"That keepeth covenant and mercy," or "covenant of mercy," or "merciful covenantant." That was the foundation of hope for the Israelites, that God had entered into a covenant of mercy with them. To us that covenant of mercy is in Jesus Christ; to them it was embodied in the tabernacle service, and so far as in that service they were able to perceive the coming Messiah. With that we close, and seal every prayer for Jesus' sake.

(5) *Confession of sin*. (Verses 6, 7).—He, as Daniel did, identifies himself and his fathers with the people, and confesses that they acted very corruptly in violating God's laws in every form in which given, or by whatever name known—statutes, judgments and commandments. It is not necessary to distinguish these words. In Psa. cxix. they are used as synonyms. We should confess and not try to excuse the sins of ourselves or our fathers. Deal honestly with God.

(6) *Thankful acknowledgment of mercy*. (Ver. 10).—He had already adopted and redeemed this people. All their past history is a story of redemption. It is our privilege to say that, and we should speak of it to God, and trust Him more on account of it.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Information creates enthusiasm.
2. The outlet of enthusiasm is prayer.
3. The companion of prayer is exertion.
4. The spring of exertion is faith.
5. The ground of faith is promise.