

was agreed that the evening of the first day of next Presbytery meeting be set apart for a Sabbath-School Conference, and that the above committee be instructed to prepare a programme, and make all necessary arrangements therefor. The Rev. Messrs J. Patterson and Livingstone were appointed a Committee on the State of Religion. The Treasurer of the Presbytery Rev. J. Wellwood—presented the interim report, showing the fund to be in a satisfactory condition. The Rev. Dr. Reid, of Toronto, was unanimously nominated Moderator of the next General Assembly. The meeting was closed with the benediction.

PRESBYTERY OF HAMILTON.—This court met in Hamilton on January 21st when twenty-six ministers and fourteen elders were present. Mr. Goldsmith reported that a Sabbath school conference would be held in Hamilton in connection with the Presbytery on the 18th February prox. Anent a memorial from Mr. John Brooker, the matter was remitted to the session of Knox Church, Hamilton and Dr. McDonald, Messrs. A. J. McKenzie, Buntin and G. Rutherford were appointed assessors. Principal McVicar, Dr. Cochran and Mr. Laing having been nominated as Moderator for next assembly, the last named was carried by a large majority. Mr. R. Thomson, presented a presbyterial certificate and designation from the Presbytery of Berwick of the English Presbyterian Church and was received as a minister of this Church. A call from Drummondville and Chippawa, with salary of \$700 was sustained and accepted by Mr. Thomson, his induction was appointed for Tuesday February 4th at 2 p. m. Mr. Gordon to preside, Mr. McIntyre to preach, Mr. McEwen to address the pastor and Mr. Murray the people. The resignation of Mr. Munt was accepted to take effect on the 27th inst. Mr. Walker was appointed to declare the vacancy and to act as Moderator of Session. Mr. Gordon was empowered to moderate in a call at Niagara. The annual report of the Women's Foreign Mission Association was submitted, read and received. A petition from East Lancaster was received and a committee, consisting of Dr. James, Mr. Fletcher and Dr. McDonald, was appointed to confer with the Rev. Mr. Black and his congregations, and the congregation of Erskine church and ascertain what can be done for the relief of the last named congregation, and to report at next meeting. JOHN LAING, *Pres. Clerk*.

PRESBYTERY OF GUELPH.—This Presbytery met in Knox church, Galt, on the 21st inst., and was duly constituted with prayer by Dr. Wardrope, Moderator. There was a considerable attendance of Ministers, but comparatively few Ruling Elders. A report was received from the Committee appointed to arrange for holding a Conference on the State of Religion, suggesting topics for discussion and recommending the names of speakers by whom they should be introduced. The report was received and its recommendations were adopted. Reports were received from the various missionary deputations appointed to visit the congregations in the bounds, and from the minister appointed to preach missionary sermons. The reports were of a highly favourable and encouraging character. Mr. Bentley presented the report of the German Mission Committee, showing the number of German speaking families at Preston connected with the congregation there, and their wish to have a regular supply of preaching in their own tongue. Mr. McCrae read an elaborately prepared table, showing the rate of contribution by each family and communicant towards the different schemes of the Church, and all purposes. It was decided to publish the table, with the addition of a column for Stipend, and that a copy should be placed in every family. Mr. Middlemiss reported from the Committee appointed to consider the Remit from the General Assembly, anent a Sustentation Fund to this effect; 1st. That while it is highly desirable that the minimum stipend paid should be eight hundred dollars, in present circumstances it is not expedient to aim at more, in the first instance, than seven hundred. 2. That owing to the diversity of opinion regarding a general Sustentation Fund, it is not advisable to establish such at the present time. 3. That though the increase sought might in other circumstances than the present be best attained by establishing a Supplemented Fund, separate and distinct from the Home Mission Fund, yet it is better not to separate the two Funds in the meantime, but to use means to secure greater liberality in the support of the Home Mission Fund as at present

constituted. Thanks were given to the Committee and their recommendations adopted. Mr. McInnes tendered his resignation on the ground of ill health of the pastoral charge of Erin and Ospringe congregations, and arrangements were made to cite these congregations to appear for their interests at next meeting. Similar steps were taken with the congregation of West Puslinch, Mr. McDiarmid having laid his resignation on the table. On the report and recommendations of the Sabbath School Committee, read by Mr. J. K. Smith, Convener, the subject of procuring and employing Sabbath School Teachers who had been trained in Normal School Classes was appointed to be discussed at the next meeting, to be introduced by Mr. Ball and Mr. Middlemiss. Dr. Wardrope introduced the matter of the Theological Education Fund, after which it was resolved to recommend it to the liberality of the congregations. Considerable time was spent in considering a question as to the propriety of dispensing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in a private house, after public notice from the pulpit. The Presbytery, feeling itself incompetent to deal with the subject, the discussion was dropped. A communication was read from Mr. Anderson, of Rothsay, stating that in consequence of sickness, he was unable to attend meetings of Presbytery, or fulfil appointments he had received. The Clerk was instructed to acknowledge the receipt of the communication, to convey to Mr. Anderson the sympathy of the Presbytery with him in his affliction, and arrangements were made to give him some rest by supplying his pulpit in February and March. The next meeting was appointed to be held in Knox Church, Guelph, on the third Tuesday of March, at ten o'clock in the forenoon. The roll was called, and the attendance marked, after which the proceedings closed.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON VI.

Feb. 9. } THE KEEPING OF THE SABBATH. { Neh xiii.
1879. } 15-22.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."—Ex. xx. 8.

HOME STUDIES.

M. Neh ix. 1-20. Sins confessed.
T. Neh ix. 21-38. Mercies Acknowledged.
W. Neh x. 1-39. The covenant sealed.
Th. Neh xii. 27-47. The walls dedicated.
F. Neh xiii. 1-14. The chambers cleansed.
S. Neh xiii. 15-22. The Sabbath Observed.
S. Jer. xvii. 19-27. Sabbath desecration denounced.

HELPS TO STUDY.

After the great gathering brought together for the reading of the law, the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated as of old. Then soon after a day of fasting and humiliation for sin was observed, when the people renewed their solemn covenant with Jehovah. Nehemiah continued his patriotic labours. Two matters are noted. (1.) *The filling up of Jerusalem.* There were large spaces within the walls uninhabited. The people who lived in the outlying towns and villages, by Nehemiah's direction cast lots, one in every ten being chosen to go to live in the capital. There were also some who volunteered to go. (2.) *The Dedication of the Wall,* which was made with great sacrifices and rejoicings, two companies of singers, one under Nehemiah, and another under Ezra, making a circuit of the wall in opposite directions, until they halted before the temple.

After twelve years of labour for the good of his countrymen, Nehemiah returned to the Court of Artaxerxes. After an absence, whose duration is unknown, he came back again, but found to his sorrow that many abuses had crept in, and grievous wrong was being done. A second time he entered upon his work of reform. He cleansed the desecrated chambers of the temple, and brought back the Levites and singers who, unpaid and neglected, had abandoned their duties and returned home. The next reform is that related in our lesson. He found—

I. THE SABBATH PROFANED—Vers. 15-22.

Notice.—1. *The Desecration.* Every kind of work and business was being carried on. Husbandsmen pursued their labours; the wine presses were trod; the sheaves were brought in from the fields to be thrashed; the fruits were gathered. (Note 1.) There were those who bought and sold. The weary beasts were compelled to bear their burdens. Those who had no regard for God's law would have little pity for His dumb creatures. Doubtless, these Sabbath breakers would have many excuses. They would plead the disturbed condition of the country, which made it unsafe to neglect the harvest, and the time they had given to rebuilding the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. Blinded by their own selfish interests, very quickly had they forgotten God's commands and their own solemn promises. No worldly interests should ever interfere with the sacredness of the day God has set apart for man's own good.

The evil example of the surrounding godless nations, and especially of the men of Tyre, with whom they had inti-

mate trade relations, doubtless, did much to corrupt the Jews. Phœnician influence had in former times wrought much mischief. It was the Sidonian Jezebel who led on the weak and wicked Ahab to sell himself to work evil.—1 Kings xvi. 31. And now this colony of Tyrians infected all Jerusalem with its irreligion and godlessness. Such is the danger of worldly associates. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

2. *The Remonstrance.* Nehemiah's faithful supervision of affairs led him at once to detect the evil, and bold, faithful, uncompromising he cannot pass it by unnoticed, or content himself with a vague disclaimer. He testified against the wrong-doers. He remonstrates, rebukes, bears witness against the sin and the shame. So the Christian is called upon to be faithful in rebuking evil. But let us take heed that while the truth is spoken, it is spoken in love. Let us show our opposition to sin first and most in ourselves, then we can consistently rebuke the sins of others. Let us not mistake anger on account of personal wrong for righteous indignation. Remember, too, that genuine hatred of sin is always accompanied by love and pity for the sinner.

Nehemiah gave another proof of his sincerity and courage. He contended with the nobles. He did not fear to deal with sin in high places. With just impartiality he would not permit rank to shelter or sanction guilt. The nobles themselves had not bought or sold, or laboured; perhaps they had not been in any way connected with the profanation of the Sabbath. But at least they had held their peace, had failed to use their influence in restraining the wrong-doers. They, therefore, were responsible, and were involved in the national guilt.

Every man in a community or in a church is responsible for all evil of whose existence he is aware, and which he does not expose and oppose, and the higher the social position, the greater the responsibility. The man who refrains from rebuke of evil on account of the trouble and annoyance he may suffer, is accessory to the wrong, whatever it be.

Nehemiah reminds the people of the sin of old, and the punishment. Neglect of the Sabbath had been one of the crimes which had provoked their doom. Sabbath-breaking is still a sin against God, who has set apart the day; against society which would become utterly demoralized without its influence; against the body, which requires rest; against the soul, which requires this blessed opportunity for communion with God and spiritual improvement. The Sabbath-breaker will not escape with impunity. National sins will be followed by national punishments. The land which disregards God and violates His laws, is sure to suffer sooner or later. The history of Israel and Judah is a mirror for all.

II. THE SABBATH SANCTIFIED—verses 19-22.

Nehemiah did not merely use remonstrance and moral suasion. He took strongest measures to put an end to the profanation. The gates were shut at dark, as soon as the Sabbath began, a watch was set. Once or twice an effort was made to resist Nehemiah's measures. The merchants took their places without the walls that they might hold their market, and yet evade the law. But Nehemiah is firm. He threatened them, and the transgressors, cowards at heart, soon desisted. If the administrators of law do their duty, the bluster of the wrong-doers will quickly be silenced. Nehemiah made the carrying out of his measures a sacred duty. He detailed for this service Levites, to whom the ministry in holy things belonged. They, too, must first cleanse themselves. Here is a lesson for all who seek to put down evil—they must be consecrated by separation from all sin, and must go with clean hearts and clean hands to the work of reformation.

A question comes up here which must be faced. Did Nehemiah succeed? He enforced outward observance of the Sabbath, but he could not make the people religious. The latter he could not do, nor can any legislation do so. But for all that the legislation is right and necessary. Its purpose is to restrain wrong-doers, and to protect those whom they oppress or mislead. Nehemiah could not make the farmers and traders religious; but he could secure for their servants and for their beasts the rest which God mercifully enjoined. He could prevent public desecration of the holy day; he could shield from temptation the young and the ignorant; he could secure opportunity for rest and devotion for all who would avail themselves of it. These are the objects of all restrictive legislation, whether in regard to the liquor traffic or gambling, or Sabbath-breaking, or any immorality. The law is made for the lawless who are to be restrained; and for the oppressed who are to be protected. It is a shelter, a bulwark, under whose protection true religion may grow and extend.

Then in regard to our observance of the Sabbath, let us look upon it as a privilege. It was made for man, for man's real benefit and advancement. True Sabbath-keeping does not consist merely in giving up so much or so little of week-day employments; but in using the whole day for God's glory and the good of our own soul and the souls of others. It is the Lord's Day. It belongs to Christ. Whatever brings us nearer to Him or helps us to bring others nearer to Him is in its place on His day. Whatever separates from Him, or has its motive and purpose in serving self and the world, is contrary to the spirit and intention of the sacred day. If the heart is given to God, then, and then only, will the Sabbath be kept for Him, and be "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable."

Births, Marriages and Deaths.

NOT EXCEEDING FOUR LINES 25 CENTS.

BIRTHS.

In Oshawa, on January 11th, the wife of Samuel Wood of a son.

MARRIED.

At the residence of the bride's father, on 31st Dec. 1878, by the Rev. Thomas MacGuire, Charles Henry Ward, to Sarah Jane, youngest daughter of Daniel Cavanagh, Esq. All of Jarvis.