

THE annual congregational meeting of the Presbyterian Church, Cobourg, was held in the lecture room recently. It was largely attended, and was one of the most successful of the series held in the history of this prosperous Church. The pastor, Rev. Mr. McCrae, after opening the meeting, spoke of the benefit derived from social intercourse with each other and acquaintance with the spiritual and secular work of the congregation for the past year. The first report was read by Mr. Joseph Henderson, the Session Clerk. It gave a clear and interesting account of the spiritual results of the preaching of the Word, the holding of regular and cottage prayer meetings, the Bible class and Sabbath school, and showed that through these instrumentalities, many—especially young people—had been induced to declare for the Master and ally themselves with the Church. The next reports related to missionary work. Mr. Jeffrey, on behalf of the Ladies' Missionary Association, read a very interesting statement of the work carried on by them and of the contributions received during the year. Mr. Joseph Holmes, treasurer of the regular missionary society, stated the amount paid to him by the collectors, but as the annual meeting had not yet been held, he was not in a position to say to what Schemes it would be allocated. The total amount at present paid in to both associations is \$466. This sum will be increased at the annual meeting. Mr. N. F. Macnachten read the next two reports: one on behalf of the lady president of the "Willing Workers"; the other, the report of the Young People's Association. The "Willing Workers" are the ladies of the congregation, who are at all times ready to visit the sick, care for the poor and do other good work. They hold weekly sewing meetings, and the proceeds of their handiwork are devoted to assisting a fund for the erection of a new Sabbath school and lecture room. The Young People's Association has the same ultimate object in view, but is carried on in a different manner. Its organization aims to bring the young people together, and by readings and lectures to give them a taste for a higher class of literature than what is generally found in the hands of the young. The report of the managers, read by the secretary, Mr. Spence, gave an account of the various work done by them during the past year, and mapped out new schemes for the coming year. The last report was that of the treasurer, Mr. E. A. Macnachten. The treasurer had been enabled to pay all amounts due by the congregation, amounting to \$2,750, and still has a balance on hand, besides unpaid contributions. The building fund debt was nearly extinguished, the last instalment, \$400, due in July next, having been arranged for. Before the meeting adjourned, refreshments, Mr. Macnachten said he had been deputed by the congregation to express the high esteem which they entertained for Mr. McCrae as their pastor, and for Mrs. McCrae as his co-worker. They desired him not only to convey this in words, but in the more tangible form of a cheque for \$100. The reverend gentleman was taken by surprise at the unexpected gift. He thanked Mr. Macnachten and the congregation for their manifestations of love and esteem, and assured them he would ever cherish the kindly feelings which prompted the action and on behalf of Mrs. McCrae and himself, sincerely thanked them for their kind wishes and liberal gift. Afterward new managers were elected in the place of those retiring, and votes of thanks passed to the choir for their efficient services, to the gentlemen who had presented reports, and to the managers for their careful government of the temporal affairs of the Church.

**PRESBYTERY OF HURON.**—This Presbytery held a meeting in Clinton on the 1st February. Mr. Barr, Moderator, presiding. The remit on cooperation with other Churches was disapproved of. Mr. McDonald, on behalf of the committee appointed to consider the remit on marriage with a deceased wife's sister, read a report recommending that the remit be not approved of, and giving reasons therefor. Some of the reasons were adopted, and a committee appointed to draft a deliverance in accordance with the reasons and the discussion thereon, and report at next meeting of Presbytery. A deputation was appointed, consisting of Messrs. McCoy and McLean, to visit Kinburn and the congregation of Burns Church, Hullett, with the view of organizing a station at the former place. It was resolved to hold an open conference on the State of Religion at the next meeting of Presbytery, during the afternoon session. Messrs. Musgrave and Simpson were appointed to address the meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Presbyterian Society at next meeting of Presbytery. The next meeting is to be held in Clinton on the second Tuesday of March at half-past ten a.m.—A. McLEAN, Pres. Clerk.

#### MONTREAL NOTES.

The annual report of St. Paul's Church, for 1886, has just been issued in printed form. It is a pamphlet of thirty-six pages, tastefully printed, and with certain new features not usually found in such reports. Besides a calendar for 1887, and the names and addresses of all heads of families, it has a brief statement of the several Schemes of the Church, and on a large folded sheet a plan of the interior of the church, with the arrangement of the pews and the names of those occupying them. The communicants number 590, a net addition of fifteen during the year. The new rents realized \$7,801, and the Sabbath plate collections, \$3,443. The expenditure for purely congregational purposes was \$13,530. There is no debt on the church property. The missionary contributions by the schedule system amounted to \$5,097. These range in amounts from \$1 to \$500; the highest contributions from individuals being one of \$500, one of \$400, one of \$350, one of \$250, one of \$200, one of \$150, one of \$130, one of \$125, one of \$105, three of \$100, one of \$85, one of \$75, two of \$60, twenty of \$50, etc., etc. In addition, the congregation raise \$1,200 annually for the support of a missionary in India. The total contributions last year were \$26,010, of which \$11,245 were for congregational and \$14,765 for missionary and benevolent purposes. The average contribution, per communicant, was \$44.08, namely: \$19.06 for congregational and \$25.02 for benevolent objects.

An interesting lecture was delivered in Erskine Church, by Mr. A. C. Hutchison, before a large audience, on Monday evening, under the auspices of the Young People's Association. The subject was "Northern Italy," and the lecture was illustrated by Mr. Hutchison by a series of stereopticon views. It was highly appreciated by those present.

Mr. A. G. Nichols, son of the Rev. J. Nichols, delivered a lecture on Tuesday last, in the hall of St. Mark's Church, on "Water," illustrated by numerous chemical experiments. There was a large attendance of the members and friends of the Mutual Improvement Association of the Church, and the entertainment was heartily enjoyed. Mr. A. G. Nichols is a young man of much promise. He was one of the best scholars that ever passed through the high school here. He is now a student of the first year in McGill, where he takes a foremost position.

The students of the Presbyterian College here have just contributed the sum of \$25 for the support of a native teacher under the Rev. J. W. Mackenzie, Efate, and a similar sum for a teacher under Rev. H. Robertson, Eromanga. This is the third year in succession that the students have raised \$50 for the work in the New Hebrides.

Last year was one of the best in the history of St. Andrew's Church, Lachine—Rev. J. Cormack, pastor. With forty-eight families and eighty-four communicants, there were raised by pew rents, \$789, and by plate collections \$607. The contributions for the Schemes of the Church amounted to \$571.25; the average giving per member being \$16.60 for congregational and \$6.80 for missionary objects—a total of \$23.40 per communicant. After meeting all expenses, there remained a balance on hand of \$356 at the close of the year. Though few in numbers, this congregation pays its minister \$1,000 per annum and manse, and the large excess of receipts over expenditure seems to indicate that they are not so rest satisfied very long with giving even this sum as salary.

A number of years ago Presbyterianism was regarded as equally "strong—numerically and financially—in Toronto and Montreal. Toronto has made very rapid strides in recent years, and to day the membership of our Church there is fifty per cent. greater than in Montreal, the figures being in round numbers, Montreal, 4,000 communicants, Toronto, 6,000. Comparing the two Presbyteries, we find the disproportion about the same as in the cities—Montreal Presbytery having 8,000 communicants, and Toronto Presbytery 12,000. In Toronto there are some seven congregations not self-supporting; while no fewer than sixteen of the congregations in the Presbytery of Montreal require assistance in the support of their ministers. Comparing the congregations in the two cities we find that there is raised:

#### IN MONTREAL CITY,

For salaries . . .	\$29,276 . . .	Average \$7.32
For Schemes . . .	19,603 . . .	" 4.92
For all purposes . .	\$9,466 . . .	" 22.36

#### IN TORONTO CITY,

For salaries . . .	\$32,900 . . .	Average \$5.48
For Schemes . . .	25,778 . . .	" 4.29
For all purposes . .	135,575 . . .	" 22.59

The average given per member is therefore nearly the same, for Church purposes, in both cities, and if this could be ascertained, it would probably be found that the giving power on the average is about the same.

The Rev. R. V. McKibbin was inducted to the pastorate of West Farnham on Friday evening—Rev. Messrs. Fleck, Dewey, Macfarlane and Cruikshank taking part in the services. Though the congregation is at present small, the town is growing, and there is a fair prospect for our cause. The church is very neat and substantial, and there is room on the property for a manse, which it is hoped the congregation may be able to erect soon. Mr. McKibbin is their first pastor, and it is hoped his ministry may be greatly blessed.

Sir J. W. Dawson lectures on Friday evening in the David Morrice Hall on "Christian Missions in the East," under the auspices of the Students' Missionary Society.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.**—Dr. Reid has received from A. Young Friend, \$2, equally to Home and Foreign Missions; A. Friend, \$5, Pointe-aux-Trembles; E. H. G., Ottawa, \$10, Home Missions; A. Friend of Missions, \$50, Home Missions, and \$50, Church and Manse Building Fund; Friend, \$2, Home Missions, \$1, Foreign Missions; W. R., \$8, Home Missions, \$8, Foreign Missions, and \$4, Widows' and Orphans' Fund; E. C., \$1, Jewish Missions; A. Friend, Paisley, \$20, equally to Home and Foreign Missions, French Evangelization, Pointe-aux-Trembles and Jewish Missions.

## Sabbath School Teachers

### INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Mar. 6 } ABRAHAM OFFERING ISAAC. { Gen. 22: 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."—Gen. xxii. 8.

#### SHORTER CATECHISM.

**Question 12.**—God sustained a direct and intimate relation with man in his state of innocence. He entered into covenant with him. A covenant is an agreement binding on those who are parties to it. God promised man an everlasting continuance of His favour on condition that man should yield a perfect obedience to the will of God. It was a willing obedience that was required, for no other could be perfect. The test of obedience was not to eat of

the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was not the eating or not eating in itself that constituted the first transgression; it was the disobedience of God's direct command, and the violation of God's covenant. The test of man's obedience was not only prompted by the promise of life, but there was the deterring effect of the penalty that should follow disobedience; that penalty was death—physical, spiritual and eternal.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

Abraham had removed from the neighbourhood of Hebron and was sojourning in Southern Palestine, near Beer-sheba, the well of the oath, so named from the covenant entered into and ratified with Abimelech. It is computed that Isaac at this time was about twenty-five years of age. Josephus makes a statement to that effect.

**I. Faith Tried.**—The lesson opens with the statement that God did tempt Abraham. When the Authorized Version was made the word tempt had a wider significance than now attaches to it. It does not and cannot mean that God would tempt any one to do wrong. That is impossible. The Revised Version brings out the true meaning—God did prove Abraham. In the trial of Abraham God had a purpose. It was not merely to test the strength of faith and try the character of Abraham only for his own sake, but in his representative capacity as the Father of the Faithful. This was the supreme test of Abraham's whole life. To God's command Abraham makes a prompt response. As he had learned to trust God, so he is ready to obey Him implicitly. The command is, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and offer him for a burnt offering." This was God's command. Abraham could have no doubt about it. It was no mere imagination. Frequently God had spoken to him before, and he cannot suppose that he is mistaken now. To what a strain this puts his whole nature. The father's heart would bleed for his son, his only son, the son of his love, even Isaac, so long promised, through whom all the nations were to be blessed. He was to take this son of promise to a distant mountain which God would indicate. If the strain is marvellous, so is the obedience. There is no questioning of God's command. He who had interceded for the city of Sodom does not plead for escape from this terrible trial. The submissive self sacrifice of Abraham has no human parallel. In the morning all preparations were made, and father and son, with two attendants, set forth on their memorable journey. On the third day the place that God had designated was seen. It is generally believed that Mount Moriah, where the temple was afterward built, and near where the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God was offered, was the place where Abraham built his sacrificial altar.

**II. Faith Triumphant.**—When they neared the spot of the awful trial father and son went on alone, the attendants being left behind. Whether they had discoursed together while journeying thither the narrative is silent. Now, however, Isaac speaks wonderingly and inquiringly as to the sacrificial preparations. Behold the fire and wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering? Abraham's faith does not fail at this supreme moment. He answers, no doubt, with intensity of feeling, "My son, God will provide Himself with a lamb for a burnt-offering. The destined place is reached, the altar is erected, the wood laid in order upon it. Isaac is bound as sacrificial victims were bound, and he was laid on the altar. Wonderful also is Isaac's submission. Neither murmur nor remonstrance is recorded. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. The trial of Abraham's faith and obedience is now complete. Having gone so far, he cannot falter now. God interposes. In that awful crisis, welcome beyond the power of expression would be the voice of God. Twice is Abraham's name called and his quick response is, "Here am I. Then comes the command, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad: . . . now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from Me.'

**III. The Substitutionary Sacrifice.**—Abraham had proved that he was willing to give up what was dearer to him far than his own life. The most precious possession he had was freely and obediently laid on God's altar. In the case both of Abraham and Isaac the surrender is complete. Apart from the voluntary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus there is no more complete example of self-consecration to the will of God than that recorded in these verses. On looking round Abraham saw a ram caught in a thicket, that he takes and offers on the altar for a burnt-offering in the place of Isaac. With thankful heart he names the place, Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide. Often, in his previous life history, he had experienced the truth of this saying, but now he had seen its most impressive instance. When surrounded by difficulties and dangers, his descendants remembered the trial of Abraham's faith, and it is said Jehovah-jireh became with them a proverbial expression. It may be that Abraham did not understand God's purpose when he was called upon to make this the greatest sacrifice of his life, but there is nothing far-fetched in the idea that the sacrifice enabled him to see more clearly than ever the need of the one true sacrifice for sin. Jesus said, Abraham saw my day afar off, and was glad. In the offering of Isaac by Abraham we see the sacrifice of Christ typified. There was entire self-surrender in the case of both. Christ said, I delight to do Thy will. Abraham was prepared to give his son as a sacrifice, but God gave His only begotten Son, and for Him there was no substitute. He endured the cross.

#### PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Whatever is most valuable is subjected to the severest tests. So is it with faith and character.

We may often wonder at the nature of the trials to which we are subjected, but we may be sure that if they are submissively borne, they will be productive of blessing.

Faith and obedience always go together.

The trial of faith should ever result in more complete consecration.

The Great Sacrifice has been offered and accepted. Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.