

a distance. After tea and cake, etc, had been fully discussed and Mr. Elder called to the chair, appropriate addresses were delivered by Revs. P. Watson, A. McGillivray, W. Rilance, and J. S. Bennett. Excellent readings were given by Mr. Scales, President of the High School, Miss Grinley, and Miss McBain. A recitation by Miss McNaughton was well received, and also a dialogue by two little girls—Miss Jessie E. McLennan and Miss Maggie McLennan. The entertainment throughout was enlivened by excellent music from the choir, led by Messrs. McLennan and Lewis. The ladies of Hephzibah added another item to the programme by presenting their pastor with an address, and a purse of \$40, for the purpose of adding to his library. The address was read by Miss Saugster, and the purse presented by Mrs. J. D. McLennan, after which Mr. Matheson made a suitable reply. He also referred to the work of the congregation during the past year, stating that seventy-one new names had been added to the communion roll. They had purchased a piece of land for a burying-ground, and are now supporting a pupil in the Pointe aux Trembles schools. The Ladies' Society had done their part nobly, and the financial standing of the congregation was all that could be desired. After the customary votes of thanks, a very enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the Rev. A. McGillivray pronouncing the benediction.—COM.

KNOX COLLEGE STUDENTS' MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The regular monthly meeting of this society was held in the College on the 7th inst. After the meeting was duly constituted with singing, reading of the Scriptures and prayer, reports were read from two of the fields occupied by members of the society during the past summer. In one of these districts there are three stations—viz., Waubaushene, Port Severn, and Sturgeon Bay. The people are engaged in lumbering operations in connection with the Georgian Bay Lumber Company; and the facts that a new church has been built at the first of these places, and that the society's missionary was boarded free of charge, shew that the Company is not negligent of the spiritual interests of its employees. The English Church people have the use of the Union Church at Waubaushene every Sabbath; and the Methodists every two weeks, so that Presbyterian services could only be held every fortnight. The average attendance was ninety, and about fifteen availed themselves of the instruction given in the weekly Bible class. Public worship was conducted at the other two stations every Lord's day, with a congregation of between forty and sixty at each place. Thirty dollars being promised towards paying the railroad expenses of obtaining a fortnightly supply from the College for the winter months, Mr. William Robertson, who was in that field last summer, was appointed to attend to the interest of the people during the present term, and to secure persons to render the requisite gratuitous services. Owing to the ill-health of the Rev. Mr. Gray, of Orillia, who was delegated by the Barrie Presbytery to dispense the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Rev. Mr. Brown, of Newmarket, kindly filled the appointment, and held a united communion service at Waubaushene. Fourteen joined the Church by profession of faith, and six by certificate. There are four stations in the Strong field, which embraces the townships of Strong, Jolly and Machar, in Muskoka. The people in this district are engaged in agricultural pursuits, and as the country is just being settled, they have to endure the hardships incident to a new locality. The Rev. Messrs. Leiper of Barrie, Moodie of Stayner, and Findlay of Bracebridge, visited the field and encouraged the missionary in his work. In Strong, as well as at Stony Lake, preparations are being made for constructing churches, and in the former of these places building operations are to commence next spring. There are twenty-six communicants in the former place and eight in the latter, while the attendance at each was between forty and sixty. At Eagle Lake and Gibbons the people are somewhat scattered, but the work is encouraging. Services were held at each of these four stations every two weeks, and at the two latter the congregations averaged from thirty to forty. After these two reports were received, a communication was read from the Rev. A. Dawson, of Gravenhurst, asking that a missionary be sent for the holidays to the lumber camps in the neighbourhood of that town. His letter stated that there are about 500 men engaged in

these camps, and they have no services amongst them at present. He also suggested that the one sent take tracts and papers for distribution. It was decided to send Mr. W. Fleming for the next four weeks. A verse of the Missionary Hymn was then sung, and the meeting closed with the benediction.

J. A. HAMILTON, Recording Secretary.

OBITUARY.

The congregation and neighbourhood of Innerkip have sustained a great loss in the death of Mrs. Gillespie, widow of the late Mr. Joseph Gillespie, Wood Hall, Blandford, on the 4th inst., in her 85th year; as also in the death of Miss Jessie, her eldest daughter, on the 19th ult., in her 63rd year.

The bereaved family, while feeling most keenly the sudden removal from among them of those so much beloved, yet bow in humble submission to the will of Him who has arranged that "all things will work together for good to those that love Him," and will seek to relieve the otherwise gloomy interval till the future reunion by "patient endurance" and a well-grounded hope.

Mrs. Gillespie's maiden name was Margaret Hall. She was a direct descendant of Henry Hall, of Haughhead, who, 200 years ago, stood so prominently among the faithful and "endured hardness" unto death for "Christ's crown and covenant."

The family became connected with the above congregation at the time of its first organization, and Mrs. Gillespie, with her husband and daughter, were among its first members. Since that time she has never ceased to take the deepest interest in its peace and prosperity. Possessed of large means in her own right, she could and she did cheerfully and liberally respond to every call made upon her. Her example and her influence were felt for good throughout the entire neighbourhood. For years her house was the open home of the ministers of our Church. Unlike so many of the present day, she enjoyed the pleasure of being to a great extent her own executrix. Truly a good mother has fallen in Israel. May God raise up many like-minded noble women to take the place of those who are taken from us!—COM.

THE London Congregational Union has issued a pamphlet calling attention to the fact that, while the population of London had increased in ten years by 1,438,982, the Congregationalists have only increased their sittings by 16,385.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON I.

Jan. 1. } THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL. { Mark i. 1882. } 1:13.

Commit to memory verses 9-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me."—Mal. iii. 1.

CENTRAL TRUTH.—Repentance of sin and confession prepare the way for Christ.

HOME READINGS.—M. Mark i. 1-13.—T. John i. 1-24.—W. John i. 1-23.—Th. Luke iii. 1-23.—F. Luke iv. 1-13.—S. Matt. iii. 1-17.—Sabb. Matt. v. 1-11.

TIME.—John the Baptist was born about June, B.C. 5, at Hebron. Jesus was born about December, B.C. 5, at Bethlehem. The preaching of John the Baptist was during the summer and autumn of A.D. 26. The baptism of Jesus, by John, about January A.D. 27; and the temptation immediately afterwards.

PLACE.—The preaching of John the Baptist was in the wilderness of Judea, a wild, thinly inhabited region west of the Dead Sea and lower Jordan. The baptism of Jesus was probably at the fords of the Jordan at Bethabara, five miles north east of Jericho. The temptation was in the wilderness, probably near Mount Quarantania, north-east of Jerusalem.

RULERS.—Tiberius Cæsar, emperor of Rome (13th year as sole ruler). Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea (first year). Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee (50th year); Herod Philip, of Perea.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.—The Roman empire extended over nearly all the known world. It was a general time of peace. Greece was subject to Rome, but still was the centre of intellect and culture.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—The ministry of John, vs. 1-8, is described in Matt. iii. 1-12. Luke iii. 1-18. The baptism of Jesus, vs. 9-11; in Matt. iii. 13-17. Luke iii. 21-23. The temptation, vs. 12, 13, in Matt. iv. 1-11. Luke iv. 1-13.

INTRODUCTION.—The object of Mark being to relate the official life and ministry of Christ, he begins with the baptism which was His inauguration into the public ministry;

and, as a necessary introduction, he briefly states the career of His forerunner John.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

1. Gospel: Shortened from good and spell = story, news, tidings. It is the best news ever brought to man. 2. In the prophets: v. 2 is from Malachi, 400 years B.C., and v. 3 from Isaiah, 700 years B.C. 3. Prepare the way: Eastern princes, when proposing to march with their armies through the countries where there were no roads, sent messengers before them, requiring the people to prepare the way,—make roads, fill up the ravines, cast out the rough stones. So John was to prepare the way for Christ. 4. John: now comes the fulfilment of the prophecy. John was the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth. (See Time.) He was a relative, perhaps second cousin, of Jesus, and was now thirty-one years old. In the wilderness see Place. Preach. proclaim as a herald. Baptism of repentance: that they should repent, and be baptized as a sign and confession of repentance. Repentance, i. e., hating and forsaking sin, was the the preparation for the coming of Christ. For the remission: the sending away, forgiveness. God cannot forgive our sins till we repent of them. 5. All the land: the people from all parts of the land, the great body of the people. 6. Camel's hair: a rough but warm garment made of the coarser hairs of the camel. Girdle of skin: untanned leather, like that worn by the Bedawin of the present day. It was an ornament often of the greatest richness in Oriental costume, and of the finest linen (Jer. xiii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 10) or cotton, or embroidered with silver or gold. Locusts: insects something like our grasshoppers, three or three and a half inches in length. The Arabs dry and eat them with salt. Thomson, Land and Book, states that though tolerated, as an article of food, only by the very poorest people, locusts are still eaten by the Bedawin. Burckhardt mentions having seen locust-shops at Medina and Tayf. Wild honey: i. e., honey made by wild bees. It is still gathered from trees in the wilderness and from rocks in the wadies. 7. Latchet: leather strings or thongs, for fastening the shoes, sandals. Worthy to loose: this was the work of the lowest servants. Christ was as much beyond John as a prince is beyond his lowest menial. 8. Indeed: showing one respect wherein Christ was his superior. 9. In those days: . . . Jesus came: in the autumn, where John had been baptizing six months. Jesus was about thirty years old (Luke iii. 23). From Nazareth: His home for twenty-eight years. It was seventy miles north of Jerusalem. Spirit like a dove: in the form of a dove, representing His gentle, loving, attracting influences. 12. Spirit driveth: impels, constrains by a strong impulse. Wilderness see Place. 13. Satan: means adversary, the chief of the evil powers that lead us to evil. Satan tempted Jesus for forty days. Jesus was tempted like as we are. The angels ministered unto Him: they brought Him food, and gave Him spiritual comfort and companionship.

SUBJECT: PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST.

I. THE COMMAND TO PREPARE.—Vers. 1-3. It is our business to prepare the way for Christ. We cannot save ourselves, but God employs us to remove obstacles. The disciples could not bring Lazarus to life, but they could remove the stone from his grave. It is related of an old Irish woman to whom the Gospel came with power that she went home and broke her liquor jug, telling it that Christ was coming to live there, and that they could not get along well together. The words, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," seem to suggest that the preacher or teacher should be only a voice, obtruding his own personality as little as possible, and hiding himself behind the Saviour whom he presents.

II. PREPARATION BY REPENTANCE.—Vers. 4-6. Dr. Alexander says of the baptism preached and administered by John that it was a "symbolical or ceremonial washing, such as the Mosaic law prescribed as a sign of moral renovation, and connected with the sacrificial types of expiation to indicate the internal connection of atonement and sanctification . . . a ceremonial washing which involved and denoted a profession of repentance, or a thorough change of mind, both of judgment and of feeling, with respect to sin." The Revised Version has "unto remission" instead of "for the remission." In either case it does not mean that mere repentance can efficiently procure the remission or forgiveness of sins, but that it is an indispensable prerequisite.

III. PREPARATION BY POINTING TO CHRIST.—Vers. 7, 8. John made little of himself and much of Christ. The wild, free prophet of the wilderness would not stoop in slavish submission to any earthly potentate, but to be permitted to perform the most menial office for Christ he regarded as an honour of which he was not worthy. The Saviour's superiority would be shewn by the superior efficacy of His work (verse 8). "John's baptism," says the "Westminster Teacher," "was only external and symbolical. It could not affect the heart or life. Christ's would be real and efficient. It would purify the heart and renew the life."

IV. CHRIST'S PREPARATION FOR HIS WORK.—Vers. 9-13. (1) By His baptism; (2) by His receiving the Holy Spirit; (3) by His being tempted, and gaining the victory. Of the temptation, Mr. H. Clay Trumbull says in the "S. S. Times": "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." Every one of us has been, or is, in the wilderness; some for forty days, others, because of their unbelief, for forty years. Every one of us has been tempted of Satan. Was your last temptation so far back that you have forgotten it? Certainly there has been no lack of wild beasts to any of us. There is a private menagerie next door to every soul in training; and sometimes it seems as if all the animals were out at once, coming for you with tearing hunger. Nor have the angels failed of their ministry to us. How their loving help and cheer have sustained and comforted us! He who endured all this Himself is touched with the feeling of those who still endure it. He who won the final victory in this soul struggle with evil is able and willing to give us the victory also. Confidence in this truth is the beginning of the Gospel to every one of us."