

# The Christian Helper.

A BAPTIST MONTHLY JOURNAL.

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but as helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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## "THE HELPER" AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

### AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

To the Pastors, Superintendents and Teachers of the Baptist Sunday Schools of the Dominion:—

The proprietors of the CHRISTIAN HELPER, encouraged by the counsel and approbation of many influential and judicious brethren, intend hereafter to devote their columns more and more extensively to Sunday School matters.

That there is ample room and need for a paper of this kind will be generally admitted, when it is stated, that hundreds upon hundreds of Sunday School periodicals from the other side of the line find their way among our S. S. workers—papers which, whatever their other merits, yet take no cognizance of our local interests, and therefore cannot have that peculiar claim upon us as Canadians and Baptists that the CHRISTIAN HELPER may be supposed to possess.

The following extract from a letter recently received from a prominent pastor bears out the above:—

"I have liked much the spirit of the HELPER. By making S. S. work the distinctive characteristic you meet a real want in our denominational work, and have an open field before you. There is no such paper published among the Baptists of Canada."

Some Reasons why Baptist Teachers should support the "Christian Helper."

1. It seeks to occupy a field uncultivated by any other Canadian Baptist periodical.
2. It is the only Baptist paper in the Dominion that contains notes on the International Lessons, especially prepared for its columns.
3. Its Notes on the Lessons have received much commendation from many teachers who have used them, and prefer them to all other such "helps."
4. It is conducted chiefly by brethren who are themselves active workers in the Sunday School; and who are at the same time thoroughly loyal to all our great denominational principles and enterprises.
5. It contains just enough of news on denominational matters and general religious intelligence to inform those who would otherwise be in ignorance, and to stimulate a desire for the more extended accounts con-

tained in the weekly denominational news papers.

The ordinary subscription price is One Dollar per annum; but in order to induce the patronage to as large an extent as possible of the class of workers for whose special service the HELPER is intended, we offer the following Special Rates to S. S. Teachers, including Officers and Pastors:—We will send them the paper at the rate of six cents per annum; or for the remainder of the year 1878, for thirty cents, when five or more persons, bona fide S. S. workers, club together for such purpose.

## TWO SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The Prophet Daniel, more perhaps than any other of the holy men whom God raised up before the Christian era to foretell things that were to come, enters into the details of events, some of which were accomplished by our Lord's first advent, and of others which have taken place since. But the great burden of his book has a far wider range and compass, and things that are yet to happen have been described with a vividness which would almost induce us to believe, had we not certain information to the contrary, that events which had transpired were recorded, rather than that predictions of what has yet to be had only been uttered.

In the midst of a portion of Daniel's prophecy, which reiterates the glories of the Saviour's final triumph, and proclaims the blessedness of the redeemed as participating in his victory, we find these remarkable words, "*Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*" It is an interesting inquiry whether this prediction is not now receiving its literal fulfilment, and whether the circumstances in which our own lot is cast are not, therefore, more clearly indicative of the approaching glories, than the generality of men may be disposed to imagine.

At the time when the prophet uttered these words the intercourse between men and nations was limited and circumscribed to an extent, of which we in these modern days can have no conception. The people of the world, then known, led chiefly a nomadic life; their occupation was, for the most part, that of keepers of flocks and herds. They scarcely thought of, much less attempted to traverse the vast breadth of the continents on which they dwelt, and

dreaded to pass beyond the boundaries which their forefathers had fixed, as the limit of their pasturage. This was especially true of the people "to whom were committed the oracles of God." With Greece and Rome, as civilization advanced, the change became more marked and definite. Yet even with these great nations, their progression beyond the boundaries of their own habitation was not connected with progression of intellect, or instigated by a thirst for the acquirement of knowledge. The annexation of territory to their vast dominions was their only purpose; the aggrandisement which military glory conferred was the ultimatum to which both leader and common soldier aspired. And even long after Christianity had prevailed, and nation after nation had become indoctrinated with its teachings, the transit from country to country was confined to the magnates of the earth. Commercial intercourse, in the course of time commenced, but the chief visits of those who traded with each other extended no further than the old and beaten track; whilst the communications between the various races of the human family were limited to the embassages of peace, or to the declarations of war. To the masses of the people, travel and—especially foreign travel—was a thing to be shrank from and apprehended; it was rarely adopted from choice; the means were few and slow; the danger, discomfort and expense were proportionately great. Clearly then, for many more than eighteen centuries the fulfilment of the prophecy that "many should run to and fro," was yet future, and to all human appearances as far distant as ever. But how vastly different is the aspect of the present times. It is difficult to meet now-a-days with men who do not "run to and fro." The untraveller man is the exception to his fellows. The facilities for transit are hourly increasing. Journeys that but a few years ago—in the boyhood, even, of some living—would have taken years to compass, are accomplished in as many weeks, and those which would have occupied months may now be effected in fewer days.

It would be equally easy to trace the progression of "knowledge" and to show how remarkably Daniel's prophecy is receiving a literal accomplishment in the present age. The wisest of men has told

us that "there is nothing new under the sun," and unquestionably much of the knowledge which now prevails upon comparatively indifferent subjects was possessed by the ancients. We have gathered the first rudiments of vast and varied information from the records handed down to us from them. In literature the learned heathen of old were certainly our equals, if not our superiors, and in their writings still extant, we trace talents of the most transcendent order. But in all these instances "knowledge" was confined to the few. The many lived and died in degradation. A mental, not less than a political serfdom enchained the vast proportion of mankind, and extension of information to the masses never came within the idea of their superiors, as either right or possible. And after all, what was the "knowledge" even these possessed. With the realities of life, with the prospects of the endless future it was perfectly unacquainted. It never advanced a step beyond the ideal and the fanciful. Not until the "knowledge of Christ" was sent forth was anything really serviceable taught, or a single truth of importance, speaking relatively, proclaimed. But even this knowledge only at first blazed up with brilliant lustre to be dimmed and hidden too soon by the "traditions of men." Those who claimed to be its teachers gradually degenerated till, at length, not only did religion become a farce, but science itself declined, and philosophy died out. None but the "clergy" could so much as read and still fewer write, and these instead of preaching Christ confined themselves to fabulous and superstitious legends. The Sacred Oracle was hidden—buried deep beneath the musty manuscripts of the "fathers," and engulfed beyond the apparent power of recovery.

But, passing from those dark and gloomy mediæval days to the present, how vast the change we behold! The time is now come when knowledge will be had; when it is happily a rare occurrence to find a grown-up man who cannot read. Education, which expands the intellect and fits it for the acquisition of greater "knowledge," is no longer the privilege of the few but the possession of the many. And it is a significant and noteworthy fact that till within the last half century no vast progress in this direction had been ven-

tured—the poor were, comparatively, still left untaught. But it is not in the advancement of mere secular learning, that we recognize the fulfilment of prophecy. There is another and broader fact which meets us everywhere, and which demonstrates that "knowledge" is upon the increase. *Divine* knowledge is circulated, and is producing a mighty moral influence, and although, alas, in too numerous cases, it is but preached and taught "for a witness" amongst men, yet wherever it pierces it opens the way for the diffusion and growth of active human intelligence.

These facts speak for themselves. They force themselves upon the thoughtful mind, as the heralds of the coming end, the fore-runners of that on-speeding day, when "Israel and Judah shall dwell safely," "When the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

#### BAPTIST "MAY MEETINGS" IN CLEVELAND.

The American Baptist National Convention was held in the "Forest City" in the last week of last month. The attendance was unusually large—at least so we were informed by "some who know." Three great Societies held their anniversaries, and the amount of business done in as many days was something remarkable. First came the meeting of the Publication Society, introduced by a fresh and vigorous sermon on Christian Beneficence from Rev. H. F. Colby, of Ohio. The text (2 Cor. 8:7) was regarded as suggesting the thought that Christ's call for his people's money is a test of their discipleship: It gives them (1) An opportunity of showing their love for him, (2) An opportunity to glorify him, (3) An opportunity of bringing good to their own souls. We were glad to learn that the Society requested the sermon for publication. The Society's income for the year was, in round numbers, \$305,000. Decidedly the most striking feature of the Report was the statement that owing to a princely act of generosity on the part of Mr. Wm. Bucknell, a mortgage of \$50,000 on the building in Philadelphia had been paid at maturity, thus freeing the property from debt. In these "hard times" the effect of such

an announcement is little less than startling. The meetings of the Publication Society were full of interest throughout. We were particularly pleased with the proceedings of the closing session, the addresses of breth. Dr. Hewitt of Ill., Z. Grenell of Mich., and Dr. Anderson of Chicago University,—on the press in its relation (1) to denominational growth, (2) to denominational unity, (3) to the development of christian character—being all that could be desired. A very high place was assigned, in all these respects, to the religious periodical press.

Then followed the Anniversary of the Home Mission Society, occupying the whole of Wednesday. In one sense the meetings of this body were the *highlight* of all. Decided differences of opinion existed on more than one point, and these were expressed with "great plainness of speech." A paragraph in the Report of the Board, "reflecting", in courteous terms, upon the action of the Woman's Home Mission Society in declaring themselves independent, led to more than one brief but vigorous debate, strong men saying their strong things on both sides. But,—and this is noteworthy and praiseworthy—there were no personalities, or displays of temper, such as we have too often witnessed elsewhere. The brethren acted the part of christian gentlemen, honestly differing, respecting each other, and carefully abstaining from speaking a single wounding word. Another stirring episode was brought about by Dr. J. D. Fulton, who took exception to the policy of the Society in its work among the Freedmen at the south. In this case a colored brother entered the lists, and the doughy doctor was routed "horse and foot," to the—for some reason—*peculiar* satisfaction of the spectators. The Freedmen and Indians appear to be objects of special interest to the Society at the present time. It is greatly to be regretted that its debt has increased, and now amounts to more than \$45,000. During the day and evening excellent addresses were made by several brethren.

We have hardly left ourselves room to say a word concerning the Foreign Missionary Union. The proceedings of this noble society opened with a telling speech by the President, Rev. Dr. Robinson of Brown University, in the course of which

he showed that the incomes of the several societies would be largely increased, if more were done in gathering up the *miles*, "the contributions of the rank and file"—a suggestion worth heeding by every pastor in Canada, as well as the United States. The receipts for the year were \$265,679. ro. Though not nearly so large as last year there is still a heavy debt to be liquidated. Dr. Murdoch the secretary, who is well known to many of our readers, read an admirable paper on "More money for Missions," which is to be published and widely distributed. We would advise its extensive circulation on this side the lines. It cannot fail of doing good wherever it goes. Reports from the mission field were upon the whole, very encouraging, calling for devout thanksgiving to God. The meetings were brought to a close by the annual sermon, preached, in the absence of Rev. John Peddie, by Dr. Wayland Hoyt of Brooklyn. A "grander" sermon we never heard.

These anniversaries of our American brethren will long be remembered, by at least one Canadian, with feelings of pleasure. Everything conspired to render the visit to Cleveland a delightful one. The beautiful city was itself a charm. The weather, for the most part, was favourable to enjoyment. But, above all, the profuse hospitality and courteous attentions accorded the visitors, rendered the occasion one which they cannot soon forget.

#### EDITORIAL NOTES.

**THE ASSOCIATIONS.**—Several of these pleasant annual gatherings have already taken place: and thus far with very gratifying success. At the call of the brethren we had an opportunity of explaining the position of the HELPER before the Toronto Association. We reserve for our next issue a more extended reference to these denominational meetings.

**OUR LESSONS.**—The whole of the lessons for July appear in this issue. They are written by an esteemed brother whom we have persuaded to "try his hand at it" in hope that this department of our work may be still more acceptable to the S. S. teachers. We are very anxious to have our Lesson Notes all that can be desired.

We shall always be most willing to re-

ceive from any source hints as to the further improvement of the HELPER as a Sunday School journal.

**MANITOBA AND THE "HELPER."**—Our effort to make the HELPER the Baptist Sunday School paper for the *Dominion* is thus appreciated by our good brethren in Winnipeg:

"DEAR SIR,—The Baptist S. School Board at a meeting held last night, decided, on the recommendation of the Rev. A. McDonald, to order ten copies of the CHRISTIAN HELPER from date until the end of the present year. Enclosed you will find \$3.00 the amount required according to Mr. McDonald's statement."

The letter is dated Winnipeg, June 6th, '78.

**ORDINATION.**—On the 6th instant Bro. D. A. McGregor, pastor elect of the Whitby churches, was set apart to the work of the ministry by "the laying on of hands." His christian experience, "call to the ministry," and doctrinal views were eminently satisfactory to the council. The usual order of exercises was followed. Opening services by Rev. M. C. Gregor of Georgetown, brother of the candidate; sermon by Rev. J. Denovan of Toronto; prayer—with laying on of hands—by Rev. W. Muir; charge to candidate by Rev. W. K. Anderson of Lindsay; hand of fellowship Rev. J. D. King of Yorkville; charge to the church Rev. W. Prosser of Port Perry. Bro. McGregor has a somewhat difficult field to cultivate—especially as regards the town; but he has associated with him a band of earnest workers, and with God's blessing upon their united labours we hope to see the cause largely built up.

**REV. W. W. ROBINSON.**—Just as we go to press, a very interesting and welcome letter from the young minister of Claremont Baptist Church, Shrewsbury, England, has come to hand, from which we call a few extracts which will be gratifying to his old friends in Toronto. Our readers will perhaps remember that nearly a year ago we informed them that the church of which Bro. Robinson is pastor, was about to erect a new place of worship. He now writes:

"I know you will be pleased to hear that by the Divine blessing the work I have undertaken here, has proved successful, and after two years or rather more of hard work we

open in a few days our new Sanctuary under very favourable auspices. Our new church is a very handsome and well-appointed building, and by far the best of the Baptist churches in Shropshire or the district. We are looking forward with intense anticipation to our opening services (to take place on the 4th of June). Chiefly, I hope we are all looking up to Him who has thus far bestowed upon our feeble efforts His blessing, and are feeling that 'except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it.' To me it is a matter at once of deep humiliation and deep thankfulness that I have been selected by the Great Head of the Church as the instrument through which the old church (250 years old) has been resuscitated and provided with so beautiful a sanctuary. How strange are God's ways! I little thought years ago of this, and I am amazed at Divine providence. Truly His way is in the sea. What He has in store for me yet I know not; whether He will take me and how use me I cannot tell; but one thing I know, and that is, I have found His service sweet and a great delight. It may have its cares and trials and toils, but it is its own reward; and while, when the sun is shining I rejoice, I have learned that in the shadowy places character is formed and some of the fairest graces are developed—*Laus Deo.*"

Bro. Robinson says of this paper:

"I am always glad to get the HELPER." It is famous. We use the capital S. S. notes in our school—that is as far as the one copy will go."

## Contributed Articles.

### EARLY MEMORIES.

To the Editor of the "CHRISTIAN HELPER."

DEAR SIR,

Pending our next interview with our aged friend Elder Oldham, which we still anticipate, I propose to give your readers a relation of a remarkable event which occurred in those early days in the county of Oxford, which though it had no connection with the early churches or ministers, will, besides furnishing an illustration of a wonderful providence of God, help, in no small degree, to fill up the picture of those times, and exhibit the condition of the first settlers, and some of the accidents to which they were exposed.

I shall, as nearly as possible, give you the words in which my aged friend related the facts to me, and I have no doubt but your readers will be interested as I was, with my friend's story.

I remain, Mr. Editor, Yours truly,  
LUTHER.

At the time of which we are now speaking, say about 1820, the country surrounding the place where Woodstock now stands, was almost an unbroken forest. The exception was known as the Burch settlement, which consisted of nine or ten proprietors settled along the south side of the Governor's Road,

from lot number 12 to 21 in the first concession of East Oxford. East and west, several miles of bush intervened before the nearest settlement was reached. Two or three miles south, in East Oxford, along what was afterwards, and is now known as the Old Stage Road, there were two or three settlers. The township of Blandford, lying north of the Governor's Road, had not yet been opened for settlement, and in that direction the bush was in fact interminable, or terminated only with the continent.

There were, however two or three "squatters" settled on the Crown lands on the north side of the road. One of these was named Wilcy or Wiltse. He had built a little log house just on a line with the road on lot No. 17, nearly in front of the present residence of R. H. Burtch, Esq., around which he had a clearing of four or five acres surrounded by a *prunk* fence. Wilcy was not a thrifty man. He was poor, but that circumstance gave him very little trouble. He was more content to sit in the shade whittling out an axe handle or peeling a splint broom, than engaging in any earnest work. His wife was industrious and scheming, and managed, without much assistance from her lord, to keep the wolf from the door, or to make his visits brief. There was a numerous family of children, ranging from 12 or 14 years down to infancy; but it will not be necessary to mention any of them except the two eldest boys Henry and Fred. The former at the time our story commences might be about 10, and the latter 8 years of age. The children were not well trained, and passionate encounters among them were not infrequent. The following is an instance.

The two boys had been set to hoe corn in the little field near the house, when an angry dispute arose between them, during which Fred raised his hoe and aimed a fearful blow at the head of his brother. By a quick motion the latter avoided the fatal consequence that might have followed had the blow fallen where it had been aimed. He however received a glancing stroke from the edge of the instrument, laying open an ugly wound of some three inches in length commencing near the roots of the hair above the right eye, and sloping downward towards the ear. The wound, though ghastly, was not deep, and was soon healed, but it left an unsightly scar, to conceal which he was in the habit of allowing the hair on that side of his forehead to drop down almost to his eye.

The reason for mentioning this circumstance, which occurred some three months before the actual commencement of our story will appear in the sequel.

The Wilcys, poor as they were, kept a cow, and indeed any one, in those days who could procure a cow, could keep her without expense. A good sized maple or elm tree or two felled each day, during winter furnished sufficient forage, to at least, keep her alive, and as soon as the snow was melted in spring the wild leeks sprang up in great abundance, which though they imparted an abominable flavor to the milk and butter, were devoured with greediness and were very nutritious. Two or three weeks later, another wild plant, by the settlers called cow-cabbage, appeared, which grew as abundantly, and was as nutritious as clover in well cultivated meadows, so that by June the cattle were fattened, fit for the shambles. Later, in the season, how-

ever, the cow-cabbage disappeared, and cattle were obliged to wander much further through the forest in order to obtain supplies. On this account, each cow, or at least, one in each herd was furnished with a bell, which, in mild weather might be heard for a mile or more through the forest.

Well, it was a pleasant afternoon in the end of September—it was nearly sunset and the cow had not come home. The mother and the boys were out in the little field listening for the bell. They thought they heard it: Indeed the sound was very distinct; the direction was pointed out and Henry was despatched to drive her in. His entire wardrobe consisted of a pair of home-made linen trousers, a shirt of the same material and a straw hat, but as he had worn them continuously all summer, they were already "worn for wear." It was supposed he would be back in half an hour, and so uneasiness was felt on his account. But the half hour passed—the sun set—darkness came on but Henry did not return. The alarm was spread. The nearest neighbours were assembled—guns were fired; bright fires were lighted not only in the field, but also far into the woods. But all in vain. Morning came, but brought no intelligence of the lost boy. Early in the day nearly every adult in the settlement, was on the spot, to renew the search. Dividing into couples, and taking different directions, the woods were thoroughly scoured for miles around; but in vain. The different parties returned at night, but neither the boy nor any trace of him had been discovered.

During the day the news of the calamity had spread to surrounding settlements and several brave and generous men had hastened forward to lend their aid. Among them was a man by the name of Decew. He was a person of some consequence. He had held an Ensign's commission in the Militia during the late war, and had, it was said, done good service at Lundy's Lane. Besides, he wore a broad cloth coat, an article seldom seen among us in those days. He was generally addressed as Captain Decew, and his opinions were likely to be listened to with respect. Captain Decew met the returned searchers and the fresh arrivals, (a company amounting to perhaps 50 or more) ready to undergo, or sacrifice everything possible to rescue the unfortunate boy. He told them that he knew a man who could direct them to find the lost boy dead or alive. He had formed his acquaintance on the lines during the war, and had known him since. That this man, whose name was Conrad House, who resided at or near the river Credit, had a magic stone, which under his eye in the dark became luminous and revealed to him any object he might wish to discover; and he earnestly advised that House should be sent for. The more intelligent among them scouted the proposition as the height of superstition; and folly, nevertheless there was not wanting a sufficient number, always fond of the marvellous to support it. Decew offered himself as the messenger; a subscription was raised to defray the expense, and he set off the same hour. By riding night and day and getting a fresh horse on the way he was able to produce his magician on the spot on the fourth day.

The search, however, had been going on. During the three intervening days the woods had been carefully searched for many miles

around but not a trace of the wanderer had been found.

When House arrived on the ground he demanded to be shown the spot from which the boy had started on his unfortunate expedition. Taking his stand here, he placed his magic stone in the crown of his hat, and covering this with his face so as to exclude the light he soon pretended that he was making discoveries, and finally, that he had found the boy. He was lying, he said beside a log or fallen tree; was still alive but very weak. He pretended to describe the course to be pursued for his recovery, but showed no disposition to accompany the party himself. But his employers were by no means prepared to excuse him, but insisted on his being himself the guide of the party. Compelled to submit he set off, in company with some dozen strong men, well supplied with provisions and warm garments for the boy, together with the means of providing a strong seat or bed for bringing him home. Proceeding in a northerly direction for two or three miles they came to the river, a branch of the Thames, which, though not a large stream, flows between very high banks. This was a topographical feature quite unexpected to House, and was quite absent from his previous description of the course to be pursued. He admitted at once that he was on the wrong track, and again had recourse to his stone, and after a long gaze into the crown of his hat he said he discovered the boy's bed, or the place by the log where he had before seen him lying, but he no longer occupied it, nor could he trace him further. He had either been devoured by wolves, or had fallen into a pond or lake which he saw at a small distance and it was in vain to seek further. And so this impudent impostor was dismissed with the disgust of the greater part, but not all; for there were some so weak and superstitious as still to believe in his extraordinary powers and these sent him away, not empty handed. The greater part now gave up in despair and returned to their homes, though, to their credit be it spoken, several small parties of sturdy hunters and woodsmen continued the search for 3 or 4 days longer in the feeble and constantly diminishing hope that they might still find the poor lad and possibly save his life. But all in vain, and here ends the first part of our story. The remainder will soon be told.

Twelve or fourteen years passed away and poor Henry had, by the great majority been entirely forgotten. The deep interminable forest through which our pioneers had conducted their diligent and persistent, though unsuccessful search had been invaded in every part by enterprising settlers. Nearly every lot had its clearing and on not a few substantial farm buildings had been erected. Wilcy *per se* was dead. The family had removed from their old residence, but still remained in the neighbourhood. Fred had grown up to manhood and felt a desire to see the world and strike perhaps upon a new mode of life. Michigan at that time was attracting a great tide of immigration from the surrounding states and provinces, and Fred turned his eyes in that direction. With a pack slung upon his back and a stout stick in his hand, in the month of September, say in '32 he set off for the west. Crossing the river at Detroit he took his night's lodging

at a small inn near the ferry,—for the little town of Detroit, at that time, was very different from the present great city. Our traveler was surprised to observe the crowds of Indians that were wending along the streets, or lounging about the corners, or standing in front of the stores and taverns; and upon asking an explanation was told that several tribes were assembled to receive their annuities, or presents, as they were called, from the U. S. Government, and that they were encamped upon the bank of the river a little above the town. He expressed a desire to visit the encampment, and upon being assured that he could do so with perfect safety he sauntered along, next morning, in that direction. Passing through a little bush he found himself in a village of huts or booths composed, for the most part, of boughs of trees; men were lounging around, or basking in the sun; boys were playing at Lacrosse or practising archery, and the women were busy about the camp fires, or dressing fish, or doing bead work and mending moccasins. No one paid the least attention to him—not so much as to look up even when he passed near them, except one individual. This was a tall young Indian who persistently followed him with his eyes wherever he went. Fred disliking this scrutiny tried to avoid him, but turn where he would he was sure to find himself again in the presence of the same young savage who seemed to eye him with undiminished curiosity. Fred at length became alarmed at this extraordinary conduct and resolved at once to return to the town. With this object in view he walked rapidly towards the path by the river bank by which he came, but just as he entered the lift: bush, almost dark with shade, there he met the same young Indian face to face. The path was narrow and if the savage had any hostile designs it would be impossible to avoid a reconnoitre except by an ignominious retreat, a measure to which Fred did not like to resort. The two stood therefore, for a few moments, at only a few yards distance, observing each other in silence. Fred carefully took the measure of his antagonist, if such he should prove, and was particular to examine whether or not he carried a sheath-knife at his belt. Being satisfied that he did not, and taking a firmer grip of the stout cane in his hand, his self confidence rose to the occasion, and he addressed the savage in loud threatening terms, "What do you want with me?" The other, in milder tones, replied interrogatively, "Your name Fred?" Utterly surprised at the question he answered contemptuously "Yes; and what is that to you?" "You know me?" continued the Indian. "No," said Fred emphatically. The Indian deliberately lifted his cap and drawing back a thick lock of black hair that hung low 'a'ove his right eye, exhibited a gastly scar of 3 or 4 inches in extent, and drawing his finger along the cicatrix, said, "You know that?" Fred almost supposing that he was about to be accused of an attempt to murder a native, positively denied all knowledge of the mark. "You make it," said the other, "but, hoo, hoo," making motions at the same time as if striking with the hoe. Before Fred, who had now for the first moment, begun to suspect the truth, had time to recover himself from the overwhelming surprise, the other approached him, and extending his hand said smiling affectionately, "Me your brother."

Of course I shall not attempt to give any detailed account of the interview that ensued between the brothers so strangely brought together, further than that they sat for several hours upon the trunk of a fallen tree in friendly conversation. Henry had for a long time lost the English language entirely, but recently coming into more frequent intercourse with white people, he had begun to recover it. It was not like learning a new language, but was simply the recalling of what had formerly been familiar, and even during this conversation with Fred, and especially during the few days he afterwards spent with his friends amid old scenes, his facility of expressing himself rapidly improved. The account he gave of his adventures was substantially as follows:—Upon entering the woods he lost the sound of the bell, but believing he knew the direction, he felt sure that by pressing forward he would soon recover it. But in this he was deceived, and finding that night was closing in, he turned, as he supposed, towards home. He however failed to reach the clearing, and darkness coming on he finally apprehended the sad truth that he was lost. Half distracted he rushed forward at the top of his speed, not knowing what course he was pursuing. Sometimes in the utter darkness he would plunge into the branches of a fallen tree, sometimes stumble over logs or dash against a tree, until utterly exhausted, scratched, bruised and wounded in his feet hands and face he sank down and slept. He woke in the morning, chilled, sore and weak. His scant clothing had been torn to shreds, he had lost his hat, and he was weak from fasting, for he had left without his supper. In the course of the day he found a few berries, and dug some roots,—for the boys of that day knew all the edible roots in the wood—ground nuts, sweet cicely, gensing, etc. He travelled during the day as much as he was able, but was obliged often to sit down on account both of fatigue and the pain he suffered from his wounds. Night came on and he was looking around for the warmest place to sleep when he caught sight of a light through the bushes. He cautiously approached it. Crossing a little brook he was creeping up the bank upon which the fire was situated, when a dog barked and he saw two or three Indians rise up and gaze around. Frightened, he turned to flee, when he found himself confronted by two women who had been to the spring for water. They gently detained him and brought him to the camp. They washed his inflamed feet and hands and face. They gave him food, and wrapping him in a blanket they put him away to sleep. In the morning he begged them to take him home, but of course they could understand no word of his nor he of theirs, and it is probable they did not wish to part with him. In a day or two the camp moved, and after many days they reached a village on the shore of a great lake where they spent the winter. During all this time he saw no white person nor the habitation of any. He soon learned their language and became contented and happy, and was now living with his people in the western part of Michigan.

Fred, spent a day or two about the camp and then, after the annuities were received, his brother accompanied him to Canada to visit his family.

The father, as before stated, was dead, but the mother had the privilege of again looking upon her long lost son, though in Indian costume. Some attempts were made to induce him to return to civilized life, but his friends were poor and could offer him no advantages which he could not find in his own wigwam, and so after spending a few days with them, he returned to his tribe, since, so far as I know, nothing has been heard from him.

## Casey.

### HOW CAN OUR ASSOCIATIONS BE IMPROVED?

*A Paper read at the Ontario Baptist Conference, held in the Jarvis St. Church, Toronto, October 1877.*

BY REV. A. H. MUNRO,

Pastor of the First Baptist C. ch., Montreal.

Institutions originally created and adopted to meet some want often survive after they have lost their usefulness through changes that have taken place in themselves or in other things. Even then some persons would have them continued without modification, while others would abolish them. In such cases a wiser counsellor will be found in him who would preserve only what is valuable, and improve, rather than destroy, what is defective. It is better to modify an old institution than to create a new one for the same purpose. The former already exists and has its plan, provisions, associations, attractions, friends, while the latter has all these to procure for itself, with the confidence that is a plant of slow growth.

Neither our Associations, nor their surroundings, are what they once were. Some can remember the time when the Association was our solitary denominational assembly. It was the religious event of the year. Each year it gave visible demonstrations of progress and promise of further advancement, by the sympathy, benevolence, and zeal it excited. But in the course of years the Association became too large and had to be divided. The Convention was formed. Gradually the Associations have lost their work and interest, until it has become difficult to say for what purpose some of them exist. By many they are regarded as no better than useless encumbrances, involving an unnecessary expenditure of time and money. There is much to create, if not to justify such an opinion.

A few years since, one of our Associations that contained at least a fair proportion of the intelligence and wealth of the denomination was attended at its annual meeting by sixty-four delegates, whose residences, were at an average distance of twenty-five miles from the place of meeting. It occupied the greater part of three days in doing its work, whatever that may have been. Its machinery consisted of three officers, five committees, two persons to read letters, one to read the Circular Letter, twelve resolutions and three long business meetings. The outlay may be thus estimated:

The time of sixty-four delegates for four days, three being spent at the Association and one in travelling, at \$2.00 per day.....	\$132 00
The board of sixty-four delegates for three days, at 75 cents per day.....	144 00
The travelling of sixty-four delegates for three miles at three cents per mile.....	96 00
Total.....	\$372 00

The pecuniary results of this Association's meeting on the occasion indicated were as follows:

Collection for Home Missions.....	\$14.44
"    Foreign Missions.....	12.00
"    The Institute at Woodville.....	4.05
The remaining collections were	
For the Church Edifice Society.....	\$4.20
For superannuated ministers.....	\$5.19
They had felt so joyful over the collection for the Institute that they determined to give as herewith amounting to.....	
	\$1.33

The whole amount raised at the Association was .. \$41.98

The cost of this Association, in time, money and necessary provision and expenses, was about eighteen times as much as the sum raised for the promotion of denominational interests. Each delegate's time and board cost \$11.75, and the amount raised was less than 65 cents per delegate. In other words, the Association was a direct loss of over \$11 per individual, or, of more than \$700 in the aggregate. But it may be said that the intellectual and spiritual benefits arising from the meeting of the Association, compensated for this loss. The intellectual advantages require definition, and the spiritual, that culminate in the enthusiasm and liberality demonstrated by a collection of \$4.05 for ministerial education, are doubtful. The real effects of such Associations are but too plainly seen. They stand in the way of something better; they teach our people not to give and not to do, rather than the opposite. They substitute talk and "resolutions," or Christian work by Christian men, alive to their opportunities, and wise and zealous to use them. They give us prolix discussions of petty details, and vague generalities, instead of practical and practicable measures in relation to important interests. The result is, that the larger number of our churches are doing nothing, some are doing a little and a very few are doing all they can for the extension of Christ's kingdom. Last year but fifty churches in Ontario contributed a cent towards ministerial education. Every one of our Associations has missionary ground within its borders, or in its immediate vicinity, to which it might send preachers of the Word, and in which it might establish Baptist churches, but which it leaves to be neglected or to be cultivated by those more wise and liberal than ourselves. If our Associations had definite, practical objects, judicious plans for their accomplishment, and steadily adhered to these, they would commend themselves to the esteem of the intelligent, and the sympathies of the zealous; they would make their value and usefulness too evident to be questioned, and win for themselves co-operation and support.

Is all this possible? Can we convert our effete Associations—compounds of the ridiculous and vexatious, useless impediments upon our progress, tolerated more because they exist and have existed so long, than for any other reason: can we convert these into efficient means of promoting what we all desire,—more of union, more of liberality, more of spirituality, more of practical godliness, and more of work for Christ? The question is ours; mine the answer and the duty of showing its correctness.

To effect such material improvement in our Associations as will give to them an honorable and abiding place among our denominational institutions, it will be necessary—

- 1st. To eliminate from them every unne-

cessary feature and a companion, so that they may economize time and means, and be simple and attractive.

2d. To give to them definite, limited and important, practical objects.

3d. To obtain for them efficient support in men and means.

As they exist at present, our Associations are encumbered and hampered with a great deal that injures their usefulness, and destroys their attractiveness. What strikes one most in attending them, is usually their immense amount of machinery, and their great waste of time and interest, in attention to numerous wearisome details. Cannot intelligent Christian men spend their time to better purpose, than in appointing committees that do nothing, in passing resolutions that mean nothing, in hearing letters that tell nothing, and holding public meetings that accomplish nothing? Instead of attempting argument with those who are enamored of this kind of thing, and blind to its folly, we would recommend them to observe the fact that more and more, each year our most intelligent and influential church members refuse to attend our Associations; and we ask them to learn the cause of this growing and persistent absence from gatherings that should be too highly valued and respected to be neglected, far less despised, by any one who has the interests of our denomination at heart.

The first improvement is to give them greater simplicity. Each of them, as at present constituted, has nearly enough machinery to run the House of Commons. All that any Association needs for the performance of its appropriate business are, two officers and one committee. Its necessary officers are a Chairman to preside, and a Secretary to prepare a report and to keep the minutes. The duty of the Associational committee should be to prepare for the next annual meeting, and to publish its programme and reports.

Among the things to be eliminated from our Associations there can be no hesitation in placing the letters from the churches and the Circular Letter. The practice of reading the letters from the churches has nothing to recommend it. The letters themselves are, with few exceptions, formal, vague, verbose and lengthy beyond endurance. The facts, compared with the platitudes, are in about the same proportion that Falstaff's bread was to his sack. If Baptists do not believe in doing penance, why do they sit every year through the long hot summer's day hearing these awful letters read? What benefit is supposed to be conferred by the custom I fail to imagine, for all the information contained in the whole of the letters read at any one of our Associations, might be presented in a report that could be read in ten minutes, and in which the facts, ascertained by previous inquiry, could be classified and tabulated for ready reference.

The Circular Letter, as a feature of our Associations, is open to several objections. The selection of its topic is left to the writer and may be well or ill chosen. In addition to this the letter may contain errors of sentiment and faults of style, but the committee to whom it is submitted can, at the worst, only make a few hurried alterations, and recommend the letter to be read and printed. At least (though we can all remember hear-

ing some very able Circular Letters, and some that were not very able but very strange productions) none of us perhaps can recall an occasion when the Circular Letter was withheld by the committee that had it in charge. It is assumed that it will attract too little attention for its publication to do harm. Such however has not always been the case.

Another thing that ought to be separated entirely and forever from our Associations is the raising of money by collections or contributions taken during the meeting of the Association. This mode of obtaining funds for denominational purposes, is not the best, but the worst to which we could resort. It interferes with better methods and is made in many instances a substitute for them; and while objectionable on many grounds, usually produces what is more discredit than helpful. The practice of raising money at our Associations causes many of our best men to stay away from them. They say with truth that they and their churches are ready to do their duty in relation to giving, without the pressure and appeals brought into use at Associations, and too frequently by those who have manifested less liberality. I deny the right of any brother to call upon me at a public meeting to give a definite sum to a specific object. The knowledge and responsibility of my means and claims belong to me, and with me he had better leave them. The pledging of churches is often a tacit stigma of an imposition upon churches or individuals already more generous in their contributions than those offering the challenge.

Secondly, our Associations must have definite and important objects.

If these institutions instead of being of long standing were about to be organized for the first time, nothing would be considered more necessary than a definite understanding respecting the purposes for which they were to be created and maintained. It is useless to ask what is the precise nature of the objects for which our Associations exist, for the answer would have to be shaped more by the imagination than by facts. Neither is it necessary to allege that they are utterly useless and attended with no benefit. It would be strange indeed if a number of Christian men could spend several days in social intercourse and the holding of public meetings and no good result to any person or interest. But what I assert is, that our Associations, instead of enhancing the advantages of those thus meeting, diminish them by hampering us with needless restrictions and leaving us destitute of worthy, definite objects.

The possible subjects that might be chosen for discussion at such annual gatherings may be thus classified:

1. Those that belong to the individual: as personal faith, culture and work.
2. Those that belong to the family: as family religion, the duties of parents, home training of children, etc.
3. Those that belong to the church: as the organization and management of Sunday-schools, prayer-meetings, Dorcas meetings, raising of funds, etc.
4. Those that belong to the denomination: as ministerial education, home missions, foreign missions, etc.
5. Those that belong to the general interests of society: as education, temperance, social amusements, etc.

A glance at this list of subjects will show that it is too ample for our purpose, and imposes upon us the necessity of a selection of topics. Those that can best be omitted belong to the first and fifth classes. Both these can be better and sufficiently discussed elsewhere. We have then left to us subjects belonging to the family, the church and the denomination. These are enough for our purpose; they are all related, they form a complete and expanding series. They are practical and adapted to interest and benefit every class, and to promote the prosperity of every institution we prize and every work we prosecute. The purposes which an Association should contemplate in connection with these subjects are: 1. To awaken and sustain interest respecting them. 2. To collect and diffuse information concerning them. 3. To promote the earnest, practical application of right principles regarding them.

If an Association were organized for these purposes and on these principles its character and procedure may be easily imagined.

The most suitable time for it to be convened would be Tuesday or Wednesday, so as not to interfere with the Sunday preceding or following it. The afternoon is preferable to the morning for the first session, as this would permit many of those who attended to do their necessary traveling on the same day that the Association meets—a valuable saving of time to some. The afternoon also is more a time of leisure than the morning, and will, therefore, furnish a larger attendance—a matter of much importance, at the first meeting.

The hour of meeting having arrived, and the Chairman and Secretary who were appointed at the last annual meeting having taken their places, the former should call upon the delegates present to occupy the seats reserved for them in the body of the house, an arrangement that will obviate the necessity for the tedious practice of taking the names of the delegates. Their names and credentials are not wanted, for this is not a church court, where the right to vote is an important and valuable privilege to be carefully guarded, but an assemblage of christian men for the discussion of christian work. The meeting having been thus organized, the Chairman should give out a hymn, read a few appropriate verses of Scripture and offer a brief prayer. These devotional exercises being ended, the Secretary should read his report of facts in relation to the churches of the Association and their work during the past year. The Chairman should then call upon the Association to make the following appointments:

1. That of a Chairman for the next meeting of the Association.
2. That of a Secretary for the next meeting of the Association.
3. That of a Committee of Arrangements, to consist of three brethren whose duties will be:

- (1.) To select the place for the next annual meeting.
- (2.) To find persons to write and others to speak upon the following subjects at the next annual meeting:

1. Christian Home Life and Culture.
  2. Sunday-schools.
  3. Ministerial Education.
  4. Home Missions.
  5. Foreign Missions.
- (3.) To prepare and publish the programme

of the next Associational meeting in due form and in time.

These appointments having been made, the Chairman should call upon the brother named in the programme, to read a paper on "Christian Home Life and Culture." His range of topics will be very wide, and if his theme is well chosen and properly handled by himself and the two speakers appointed to follow him, its discussion will awaken deep interest and make impression, of which many a home and life will reap the benefit.

With this the afternoon session would expire. In a similar way the evening session of the first day might be devoted to Sunday-school work; the next morning to Ministerial Education; the afternoon to Home Missions, and the evening to Foreign Missions.

In connection with its Home Mission work each Association should have a map of its territory to be suspended in view of the meeting during the discussion of that subject. It should also have prepared for the meeting on Home Missions, a condensed statement of the work done and that which should be continued or begun.

As respects Foreign Missions, what is needed is information, to enable our people to form an intelligent judgment regarding what is to be attempted and expected.

If our Associations were thus organized and conducted they would have an elevating and invigorating effect upon our whole denominational life and work. They would educate us for intelligent appreciation and inspire us for enthusiastic service. They would cease to linger in doubtful existence and would soon win for themselves respect and support, become efficient in promoting the health, union, zeal and liberality of our churches.

## Sunday School Department.

### PROVINCIAL BAPTIST SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

The second annual meeting of the Convention was held with the Baptist Church in Aylmer on Wednesday and Thursday, June 5th and 6th. The proceedings commenced by a prayer-meeting at 11.30, while the real business of the Convention commenced at the afternoon session. The President, Prof. J. Montgomery occupied the chair.

The following Committees were appointed: 1. Nominating Com. Rev's J. Dempsey and W. C. Beardall, and Deacons McKee, McDiarmid, and Stovel. 2. Prudential Com. Rev. G. T. Stansbury, Prof. Montgomery, Deacons Baker and Willis. The Com. on Nominations reported as follows:

President.—Prof. J. Montgomery; Vice-Presidents.—Presidents of Local Conventions; Corresponding Sec'y.—Rev. J. Dempsey; Recording Sec'y.—Deacon J. J. Clutton; Treasurers.—H. H. Stovel, Mt. Forest. Ex. Com.—President, Sec. Rev. W. C. Beardall and Deacon Wellsted.

The subject of the Statistics having been introduced, a Com. was appointed to obtain the same.

#### EVENING SESSION

Commenced at 7.30 with prayer meeting conducted by Rev. H. F. Griffin of Barrie, which was followed by an address of welcome from Rev. G. T. Stansbury.

After a few suitable words from the President, the hymn "Go bare the joyful tidings" was sung. According to programme the President elect gave an address, choosing for his subject, "The Work a Baptist S. S. Convention ought to do." The address, though brief, was a most excellent and practical one.

After another hymn, a telling and pointed address was delivered by Rev. R. A. Fyfe, D. D. upon "Sunday School Literature and how to use it."

It is impossible in the brief space allotted for this report to do anything like justice to the paper. Among the points touched upon were the following: The question 'How are we to select what to read and what to pass by?' was answered as follows:

Pass by books giving overdrawn and unnatural views of life. And on this, schools were warned not to trust too much to the recommendations of publishing societies, seeing careful selection was not always possible. It was necessary for our schools to be cleared of much of their literature, if even so as by fire.

In answer to the question 'what you have fiction?' the reply was given: You cannot shut out all fiction, therefore be the more careful in your selections. Even in books of fiction select—1. Those giving natural pictures of life; 2. Those giving healthy impulses to the mind; 3. Historical books and true history at that; 4. Biographies, not those giving one-sided view of life, but the real and true and impartial; 5. Books of travel—the real travel, the facts of which men have experienced; 6. Books representing religious life.

Kind and valuable advice was given as to—

How to select a Sunday-school library and how to use it. Sunday-schools were warned to be careful—very careful—in the selection of a Librarian. When chosen: 1. Let him examine the books; 2. Let him question the scholars and find out the book most useful for them; 3. Let him suggest books; and lastly, if possible, let the books recommended be clear, forcible and elegant.

The session closed with singing and benediction.

#### MURDAY MORNING SESSION.

A Bible reading was conducted by Rev. R. Cameron, after which the Convention proceeded to business.

The corresponding secretary, Rev. J. Dempsey, read reports of schools.

A very interesting paper was read by Rev. Dr. Cooper, of London, on *The Teacher's Preparation for His Work*. We hope to publish it hereafter.

The subject was discussed by Revs. R. Cameron, C. Goodspeed, E. Harris, G. T. Stansbury, W. W. Willis, J. Dempsey and others.

#### AFTERNOON SESSION

was opened with an address from Rev. H. F. Griffin, Barrie, on "How to secure more pupils from among the non-church-going people," and was followed by a discussion, in which Revs. Stansbury, Dempsey, Brennan (Presbyterian) and others took part. After some routine business the question, "What shall we do with incorrigible scholars?" was taken up by Deacon Baker, and discussed at some length.

The place and time of the next annual meeting will be determined at a future date.

consideration, and upon motion it was resolved to leave the same with Executive Committee.

#### EVENING SESSION.

After the usual devotional exercises, followed by an anthem by the choir.

An address was delivered by Rev. R. Cameron M. A., his subject being, "Sunday Schools should not supersede parental duty in the religious training of children."

After the very excellent and practical address on the above subject, the choir sang the appropriate piece "Sowing the Seed."

The Rev. C. Goodspeed M. A., then read his admirable paper on "The Teacher—his Aim." We hope to publish it in full in our next issue.

After the choir had again favoured the audience and the collection had been taken up.

Brief speeches of not more than five minutes each were made. Rev. E. Harris B. A., spoke on the necessity of the teacher's knowing that he was himself a Christian. Rev. J. Her spoke on training the scholars to love and sympathy. Prof. Torrance insisted on the conversion of every scholar as the teacher's aim, and enforced the necessity of punctuality in all matters connected with the school. Rev. R. Lennie followed Prof. Torrance in urging the teacher to use every effort to bring the scholars out from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God.

After a cordial vote of thanks to the good people of Aylmer for their generous hospitality, the choir sang "We're going home," and benediction was pronounced by Rev. G. T. Stansbury.

### International Bible Lessons, 1878.

June 23.—The Decree of Cyrus.—2

Chron. xxxiv. 22, 23.—B. C. 536.

#### GOLDEN TEXT:

"Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Isaiah xi. 2.

**NOTE.**—As the whole of the lessons for the month of July prepared specially for our columns, are contained in this issue, and as we have been somewhat pressed for time, we copy the following exposition of the present lesson from the *Sunday School World*, the writer being DR. JOHN HALL of New York.

The importance of the "captivity" in the history of the Jews can hardly be overstated. The principle of it is to be remembered. The land was God's gift; He was king in the land. So idolatry was treason, and punished, as nations generally have punished it, with death. The people had no rights in the land but by God's grant. When they cast Him off, He withdrew His grant. Their right to the land ceased. They were cast off and cast out. (See in proof, Lev. 25: 23; Josh. 24: 13; Lev. 18: 26-30.)

The severity of God in the captivity appears in this, that the people basely copied the idolatrous ways of the heathen, and especially those old Oriental forms of worship, some of which were immoral, some cruel, and all dishonouring to God, and the Lord left them to the "tender mercies" of their chosen friends. They loved strangers, and went after them, and the Lord sold them into their

hands. They were punished in the way of their sin. Their chosen patrons and models became their captives and tormentors. (So we employed vices, as gaming, drunkenness, covetousness, impurity, in the end, ensnare their lovers.)

The effect of it is noticeable. The restored people had many faults and vices, but idolatry was not among them. Our Lord has no occasion to speak as Isaiah and many of the prophets spoke. There was Pharisaism in His time. Sadducees exalted their own ideas of Deity above Scripture. But there is no New Testament evidence of an idol in the land, or a grove, or an image from Dan to Beersheba. The Sabbath which they used to violate was, in His time, kept to the verge of superstition, and the law, though often ignored in its spirit, was magnified in the letter. And the people have not unlearned that awful lesson of Babylon. It is said that image-worship in so many Christian lands prevents the Hebrews of to-day from seeing that the New Testament is the outcome of the Old, and raises prejudices against Christianity as stained by the sins for which their fathers suffered so much.

On all these and many other accounts, we may profitably study the lesson of to-day. It connects Second Chronicles and the Book of Ezra, and also the history and the prophecy of the Old Testament.

#### I.—CONSIDER THE FOREGOING PREDICTIONS.

They had respect to the length of the bondage, "seventy years" (Jer. 25: 11); to the way in which it is effected (Jer. 25: 9); to the "servant" whom he used (Isa. 10: 15-12), (a most remarkable and instructive passage), and Jer. 25: 12, 13; and to the integrity and completeness of the desolation. (vs. 34, 35).

These predictions are referred to in 2 Chron. 36: 21, 22, and appear to have been known and studied by Daniel and his friends (Dan. 9: 2), in which, also, we see one of the uses of prophecy. Like other promises of God it quickens to prayer (Ps. 119: 49).

The name of the deliverer who should end the captivity was given by Isaiah (Isa. 44: 28), and his work in favoring the rebuilding of the temple specified. The immediate occasion of the round number seventy (ten times seven) being the time of the captivity is hinted at in Lev. 26: 34, 35; but it would be idle to reckon the exact number of Sabbaths, or Sabbatical years, sinfully disregarded in order to secure literal exactness. God does not so deal with nations. Judah is specially contemplated in this prediction of seventy years.

Israel's bondage was longer; but Judah and Israel sinned long and in common, in the matter of the Sabbath.

#### II.—THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE FULFILLMENT.

The king of Babylon carried away the people in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jer. 25: 1, 12; Dan. 1: 1). How they fared, we know only as concerns Daniel and his friends, from his book. From the memoirs of Esther, from the tone of the predictions and from the general habits of Oriental conquerors, we can judge of the condition of the common Hebrews. Only this has to be noted, that the superior intelligence of the people early gave them an educator, even among their captors. There is no educator for a people, even in common knowledge, thrift, prudence, and enterprise, like the divine revelation.

But Babylon only "served" God because it served its king and loved to conquer; to ravage Judea and carry off the people. Darius, the Mede, overran it, and, in turn, fell before Cyrus. He probably came into early contact with a man so known and venerated as Daniel, who, intensely interested in his own people, would call Cyrus' attention to his being named so long before, and designated for this work. This could not fail to

impress him, and may be referred to as the "charge" to build the temple. Study Isa. 44: 26-28.

The fulfilment came at the predicted time. From the fourth year of Jehoiakim, B. C. 605, to the fall of Babylon in B. C. 538, is sixty-seven years. But time must be allowed for the settlement of Cyrus in power, the dispossession of "Darius, the Mede," and the arrangement of immediate plans, before the fulfilment of the decree of Cyrus on the throne, and if this be questioned, seventy years would be the ordinary way, in round numbers, in which such a term would be described by average men everywhere.

It is to be noted that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus," which does not preclude the use of Daniel and of the prophecy. When God's words or servants move us to any good, it is the Lord's "stirring up." Note also that the style of the proclamation evidences its genuineness, for, in point of fact, the Persian empire was of enormous extent, embracing the territories of the two foregoing powers (see map), and the inscriptions supply parallels. Here is a specimen of many Persian inscriptions: "The great god Ormuzd, who is the chief of the gods, he established Darius as king; he granted him the empire; by the grace of Ormuzd Darius is king. The clear statement of v. 23 regarding Jehovah is a fulfilment of Isa. 45: 1-3.

#### III.—THE LESSONS OF ALL THIS.

(1) Prophecy is to be studied. (See Daniel's example.) Many regard it as barren and speculative; and no doubt the fanciful uses of it made by many favor this prejudice. But we are, on this account, only to take the more earnest heed.

(2) And we are to know history, and to study contemporary events, that we may see the ways of the Lord, and our duty. True religion makes men public-spirited, promotes intelligence and patriotism. We are the children of the American nation, which God has kept and blessed greatly, and for which we are to hope there is still in store great usefulness. But that usefulness will depend in a great degree on our being wise, just, free from selfishness and malice, and actuated by regard for God and His law.

(3) We must note the connection between the fear of God and the stability of a people. The soil which Pilgrims and Puritans subdued may pass into the hands of men without any sympathy with their worship or their aims, if their soil be unfaithful for America; or gift to the people, no less than Palestine to Israel.

(4) We must remember the mercy of God. He visits and restores. He waits to be gracious. He gives promises and prophecies. He sends deliverances to men who own their sins, and turn to Him. (See Hosea 14: 1-4.) When we are cast down, let us remember that blessing in which we have grouped together the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

(5) He is faithful and keeps his promises. The time may seem long, but the word is not forgotten. Oh suffering saint, deliverance will come at length.

(6) Nor will the means be wanting in God's time. He can search the heart of the greatest king, use him as His instrument, and so glorify his name.

(7) How important was a visible worship in God's eyes! To rebuild the temple was more than to set up houses, or towers, or battlements. And it is so still. There is a closer connection between God's house; its being worthy of its ends; its being His, and not some money-lender's; its services being decent and orderly; its whole presentation of God's character fitting; than many imagine. In doing for the spiritual, we must not forget the material structures and their completeness.



SECOND QUARTER—REVIEW.

SUBJECT

GOLDEN TEXT.

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Josiah's Early Piety, 2 Chron. xxi. 1-8                 | Exd. xii. 1.     |
| 2. The Scriptures Found and Searched, 2 Chron. xxiv. 14-22 | John v. 39.      |
| 3. Jerusalem in Prison, Jer. xxxix. 1-9                    | Jer. xxxix. 1-9. |
| 4. The Rehearsals, Jer. xxxv. 15-19.                       | Jer. xxxv. 15.   |
| 5. The Captivity of Judah, Jer. li. 1-11.                  | Lam. 1. 8.       |
| 6. The Captivity in Babylon, Dan. i. 1-17.                 | Palm. cxl. 10.   |
| 7. Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, Dan. ii. 28-45.                 | Dan. ii. 28.     |
| 8. The Fiery Furnace, Dan. iii. 21-27.                     | Dan. iii. 17.    |
| 9. The Handwriting on the Wall, Dan. v. 25-31.             | Dan. v. 27.      |
| 10. Daniel in the Lions' Den, Dan. vi. 16-28.              | Dan. vi. 22.     |
| 11. Haniel's Kingdom, Dan. vii. 9-14.                      | Palm. xlv. vi.   |
| 12. The Decree of Cyrus, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22-29.            | Isiah, xl. 1.    |

THIRD QUARTER.

STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

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|---|--------------|
| July 7. Birth of Christ the Lord.....   | Luke 2: 8-20 |
| " 14. The Childhood of Jesus.....       | 2: 40-52     |
| " 21. Ministry of John the Baptist..... | 3: 1-22      |
| " 28. Jesus at Nazareth.....            | 4: 16-30     |
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| " 11. The Centurion's Servant.....      | 5: 1-11      |
| " 18. The Widow of Nain.....            | 7: 11-17     |
| " 25. The Friend of Sinners.....        | 7: 40-50     |
| Sept. 1. Returns of the Seventy.....    | 10: 17-24    |
| " 8. The Good Samaritan.....            | 10: 30-37    |
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Prepared for the CHRISTIAN HELPER.

JULY 7.—Birth of Christ the Lord.—  
Luke 2: 8-20. B. C. 4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2: 11.

IN THE STUDY.

For the next six months our studies will be upon the life, labours, sufferings and death of our Lord, as recorded by the evangelist Luke. It will not be amiss, therefore, for us to know something of the author of this record, and of the circumstances under which he wrote it. The evangelist Luke, Lucas or Lucanus, was a physician, *Col. 4: 14*, and according to Eusebius, a native of Antioch. He is first mentioned in his own work, the Acts of the Apostles 16: 11, "We," though it is probable that he was an attendant upon the ministry of Jesus, and an eye-witness of His miracles, *Luke 1: 3*. He speaks of himself as travelling in company with the great apostle from Troas to Philippi, where he seems to have travelled behind, and where he again joined Paul on his second tour of Greece, accompanying him to Jerusalem, thence to Caesarea, and finally to Rome, where he remained with him until the close of his life, steadfast through all the fires of persecution. *Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11*. It was during this long and intimate association with the apostle that he wrote his two works—the Gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles, probably under the immediate direction of Paul himself. The earliest traditions represent him to have died in Achaia, but there is no definite record of the place or mode of his death. His Gospel and the Acts are written in the most beautiful and correct Greek, revealing the man of culture, while his minute and exact descriptions of diseases that Christ healed reveal the hand of the physician.

The Time. The exact date of our Lord's birth cannot be fixed with certainty; some think that it was not later in the year than September, for the shepherds still kept their flocks in the open fields, while others hold it to be the traditional date. One thing, however, is generally conceded, and that is that it took place at least 4 years earlier than our A. D. 1. Herod died in

A. U. C. (the founding of Rome) 750, and Christ was born some time before Herod's death, but our A. D. 1 corresponds with A. U. C. 754. The date placed at the beginning of this lesson B. C. 4, that is four years before the beginning of A. D. 1.

The Place. Bethlehem—the house of bread—situated at the birth place of Him who was to be the "Bread of Life"—is six miles southwest of Jerusalem. Its ancient name, Ephrath (Gen. 48: 7), signifies, fruitful. It is situated on a ridge, 2,700 feet above the sea, and is surrounded with hills and valleys. Here David was born, B. C. 1085, and from this circumstance it was frequently called the City of David.

The Inn. "This does not mean a hotel kept by a landlord at so much a day. The inns or caravansaries of the East are large enclosures built at convenient distances along the road for the accommodation of travellers. They are for shelter and protection at night. The building is commonly of stone, built round an open square, with sheds or stalls for cattle; and over these, often, are chambers for the traveler."—*Jacobus*. The taxing, more properly enrolment or registration. The same Greek word is found in Heb. 12: 23, "written in heaven." It was a census for the purpose of taxing, and the actual taxing was carried out some years later.

The taxed rule then subsisting in Palestine had a remarkable influence on the fulfilment of prophecy. Had the census been purely Jewish, Mary need not have gone to register, the names of men only being taken. Had it been purely Roman, both might have been registered at Nazareth. The Roman law required her enrollment, the Jewish that it should take place at the hereditary city.—*Isa. 9: 6; Micah. 5: 2.—Stock*.

Genealogy. Jesus was David's son through Joseph, legally by adoption.—*Matt. 1: 1-17*. He was David's son through Mary, lineally by direct descent.—*Luke 3: 23-38*. And He was the Son of God by the conception of the Holy Ghost.—*Matt. 1: 20; Luke 1: 35*.

IN THE CLASS.

Questions. What great event are we to study to-day?

By whom was it foretold, and how long before?

How far was Bethlehem, and in what direction from Jerusalem?

By whose birth was Bethlehem first made famous, and who gave his name to the city?

What relation was Jesus to David?

How was He David's son through Joseph?

How was His son through Mary?

How was He the Son of God?

For what great purpose did Jesus come to this world?

Why was it necessary that He should be born in human flesh, and become a man?

Why was it necessary that He should be at the same time God as well as man, Divine as well as human?

How long had this great purpose been in God's mind?

With what feelings did the Old Testament saints look forward to this event?

What feelings ought it to produce in our hearts?

We have in our lesson, 1st. The Watch of the Shepherds, v. 8; and 2nd. The Heavenly Announcement, v. 9-12; 3rd. The Joy of the Angels, v. 13-14; 4th. The Shepherds' Visit, v. 15-16, and 5th. The Publication of the Good News, 17-20.

THE WATCH OF THE SHEPHERDS.

V. 8. And there were in the same country shepherds. The country in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem was partly agricultural and partly pastoral. The rough rugged hills and steep ravines, like the Highlands of Scotland, could be used only for grazing purposes.

Keeping watch over their flocks by night, to guard them from wild beasts, the incursions of enemies, and from wandering away.—*Gen. 31: 39; 1 Sam. 17: 34; John 10: 12*.

THE HEAVENLY ANNOUNCEMENT.

V. 9. And to the angel of the Lord, His messenger.—*Zech. 6: 11* (Gideon), *13: 10-23* (Manasseh).

And the glory of the Lord, the visible symbol of the Divine presence.—*Ex. 24: 16-17; Num. 14: 10*.

And they were sore afraid.—*Isa. 6: 5; Dan. 10: 7-8; Act. 9: 17; Rev. 1: 17*.

V. 10. Fear not. The message was not one of judgment, but of mercy. I bring. God is ever first in the salvation of the world. Christ came to us; His gospel, the message is sent to us.—*Rom. 10: 6-8*. Good tidings of great joy: the best news that ever came to this sinning, suffering, sorrowing world; the most blessed that God could send or man receive. Unto all people. Unto all the nation, and to all the world.—*Luke 24: 49*.

V. 11. For unto you is born. What joy gathers around a birth! How much of joy or sorrow, happiness or misery, may be in the future to the new born infant! An immortal soul launched upon the voyage of life. Christ the Lord was born, born of a woman, in all the weakness and helplessness of infancy, and yet mystery of mysteries, Christ the Lord, the JEHOVAH, veiled within that infant form, was there.—*1 Tim. 3: 16*.

V. 12. And this shall be a sign, a guiding sign, so that they might find Him, as the star to the wise men; and finding Him thus, see the truth of the announcement; a confirming sign.

Wrapped in swaddling clothes—an evidence of His weakness, lying in a manger of His humiliation.—*Phil. 2: 6-7*. So if we would find Christ we must seek Him by the marks of His humiliation, sufferings and death. Seek Him in the garden, on the Cross.

"Hath he marks that lead me to Him,  
If He be my guide  
In His feet and hands are wounds-printed,  
And His side."

THE JOY OF THE ANGELS.

V. 13. A multitude.—*Heb. 1: 6*. Praising God. The exercise of heaven, heaven come down to earth, that earth might be won back to heaven. Oh, happy shepherds to hear the music of heaven! So hears every one, in his soul, who mysteries the Holy Child.

V. 14. Glory to God in the highest—in the highest strains, in the highest places, the heaven of heavens; for "His love displayed, His manifold wisdom made known, His law magnified, His faithfulness and truth proved, His alienated inheritance redeemed, Satan despoiled."—*Jacobus*.

"'Twas great to form a world from naught,  
'Twas greater to redeem."

On earth peace.—between God and men.—*Rom. 5: 1*. In men's hearts.—*Phil. 4: 7*. Among men.—*2 Th. 4: 2*.

Good will toward men, or, among men of good will, to whom God manifests His saving grace.—*Ezek. 33: 11; John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 8; 1 John 4: 9*. The revelation of God's good will, and the communication of it by applying the saving virtues of Christ.

THE SHEPHERDS' VISIT.

V. 15. Let us now go—a prompt response; so ought every one to set out at once to seek Christ, and so ought we to exhort one another.—*Ps. 122: 1*.

V. 16. With haste, revealing their earnestness and intense desire to reply: by a personal experience in a sight of Jesus the truth of the message by which they had just heard.

And found—so it is with every one who

truly seeks the Lord with His whole heart.—*Jer. 29: 13.* And to such the finding is a demonstration of the truth of the Divine message.—*2 Tim. 1: 12.*

#### THE PUBLICATION OF THE GOOD NEWS.

*V. 17.* Having by the testimony of two witnesses—the word of the Lord and their own experience—became assured of the blessed fact, they made no delay in declaring it to others. And thus these humble shepherds became the first preachers of Christ unto men.

When God has spoken to us in His Word, and we have realized in our own experience His great salvation, we ought also to "tell to all around, what a dear Saviour we have found."

If we seek and find Him we also shall return glorifying and praising God for all the things that we have heard and seen.

#### JULY 14.—The Childhood of Jesus.—

Luke 2: 40-52. A. D. 9.

#### GOLDEN TEXT.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and with man.—*2: 52.*

#### IN THE STUDY.

Our lesson covers all that period of time from the return of our Lord from Egypt until His entry upon His public ministry at the age of thirty. But the date of the principal incident in it is about A. D. 9, or when Jesus was twelve years old. Nazareth, the home of Jesus for these nearly thirty years, is a city of lower Galilee, about seventy miles north of Jerusalem, in the territory of the tribe of Zebulun. "It is situated on the side of a small, verdant, rich and beautiful valley, surrounded by hills, with a narrow outlet from the south. From the summit of the hill on the eastern slope of which Nazareth lies is a truly magnificent prospect. Towards the north the eye glances over the countless hills of Galilee, and across the desert and snow-crowned Hermon. On the east the Jordan valley may be traced, and beyond it the dim heights of ancient Bashan. Towards the south spreads the broad and beautiful plain of Esdraelon, with Tabor and Little Hermon and Gilboa visible on its eastern border, and the hills of Samaria on the south, while Carmel rises on the west, and dips his feet in the blue waters of the Mediterranean." Says Dr. Thomson: "It is certainly remarkable that this place, dearest to the Christian heart of all on earth except Jerusalem, is not mentioned in the Old Testament, nor even by Josephus, who was himself on every side of it, and names the villages, all about, but seems yet totally ignorant of its existence. It was probably a very small hamlet hid away in the narrow vale, and almost political impudence whatever. There is a sort of latent beauty and appropriateness that He, who made all things out of nothing, should Himself come forth to the world out of a place that had no history." Its present population is about 3,000.

Of the childhood and youth of our Lord nothing is recorded save this one solitary incident. For nearly thirty years He remains in the obscurity of His mountain home developing those traits of mind and spirit that were to shine out in such dazzling glory. Thirty years of preparation for three of public ministry! But how much the more dependent on the thirty. There is a deep significance in the Evangelist respecting the youth of our Lord, but how expressive and instructive is that silence! But though the sacred narrative is silent, we may nevertheless, from the home where He lived, the family of which He was the central figure, and the people among whom He dwelt, ascertain certain things concerning those years spent in the quiet valley of existence. "He grew as our children grow, only in a childhood of sinless

and stainless beauty, as the flowers of roses in the spring of the year, and as lilies by the waters." *Karrar.* As a Jewish youth He would be required to learn a trade, probably His father's.—*Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 3.* He would be taught to read and write at the ordinary Synagogue school; for education was very general in Palestine in those days, and schools numerous. One Book above all others would be His constant study. While in His leisure hours from the summit of the hill above the village He would look down upon nearly all the places rich in sacred associations,—and thus with "The Land and the Book" before Him He would, like Timothy, know the Scriptures from a youth. That He made rapid progress, and that His mind was early stored with sacred truth, is seen from the wisdom He manifested on His first visit at the age of twelve to Jerusalem and the Temple.

"The popular conception of the Saviour is too much that of *human body dwelt in by God*, which wholly omits the 'reasonable soul' so strongly implied in *2 Cor. 2: 17-18; 4: 15; 5: 7-9; Matt. 23: 38; Luke 10: 22*, and in the words, 'I dwell in wisdom.' This growth in wisdom does not imply defect; for from His earliest childhood Jesus was 'filled with wisdom'; His human mind expanded, and so, though always full, it constantly increased in wisdom. The expression 'increased in favour with God' is very remarkable and is to be understood like the other one, not that God was at any time *less* 'well pleased,' but that as Jesus grew there was more and more on which the Divine favour could rest.—*Stack.*

"We have no mention of Joseph after the events narrated in this lesson; and it is, therefore, probable that he died before our Lord entered on his public ministry.

"There is one great difficulty in enforcing upon children the example of Christ. Their common conception of Him is of one to whom goodness was so easy that it had no merit, who could not feel as children do feel, who was altogether far above the petty trials and difficulties of child life, and whose example cannot be fairly adduced. Let us, therefore, make it our special business in this lesson to exhibit Jesus as a *real boy*, let us not seek to diminish the reverence with which His divinity is regarded; that feeling already exists, and we shall rather increase it by dwelling on the real humbleness of the eternal Son of God.—*Stack.* Heb. 2: 171, 4: 15.

Jesus is a friend and a Saviour, who can feel for and understand the children, for He Himself was a child.

The following suggests itself as a suitable line of thought for the teacher in the class: 1st. The Home of Jesus; 2nd. The Growth of Jesus; 3rd. The Daily Life of Jesus; 4th. His First Visit to Jerusalem and the Temple; 5th. His Stay in the Temple with the Doctors; 6th. His Return to Nazareth.

#### IN THE CLASS.

Questions. What events have taken place since our last lesson? The circumcision.—*V. 21. Ex. 13: 2.* The presentation in the temple.—*V. 22-28.* The visit of the Magi.—*Matt. 2: 1-12.* The flight into Egypt, Herod's cruelty, and the return.—*Matt. 2: 13-23.* Where was Nazareth? How long did Jesus live there? Why is the only incident recorded during His life in Nazareth? How was prophecy fulfilled by His dwelling at Nazareth? *Isa. 11: 1.*

#### THE HOME OF JESUS.

A mountain home, small, rude, despised. *John 1: 46.* Let us not despise any one because of his home. The greatest and best men have been born and brought up in obscurity. It is not where a man begins; it is where he ends. The diamond that gleams in the monarch's crown was formed in the dark mine. See the humiliation of our blessed Lord! He stooped down to the lowest and humblest position, and was content to be

despised so that He might save us. *Matt. 26: 7; John 19: 19.*

#### THE GROWTH OF JESUS.

He grew as our children grow. From an infant wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger, He grew day by day until He could walk and run, and talk and think, and learn, until at twelve years of age, all were astonished at His understanding.

As He grew in body He grew in mind. He did not spend His hours in idleness and listlessness, but improved them diligently. How precious the opportunities of youth! Then the mind and character are forming, and as the boy is so the man will be. And above all, and the cause of all, is the "grace" or favour of God was upon Him.

#### HIS DAILY LIFE.

It was that of a poor man's son. His food was plain. His clothing was not of the best. He had many little duties to perform. He had his studies to master. The Sabbath services to attend. No doubt he was an affectionate, obedient, contented and studious boy. The word of God was His constant companion, and as He read His sacred narratives and lessons of heavenly wisdom, He received the good seed into good soil. He received it into His heart, and treasured it there. *Ps. 119: 11.* As He grew older He began to use His father's tools and to assist Him in his work, and when Joseph died He took his place and became the support and comfort of His mother.—*Mark 6: 3; John 2: 12.*

"The trivial round, the common task,  
Should furnish all we ought to ask—  
Room to deny ourselves, a road  
To bring us daily nearer God."

#### HIS FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.

At the age of twelve a Jewish boy became a 'son of the law,' thenceforth bound to obedience to all its requirements, including attendance at the passover. We can imagine the deep interest and the emotions that filled the breast of Jesus as He took this journey to Jerusalem—the Holy City, and the Temple. Already He had begun to realize something of His great destiny, and the future that was before Him in that city.

The feast lasted seven days.—*Ex. 12: 15; 13: 7*—from the 14th day of the first month, corresponding with our March, to the 21st, the day beginning at the setting of the sun. So deep was the interest of Jesus that He tarried behind, and only after three days search. He was found in the temple in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking questions. He was there to learn, and so eager was His desire for heavenly wisdom that the hours passed almost imperceptibly. He was absorbed in His Father's business.

"As to questioning, great courtesy was allowed. It is a grievous mistake to say that call this scene 'Christ disputing with the doctors.'—*Killo.*

"His reply to His mother reveals His consciousness of His divine mission and the necessity that was laid upon Him. 'I must.' 'This is no reproachful question. It is asked in all the simplicity and boldness of childhood.'—*Alford.*

#### HIS RETURN TO NAZARETH.

Again our Lord is hid from our view. For eighteen long years He remains in Nazareth, ripening for His great work, subject to His parents, doing the common duties of daily life. So did Moses in the wilderness. We ought to be far more anxious to be ready for our work, and to be worthy of any position than to have it. When we are ready for our work the work will be ready for us.

He increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man—so ought we all. But this can be for us, only by going to Jesus the only perfect One, and making Him our trust and our example.

## JULY 21.—The Ministry of John the Baptist.—Luke 3: 1-22. A. D. 26.

### GOLDEN TEXT.

"For He shall be great, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink."—Luke 1: 15.

### IN THE STUDY.

"Thirty years have passed since the birth in Bethlehem, when 'all Jerusalem was troubled by the enquiries of the Wise Men from the East, and eighteen years since the Galilean started the Rabbis in the Temple by his youthful wisdom, old men have died, young men have become old, and children have grown up.'—*Stock*. The kingdom has departed. For upwards of twenty years the country has been a Roman province, and six Roman officers have governed Judea since Herod the Great and his son Archelaus sat on the throne. Pontius Pilate, more hated than all the rest, now rules, and the people wearied with foreign domination and remembering the promise, and that the time is fulfilled for the coming of the Messiah, are now anxiously looking for the Deliverer who is to restore the throne of David. A warrior king is expected, and an earthly kingdom.

The prophetic references to John the Baptist intimately associate him with the coming of Christ.—*Isa.* 40: 3-5; *Mal.* 4: 5. He was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and he was to prepare the way of the Lord. The Jewish people thought that Elijah himself would come.—*John* 1: 21.

"The deep impression made by the appearance of a man with the habits and in the garb of prophets like Elijah, preaching with Elijah's spirit and power, and that too after a prophetic silence of 400 years, or since Malachi predicted the appearance of Elijah before the Lord's coming, is evident from the crowd that gathered on the Jordan valley from all parts of the country, especially when we remember that John did no miracle."—*John* 10: 41. It has been calculated that it was a Sabbatic year; and as these years were now observed with some strictness by the Jews, the people would not be detained from their ordinary avocations. According to Stanley and others, an expedition was then passing down the Ghor, or Jordan valley, against Petra in Idumaea, the capital of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea, 2 *Cor.* 12: 28, and some of these troops were doubtless the soldiers spoken of in *Luke* 3: 14.—*Stock*.

"The wilderness of Judea" is a term applied to a strip of uninhabited country between the hill country of Hebron and Bethlehem and the Dead Sea, consisting of the wild ravines which descend abruptly into the deep hollow in which the lake lies, and of the precipitous rocks which divide them. The district extends from Engedi on the south to Jericho on the north. John probably moved northward from the wilderness as he preached; for his first baptisms seem to have taken place at the lower ford of the Jordan, opposite Jericho; while a little later we find him at Bethabara, probably the 'upper fords' where the Jabok runs into the Jordan (*John* 1: 28), and afterwards at Enon, near Salim, which has been identified still higher up the stream towards Bethan or Scythopolis.

Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," speaking of Eastern roads, says: "These mountain roads are positively barbarous; and a whole class of Biblical figures rests on this state of things." Isaiah says: "Separate the way of the Lord, cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones." And not only do modern ways prove the need of such preparation, but modern customs show how, when, and why it is done. When Ibrahim Pasha proposed to visit certain places on Lebanon, Beyers and Sheikha sent forth a general proclamation to all the inhabitants to assemble along the proposed route, and to prepare the way. The same was done on a grand scale in 1845, when the Sultan visited Prusa. The

stones were gathered out, crooked places straightened, and rough ones made level and smooth. The exhortation to gather out the stones is peculiarly appropriate. These farmers do the exact reverse—gather up the stones from the fields and cast them into the highway, and it is this barbarous custom, which in many instances renders the roads so uncomfortable, and even dangerous.

Theribus was for three years joint emperor with Augustus; so this date would be the twelfth of his sole rule. Judea had been for over twenty years a Roman province. Archelaus having been deposed for his cruelties, and banished to Gaul. A Tetrarch was strictly a governor of a fourth part, but eventually came to be applied to any ruler of a small province. The Herod here spoken was the son of Herod the Great.

Philip was the half brother of the Philip who married Herodias.

Itranea was the north-eastern district of Palestine. Abilene lay still farther north and received its name from its chief city, Abila, 18 miles north of Damascus.

Ananias had been high priest of fifteen years, was his father-in-law of Caiaphas, and still retained the name and much of the authority of the High Priest, although Caiaphas actually held the office.

Isaias is the Greek form of Isaiah, as found in the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament.

There are two words in the New Testament for repentance, the one signifies regret, not so much for the thing itself as the consequences, and the other a change of mind and feeling, towards the thing, arising from change of views. This latter word is by far the stronger one, and is here used: For the first, see *Matt.* 27: 3, and for the latter, *Mark* 7: 15; *Luke* 10: 13; 2 *Cor.* 7: 10. True repentance, the repentance preached by John, and so much insisted upon throughout the New Testament, by our Lord and His Apostles, is not simply sorrow for sin arising from a view of its consequences, as a turning from it and against it, and is produced by the enlightenment of the mind as to its true nature and tendencies. True repentance is a *change of heart*, not simply sorrow of heart. It changes the heart from the love of sin to the hatred of it, and to the love of Christ and to holiness.

### IN THE CLASS.

Questions. How many years have passed since the date of our last lesson? What changes have taken place? What was the state of people in reference to coming of the promised Messiah? What was the appearance of John as he came out of the wilderness preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand? What impression did his preaching make? When men asked him who he was, what was his answer? Did he magnify himself or the one who was to come? What was his message to everybody?

We have in our lesson: 1st. The Mission of John; 2nd. The Message of John; 3rd. The Baptism of John; 4th. The Results of His Ministry.

### THE MISSION OF JOHN.

It was that of a fore-runner to announce the coming of Christ and to prepare the people for him. *Isa.* 40: 3; *Luke* 3: 13-17; *John* 1: 23. As a pioneer in the back woods clearing out the brush, rooting up the stumps and making a road through the wilderness. As pioneers before an advancing army clearing the way along which it is to march.

The preparation John demanded was in men's hearts, which were hard, proud, selfish, sinful. So is every one's heart by nature to-day.

### THE MESSAGE OF JOHN.

Repentance. To turn away from their sins, give them up, confess them, and to stand ready to receive the Lord when He should come. This message was to every one, for all needed it. Some

of them thought that they were already prepared for the Lord. The Pharisees, because they were descendants of Abraham, very strict and religious in their way supposed that, therefore, they were righteous, having no sins to confess; no evil hearts to be changed. But John called them "a generation of vipers." He told them that all their covenant privileges, and all their outward forms, and not even their being children of pious Abraham would avail them, that the axe was already laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that brought not forth good fruit should be cut down—v. 7-9. And then he told them how true repentance would manifest itself—in a changed life—v. 10-14. So is it with us—nothing, not even pious parents, church membership, outward observance of the forms of religion will fit us for the kingdom of Christ. We must repent by turning from our sins to Christ to trust Him, and follow Him.—*Matt.* 18: 3; *John* 3: 3; *Acts* 3: 18.

### THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

Those who received his message and believed in the Saviour that was to come, in Him who was to baptize them with the Holy Ghost, were baptized—that is, they were buried in the water and raised again. That John baptized by immersion may be clearly seen, not only from the meaning of the word used, which is to dip under, but also from the place where he baptized. He kept along the river, first opposite Jericho at the "lower fords" there, then at Bethabara, the "upper fords," then at Enon near Salim.—*John* 1: 28; 3: 23.

He baptized in the river, and those who were baptized came up out of the water.—*Matt.* 3: 16.

### THE RESULTS OF JOHN'S MINISTRY.

John was beheaded. He said of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease."—*John* 3: 30. We read that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.—*John* 4: 1. Was John's ministry a success or a failure as to *lasting results*? Let us see. The first disciples of our Lord were from among John's and the result of his test ministry.—*John* 1: 35-42. When John was beheaded his disciples came to Jesus.—*Matt.* 14: 12. When Christ went among the people they remembered the testimony of John.—*John* 10: 40-42. The disciples that John made were ready to receive the gospel when it was brought to them.—*Acts* 18: 24-28; 19: 1-6. He prepared the way for Jesus. "And when his work was done, like the morning star, he faded away from our sight on the rising of the sun, he gradually passed away, and Christ, as on the mount, was left alone. So ought it to be with our teaching, to so point to Jesus that we shall fade from view in the greater light, and Christ fill the vision with His surpassing glory."—*John* 3: 29.

## JULY 28.—Jesus at Nazareth.—Luke 4: 16-30. A. D. 28.

### GOLDEN TEXT.

And they were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with power.—*V. 22.*

### IN THE STUDY.

Since the baptism of our Lord, with an account of which our last lesson closed, and the return of Jesus to Nazareth, as recorded in our lesson for to-day, the following events have, according to Robinson's Harmony of the Gospels, taken place. The temptation in the wilderness.—*Matt.* 4: 1; *Mark* 1: 12-13; *Luke* 4: 1-13. The testimony of John to Jesus at Bethabara.—*John* 1: 19-34. The first disciples made by our Lord: Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael.—*John* 1: 35-51. The first Passover, at which Jesus drives out the traders from the Temple.—*John* 2: 13-25. His discourse with Nicodemus.—*John* 3: 1-21. His sojourn, preaching and baptizing in Judea.—*John* 3: 22-36. His departure

into Galilee after the imprisonment of John.—Matt. 4: 12; Mark 1: 14; Luke 4: 14; John 4: 1-3; His discourse with the woman of Samaria.—John 4: 4-42. His return to Cana, and the healing of the Nobleman's son at Capernaum.—John 4: 46.

This will account for the fame that had preceded Jesus to the little village of His boyhood and youth, and for the jealousy they evidently felt at His not beginning His miracles there.

"The word 'synagogue' is a Greek one, meaning assembly and is almost identical with the Latin 'congregation.' Like our word 'church,' it originally designated the assembly of worshippers, but in course of time was applied to the building in which they met.—John 9: 22; Acts 19: 2. Synagogues probably originated during the captivity, when the Temple worship was suspended. Subsequently they arose in all directions, and had a great influence in fostering the religious life of the nation. The ruler of the synagogue was the chief local Rabbi, as Jairus at Capernaum, Luke 8: 14, and Crispus at Corinth, Acts 18: 8. The word *metanist*, v. 20, means a convert, and refers to the *Chazan*, a kind of clerk or verser. This functionary was often also the local schoolmaster.

The service consisted of prayers read by the ruler, the people standing.—Mark 11: 25; Luke 18: 11—and responding 'Amen,' singing the Psalms; reading of the law first, and then of the prophets; and finally the '*deutab*' or 'word of exhortation.' Any one could read the Books of the Prophets. The reader always stood, the preacher sat.—Matt. 5: 1; Mark 4: 1.

The synagogue was also used as a court of justice, Luke 12: 11, and even as a place of punishment, Matt. 10: 17; Mark 13: 9.—*Stack*.

The opening and the closing of the book referred to in our lesson mean the unrolling and rolling up again, after it had been read of the roll. An ancient book may be described by supposing a sheet of vellum or skins sewed together, similar to a window curtain, with a roller at each end with handles, so that it could be rolled together from both ends, or rolled from one end to the other; this the reader placed before him on a desk, as we have our large Bibles on the pulpit. The word *rotulus* means a roll. It is supposed that the passage our Lord read was the portion for that day.

The 'brow of the hill,' from which they sought to cast him, is pointed out by monkish tradition as a steep hill about two miles from the village, but this is evidently a mistake. Just above the town is a cliff, forty feet high, and which at one time was higher, but through the filling up of the ground below with *debris* and the breaking away of the soft stone above has been greatly reduced in height. Part of the village was probably built on this, and most likely also the synagogue. There are also other cliffs near at hand, from which if a person were cast he would almost certainly be killed.

The exact method of our Lord's escape from the crowd is uncertain. He may have made Himself invisible, or made them powerless by a *deutab* such as that in Gethsemane. John 18: 6. *Stack*.

The copy of the Bible from which our Saviour read was the Septuagint or Greek translation from the Hebrew made at Alexandria in Egypt by seventy Jewish scholars, and compiled by B. C., which accounts for the different phraseology in the quotations from our present version.

#### IN THE CLASS.

Our lesson falls naturally into the following divisions: 1st. Jesus in the Synagogue of His own town, v. 16; 2nd. The gracious news He has to tell, v. 17-22; 3rd. The claim He makes concerning Himself, v. 22-27; 4th. His rejection by His own people, v. 28-29; 5th. His disappearance from among them, v. 30.

#### JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

What emotions must have filled His heart as for

the first time after entering upon His public ministry, for the first time since coming out from the obscurity in which He had been for thirty years. He stands in the synagogue where as a little Jewish boy He had worshipped, and before the men and women who had known Him from infancy, and the young men and maidens with whom He had gone to school, to declare Himself the MESSIAH, the long looked for—the promised Redeemer, and to demand their faith in Him. And with what mingled feelings of eury, and criticism and unbelief that congregation must have looked upon Him whom they knew so well who had worked for them and with them, whom they called the carpenter's son, and the carpenter, and of whom they had lately heard such strange things. They had heard of wonderful things He had done in other places—would He do anything better *there*?

The opening prayers are over—the first lesson has been read—and now Jesus "as His custom was," not simply to attend the services, but to take part in them, stood up to read the second lesson, and to sing the great roll from the *Chazan's* hand. He opens it at Isa. 61: 1-2, and reads a prophecy over 700 years old.

#### THE GRACIOUS NEWS HE HAS TO TELL.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, referring to the fact that He had been publicly consecrated to His work by the Holy Spirit descending on Him at His baptism, and that the Spirit of God had been imparted to Him without measure to endow Him for His great office.—*Barnes*.

Kath anointed me, referring to the ceremony by which priests, prophets and kings were appointed to their office.—Ex. 28: 44; 1 Kings 19: 16; Sam. 10: 1. To preach the gospel—to proclaim good tidings. To the poor—They are poor whatever else they may possess who have needs unsatisfied, sorrows uncomforted, and sins unforgotten.—*Peabody*, Rev. 3: 17-18.

Given hearted—on account of sin. Captivities—bound in the chains of sin, or social prisoners. Sight to the blind—lost on account of sin. The acceptable year of the Lord—a jubilee year when all debts should be cancelled, every inheritance restored, and every servant set free. What blessed news! And then as He began to say to them that that day that prophecy given over 700 years before was fulfilled, they wondered at His gracious words, and at the gracious way in which He uttered them, for "never man spake like this man."

This is the first recorded sermon of our Lord. How full of grace and mercy! And now as *then* is the *acceptable* year of the Lord. Not yet is it the 'day of vengeance of our God,' but how soon that may be, who can tell?

#### THE CLAIM HE MAKES CONCERNING HIMSELF.

Up to this point they are pleased, delighted, but when He begins to tell them that *He* is the one by whom these blessings are to come, then they begin to doubt and question in their minds: *He the God Physician? He the promised Messiah? and they the ones who need these blessings? Physician heal thyself—do for your own people—in your own town the healing of the sick that you have done for others. If you have power let your own countrymen have the first benefit. No prophet is accepted in his own country.* He then is a prophet! claims to be such. *Elias*—Greek form for Elijah. *Eliaseus*—Greek for Elisha.

#### HIS REJECTION BY HIS OWN PEOPLE.

What then? Were they in *His* estimation (and He but the 'Carpenter') no better than Gentiles and lepers? This was the climax of all that was intolerable to them, as coming from a townsman whom they wished to rank among themselves. And at these words their long suppressed fury burst into a flame. The speaker was no longer

interrupted by a murmur of disapprobation, but by a roar of wrath.—*Farrar*.

They were not prepared to receive Him—Jesus saw that. Others should have the blessings. This enraged them, and so they determine to *destroy* Him. What a Sabbath day's work!

#### HIS DISAPPEARANCE FROM AMONG THEM.

But though murder is in their hearts they are not able to carry out their wicked resolve. Jesus, who could speak so graciously and gently, has Divine power, and He *restrains* them by a power they know not, and passes away, probably vanishes from their gaze. They demanded a miracle; they have seen one, but it has *separated* them from their Saviour, perhaps never more to see or hear Him again.

Like the people of Nazareth, we have, in Christian home, and Sabbath-school and Sanctuary privileges, known Jesus from our childhood. Shall we like the Nazarenes reject Him and cast Him out when He demands our faith? or will we receive Him?

## Religious Intelligence.

### DENOMINATIONAL.

#### ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.

Baptisms reported during the month: Arkona, 5; Barrie, 4; Brockville, 20; Campbellford, 1; Doe Lake, 5; Dundas, 3; Durham, 17; Farnersville, 5; Gilmorris, 2; Hanover, 3; Highgate, 1; Howick, 7; Kinmount, 5; Medonte, 1; Midland, 1; McGillivray, 1; Montreal, 3; Catherine st., 1, Olivet, 5; Orillia, 1; Otterville, 3; Paris, 4; Petrolia, 2; Potton, Que., 4; Sherbrooke, 1; Smith, 5; Springfield, 2; St. Thomas, First, 8; Toronto, *Alexander st.*, 4. *College st.*, 7; *Yarvis st.*, 7; *Parliament st.*, 14; Hartford, 9; Eugenia, 8; Round Plains, 12; Watford, 40.

Ministers Ordained.—Rev. D. P. McPHEESON was ordained at *Dresden* on the 8th of May, and will supply during the summer there. Rev. G. B. DAVIS was ordained as pastor of the 1st and 2nd Onondaga churches on the 30th of May. Rev. D. A. MCGREGOR was ordained as pastor of the *Whitby* churches on the 6th inst. Rev. D. D. BURCH was ordained at *Leamington* on the 4th inst. Rev. GEO. EVERTON was ordained at *Harrow* on the 5th inst.

Pastoral Changes.—Rev. J. T. DOWLING has resigned the charge of the Uxbridge church, and accepted a call from the church in *Striving*. Rev. R. M. CUNNINGHAM has resigned the Petrolia Church and accepted a call from *Bea-ville*. Rev. WM. MURDIN, late of Strathallan, has become pastor of the *Second Lobo* church. His address is Fernhill, Ont. Rev. G. L. OLIVER has resigned the care of the church in *Pembroke*, Ont. Rev. THOMAS BALDWIN has moved from Galt to St. Thomas, his former home, and is supplying the pulpit for the church in *Tilsbury*. Rev. J. HIGGINS has accepted a call to the pastorate of the church in *Alton Craig*. K. D. McDEARMID, late pastor of the church in *Fondoulay*, has been excluded from that church and deposed from the Christian ministry for gross immorality.

Churches Recognized.—On the 30th of April the body of baptized believers calling themselves the *Third Daystar Church*, with a membership of 20 persons. On the 15th of May the church in *Bismarck*, with 46 members. On the 24th of May the church in *Watford*, with 10 members.

Miscellaneous.—The *Parliament St. Church*, Toronto, at its annual meeting on the 9th of May, reported very gratifying progress, both in the main interest in Parliament street and in all the three mission stations, which this vigor-

one young church sustains. The number baptized during the year was 54. The pastor's salary was increased by \$100. The church now numbers 282 members; and there are 480 scholars in the three Sunday-schools, who are under the care of 65 faithful teachers.

MARITIME PROVINCES.

Baptisms reported during the month: Ancherl, N. S., 2; Bridgewater, N. S., 35; Calais, N. B., 40; Cariboro, N. B., 5; Chester, N. S., 1; Dartmouth, N. S., 1; Greenwood, N. S., 3; Little River, N. S., 9; Mahone Bay, N. S., 20; Margareville, N. S., 48; New Albany, N. S., 14; New Glasgow, N. S., 1; Nictaux, N. S., 21; North River, N. B., 32; Oak Bay, N. B., 28; Paradise, N. S., 5; Springfield, N. S., 74; St. Martins, N. B., 5; St. Mary's Ferry, N. B., 3; St. Stephens, N. B., 14; Tusville, N. B., 1; Tremont, N. S., 7.

Chapel Dedication.—A fine new house of worship for the church at *Wulm's Cove*, N. B., was dedicated on the 24th of May, the dedication sermon being preached by Rev. G. W. Carey, A. M., of St. John.

Chapels recognized.—A number of churches existing in and about Warren, Cumberland county, having handed together in church-fellowship were publicly recognized as the Sister Baptist Church on the 8th of May. The new organization is to be called the *Benola Baptist Church*.

Ordination.—Bro. J. E. GRANT, who has been labouring with much acceptance at New Albany and Springfield, N. S., was publicly set apart to the work of the gospel ministry on the 14th of May at *Wulm's Cove*.

Missionaries.—*The Teluk Mission*.—We learn from the Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board that at their last meeting it was voted unanimously to appoint Miss Caroline A. Hammond to mission service in India. She was cordially recommended by the N. B. Central Board of the Woman's Mission Aid Societies, and is to labor under their auspices. She will probably be located at the Binlapitan Station in the Madras Presidency, and will assist Mr. and Mrs. Sanford, who have been labouring at that place for some time past. At the request of the Central Boards of W. M. A. Society the F. M. Board has appropriated \$500 to erect a mission school-house at Binlapitan. Thus the benefactions of our sisters are being devoted to the glorious work of evangelising and elevating the heathen.—*Christian Visitor*, May 15th.

The tree will not only lie as it falls, but it will fall as it leans. And the great question every one should bring home to himself is this, "What is the inclination of my soul? Does it, with all its affections, lean toward God, or away from Him?"—*J. J. Garnsey*.

He who prays as he ought, will endeavor to live as he prays. He that can live in sin and abide in the ordinary duties of prayer, never prays as he ought. A truly gracious praying frame is utterly inconsistent with the love of any sin.—*Owen*.

If heaven be the world toward which we are journeying, holiness will be the way in which we shall walk from day to day; for if we do not love and cherish the Spirit of heaven here, we shall never enter heaven itself hereafter.—*Payson*.

There are two words which should take up much of our thoughts and cares—*time* and *eternity*; time, because it will soon come to an end; and eternity, because it will never come to an end.—*Erskine*.

What are the threatenings of the divine law, but the warnings of divine love? They are a fence thrown round the pit of perdition to prevent rash men from running into ruin.—*Watts*.

TORONTO ASSOCIATION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON OBITUARIES.

The Committee on Obituaries has not noticed in the letters of the churches particular allusion to the death of any individual, except in a single instance. The Yorkville church deploras the death of its beloved deacon, DAVID BUCHAN.

To this revered brother, more than to any one else, belong the honor and the responsibility of organizing this Association. It was on his motion that the churches composing it separated from the East Ontario Association, to form a more perfect union, and more effectually to cultivate their own territory. He was present at every previous meeting, and thoroughly interested in all our movements. In him we miss to-day, one whose intelligence, integrity, piety, fervor, and staunch adherence to our principles gave him, what he did not seek, a foremost position of influence among his brethren.

At the time of his death in October last, the Baptist Convention of Ontario, of which he was President, was in session. On the threshold of his own home, as he was passing out to the evening meeting, he was smitten by death. When summoned, he was at his post. He died in his armour. There was scarcely an interval between his own hearty, ringing words of good cheer to his brethren, and the Master's, "Well done, good and faithful servant." His family and his church have had the profoundest sympathies of the denomination; and while in common we mourn the loss of a wise counsellor, an energetic worker, and a bountiful giver, we also have a sacred pleasure in recalling the example and good name of one who lived to brighten and bless his generation. While the suddenness of his departure was least regretted by himself, it is an admission from the throne that our own change may come "in the twinkling of an eye." Like David Buchan, may we find,

"How pleasant are thy paths, O Death! Straight to our Father's Home! All loss were gain that gained us this, The sign of God, that single bliss, Of the grand world to come."

"How pleasant are thy paths, O Death! Ever from toil to rest— Where a ston of such splendour runs, Where the days bury their golden suns, In the dear hopeful West!"

(Signed), JNO. H. CASTLE, A. T. McCORD, H. F. GRIFFIN. Collingwood, 12th June, 1878.

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