

"The Committee felt that, to supplement the most inadequate grant given by them, which is the utmost their funds will allow, not a few of the members of our Church, if invited, would gladly give special subscriptions; and they authorized us to issue this short note asking for such.

"I trust you will recognize that the case we present to you is really a clear and clamant one."

Subscriptions will be received by Rev. R. G. Balfour and Rev. J. G. Mackintosh, offices of the Free Church of Scotland, or by the Treasurer of the Church.

ADDRESS TO THE REV. DR. BAIN.

On Monday, the 11th inst., the Rev. Dr. Bain, of Perth, was presented with the following address:

To the Rev. Dr. Bain, Minister of St Andrew's Church.

We, the members and adherents of your congregation, regret that, after a long life of useful service amongst us, you should feel yourself forced to retire from the active duties of the ministry among us, under circumstances, over which, as it seemed to us, we had no control.

As it has been decided at a meeting of the congregation by a small majority that it was for the interest of the Presbyterian Church in its present unhappy circumstances in this place, that you should be allowed to make a sacrifice of yourself, we earnestly hope that the object for which you have done this may be accomplished.

As members of your congregation, we feel that we would be remiss in our duty to you if we allowed this opportunity to pass without expressing our heartfelt sympathy and affection for you and your family.

Although you are retiring from being our minister, we have confidence that your usefulness as a minister of Christ will not cease, but that your Master, in the new stage of life which is before you, will yet present to you work in His vineyard.

From our knowledge and experience of your past life among us we have every reason to believe, that, in whatever sphere in life Providence may see fit to place you, you will always be found engaged in your Master's work.

And now, dear pastor, remember that you have still a warm place in our hearts, and it is our earnest wish that these feelings may ever be kept fresh by your frequent coming in and out among us.

Signed by

SAMUEL WILSON,
DUNCAN MCNEE,
DONALD MCPHAIL,
JOHN JAMIESON,
Elders.

And seventy-three other communicants in the Church, and several adherents.

REPLY.

I have received your kind and affectionate address with much gratification, although it has assured me only of that of which, for many years, I have had no doubt, viz.: your regard and affection for me as your minister, and your kindly wishes for my family.

With the repeated assurances given us of the large number from Knox Church prepared to unite with our congregation, in the event of satisfactory arrangements being made for my retirement; with my own feelings repeatedly and honestly expressed to you that I considered that, in the very peculiar circumstances, in which, in the Providence of God, we find ourselves at present placed, it would be in the interests of the Church that I should retire, if a cordial union could thereby be secured, and friendly co-operation thereafter be likely to follow; and, especially, with the perplexing and difficult question, as I submitted it to you at your meeting, which I told you, first you, and then the Presbytery had to consider, viz.: "Is it, or is it not expedient, in the interests of the Presbyterian Church, in its present circumstances in this place, that I should retire?" I was not surprised nor disappointed that the desires and hopes which led me, in these circumstances, conditionally, to tender my resignation, should have led you to offer no objections to the Presbytery's acceptance of it. Indeed, I was prepared to hear that you had, not by a small majority, but unanimously, acquiesced in my resignation.

I was, however, both surprised and pained to learn that the resolution suggested by one of the members of the Presbytery's Commission—to accept my resignation with an expression of kindly regard and good wishes for me so long your pastor—had been opposed even by one person connected with the congregation, and that the cold, unkind, business-like resolution, put in its place, should have been silently adopted.

I understood, however, and I appreciated the feelings which caused you to refrain from opposing this unkind, or, at least, inconsiderate resolution, and my confidence in possessing your regard and affection was not in the least shaken. In this confidence, your address shews that I did not err.

As expressive of my feelings towards you, I can only add what I stated in my answer on the occasion of my presentation so kindly made to me, by many in the congregation, in September last, viz.:—"My pastoral relation to you as a congregation may change" (and it has now changed), "but my interest in your welfare, temporal and eternal, shall never cease or be abated. I have strong affection for many of you, as personal friends and as my brethren and children in the Lord; and I have towards every family and individual now connected with the congregation, or who has been connected with it, feelings only of kindness and of strong desire for their welfare, in all their highest interests, in time and through eternity."

At Almonte, and within St. John's Church there, the twelfth day of April, one thousand eight hundred

and eighty-one, which day and place the Presbytery of Lanark and Renfrew being met and constituted.

Inter alia, the committee appointed to draft a minute anent the retirement of Dr. Bain from the active pastorate of St. Andrew's Church, Perth, gave in their report, which, on motion duly made and seconded, was received and adopted, and ordered to be entered on the Records of the Presbytery, and a copy of the same sent to Dr. Bain, by the Clerk.

The minute is in terms following, viz.:

In accepting the demission of the Reverend William Bain, M.A., D.D., who has been the incumbent of St. Andrew's Church, Perth, for more than thirty-five years, the Presbytery hereby, in accordance with a resolution to that effect, record the estimation in which he has been held in the surrounding district by all classes of the community, and especially by the sections of the Christian Church with which he has in any way been connected. Dr. Bain was highly respected by the general public. While his genial qualities endeared him to his friends, they could not fail to have more or less influence on all with whom he had intercourse.

In the Church of which he was an office bearer, his services were eminently useful. He was characterized by consistency and prudence, and he was found to be a sincere friend and a wise counsellor. In transacting ecclesiastical business, his counsels were of great value, and the Christian spirit in which they were tendered gave weight to his sentiments, and frequently procured their adoption. The deference which was always paid to his opinion was deservedly great. In his retirement, therefore, from the duties of the active pastorate within the bounds, his brethren feel very sensibly that they have sustained a great loss.

Previous to the union of the Presbyterian Churches in the Dominion of Canada, Dr. Bain officiated for many years as Presbytery Clerk, and discharged the duties of that responsible position with credit to himself, and advantage to all concerned.

In the exercises of the pulpit, Dr. Bain delighted. His heart was in his work. Those, therefore, who enjoyed his ministrations must have been convinced that he was thoroughly in earnest, and there is every reason to believe that his public addresses were blessed to many. One pleasing and tangible fruit of his labours, has been the liberality of not a few of the members of St. Andrew's congregation to the schemes of the Church and other benevolent objects. As a pastor, he was ever ready not only to attend to the calls of his own people, but also to give to others advice and consolation, in seasons of affliction. And there are not wanting testimonies to the good results of such professional visits. He has been a conscientious advocate of temperance, exemplifying in his practice what he recommended to others.

Dr. Bain took a deep interest in the spiritual welfare of the young. Long before Sabbath schools were considered to be of intrinsic importance in the dissemination of divine truth an institution of this kind was in operation in his congregation, which was numerously attended, and successfully conducted. At the same time, he was far from being indifferent to the claims of secular education. His views relative to this were well-known, and duly appreciated. Accordingly, he was appointed from time to time to discharge the duties of a grammar school trustee, an examiner of candidates for the office of common school teacher, and a trustee of Queen's University.

Dr. Bain obtained various marks of honourable distinction. At the end of his academic course he took the degree of Master of Arts. As a tribute of respect, he was on two occasions unanimously elected Moderator of Synod. In recognition of his merits as a clergyman, the Senate of Queen's University conferred on him the degree of Doctor in Divinity.

The members of the Presbytery, therefore, in releasing Dr. Bain from the charge the duties of which he has so long performed with faithfulness and efficiency cordially and unitedly desire that the great Head of the Church may bestow on their beloved brother, and on all the members of his family, every needed blessing, and wish him success in any sphere of usefulness in which in the course of Providence he may see it to be his duty to engage.

Extracted from the Records of the Presbytery.
(Signed) JOHN CROMBIE, Clerk.

SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XIX.

May 8, } THE PRODIGAL SON. { Luke xv. 11-24.
1881. }

GOLDEN TEXT.—"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee."—Luke xv. 18.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke xv. 11-24. The Prodigal Son.
Tu. Luke xv. 25-32. The Elder Son.
W. Isa lxxiii. 7-16. God our Father.
Th. Psalm ciii. 1-22. The Pitying Father.
F. Eph. ii. 1-22. The Far-off made Nigh.
S. Psalm xl. 1-17. The Helper of the Needy.
Sab. Jer. xxxi. 9-21. A Returning Son.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The text of our present lesson follows closely upon that of our last, being part of the same discourse. The parable of the lost sheep and that of the lost piece of money clearly bring out the love of God to sinners, but that same saving love, together with its reactionary effects on the human soul, are still more vividly portrayed in what has been well called "the pearl of parables"—that of the prodigal son.

The lesson may be divided as follows: (1) *The Prodigal's*

Sin, (2) *The Prodigal's Misery*, (3) *The Prodigal's Repentance*, (4) *The Prodigal's Return and Reception*.

I. THE PRODIGAL'S SIN.—Vers. 11-13. This young man's affections were estranged from his father. In a cool and business-like manner, employing a legal term, he asks for his patrimony in advance, in order that, freed from the restraints of a well-regulated home, he may gratify his evil inclinations.

He took his journey into a far country. The father in the parable is human as well as the son, but in the application of the parable the father is divine, and the son is, not a mere individual, but man in his lost state by nature—far away from God, living to himself and, in his over-reaching self-love, ruining that which he prizes most. This estrangement from God is the "head and front" of man's "offending." As long as he forgets God—as long as the love of God finds no place in his heart—he is in the condition of the prodigal.

II. THE PRODIGAL'S MISERY.—Vers. 14-16. Man has not within himself sufficient resources to provide for his happiness, nor is an adequate supply to be found in all that the outer world can give. The fall left a vacancy in the human heart which God alone can fill. He who proposes to find his happiness in himself, and in his material surroundings, will very soon find himself in the condition of the prodigal—when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

The poor prodigal went away in order that he might be his own master, and he soon found himself in bondage. Every man has a master of some sort; we cannot serve God and mammon, but we must serve either the one or the other. Some interpreters have, in the swine which the prodigal fed, found those herds of filthy lusts and passions which the sinner, in his lower stages, pampers while his soul is starving.

III. THE PRODIGAL'S REPENTANCE.—Vers. 17-19. "Repentance unto life is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience." Of course the repentance in the parable is not "repentance unto life," it is only the turning of an erring son towards his earthly father; but it is at the same time a vivid picture of the "repentance which needeth not to be repented of"—the conviction and conversion of the sinner.

The prodigal came to himself, that is, regained his proper, rational state of mind; so does the sinner when convinced of his sinful and lost condition. Worldlings often suppose the awakened sinner to be insane. It is not so; he is only coming to his senses; it is the worldling that is insane. The prodigal thought, and thought to some purpose; he realized his own perishing condition, and the rich profusion of his father's house; and are not these the very truths revealed to the awakened sinner by the Word and Spirit of God?

IV. THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN AND RECEPTION.—Vers. 20-24. Good resolutions are such only in so far as they are carried out. The immediate action of the prodigal is the point of the parable. And he arose and came to his father—if that had been left out, what would all the rest have been good for? But what was he going to say to his father when he got back to him? That was all arranged; he had his speech prepared, and over-prepared, beforehand; he had resolved upon a full confession as to the past, and unquestioning submission and obedience as to the future. He had even in his own mind given up all claims to sonship, and the speech which he had prepared in view of the meeting with his father included an offer of menial service; but the words, make me as one of thy hired servants, are not to be found in the speech which he actually delivered when the time came; in the face of the love and joy manifested at his return he could not use these words; the filial instinct—long dead, but brought back to life again by the quickening love of the father—was too strong for that.

The difficulty in connection with this parable is in the question, Who is represented by the elder son? Dr. Kendrick's answer, quoted last week, to the question, Who are the ninety-nine sheep that did not go astray and the nine pieces of money that were not lost, furnishes a sufficient explanation. The "S.S. Times" repeats it in connection with the present lesson, in slightly varied language, as follows: "The ninety-nine sheep that had not strayed, the nine drachmas that had not been lost, the son that had never left his father's roof and service, nor transgressed his commands, all answer to each other. They are not the self-righteous, nor the legally, but still imperfectly, righteous of the Jewish nation. They are the genuinely, truly, perfectly righteous—providing such there be—supposed by the Saviour as a background against which to set the divine compassion towards sinners. If the Pharisees, who murmur against the Lord for His condescending grace towards sinners, are really the righteous persons whom they suppose themselves, then they must recognize with thankfulness, instead of complaint, this feature in God's government, that shews mercy to the unworthy, that sent Jesus to call not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. If they are not the righteous ones that they fancy themselves, the principle is none the less true, and it is a question on which the Lord has here no occasion to pronounce. The one point here illustrated is that compassionate love which seeks and saves the unworthy, and welcomes the return of the prodigal with more lavish demonstrations of joy than had been called forth by long-continued and unfeigned obedience. The transient murmuring of the elder and faithful son is, as a feature of the parable, true to the life, and is felicitously introduced in order to give the father an opportunity of bringing out with more fulness and force the occasion of rejoicing furnished by the return of the lost one."

MORE than one-fourth part of the income of the Basle mission, which now sustains 115 missionaries in India, Africa and China, and which has already gathered 13,245 church members, is derived from a system of penny collections. There are now about 120,000 persons who contribute a penny a week to this society.