

The Presbytery would not overlook the fact that while you have had many of the comforts of life, and much to encourage you in your ministerial labours, you have not been without your cares and troubles and afflictions; but they would bear witness to the spirit of meekness and resignation with which you have been enabled to bear them, and they would trace the abundance of the grace of God toward you in the cheerfulness you have maintained and exemplified under them all.

Verily you can say that God has been your refuge and your strength, and a very present help in trouble.

For some years you have been laid aside, in the all-wise Providence of God, from the cares and labours of a stated pastoral charge. Yet your lot is still in "midst of those to whom at one time you ministered both in the pulpit and elsewhere, and who have a place in your Christian affection and interest from the official relationship, to them which you sustained. But the Lord of the vineyard has not laid you aside from all work in His vineyard. He is still giving you many opportunities of declaring His Gospel and to show His work and power to those who come after. The prayer of your brethren is that you may have not a few years of this service, that all your labours may be blessed to others and to yourself, and that at last the voice of the King and Judge may be heard saying to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Your brethren must not close without expressing their sincere interest in the welfare of Mrs. Duff, and that of your children, who, having grown up amid the privileges and influences of a minister's household, have gone forth to the portion which the Sovereign Disposer has provided for them. May His blessing rest upon them in all their relations and engagements. May peace and prosperity be their heritage below. May their end, and yours, be life everlasting.

In name and on behalf of the Presbytery of Guelph,  
HUGH ROSS, M.A., Moderator,  
ROBERT TORRANCE, D.D., Clerk.

Elora, 10th August, 1886.

At the close of the address Dr. Torrance stated that through the kindness and liberality of Mr. Duff's friends, not only in Elora but elsewhere, he was to place in his hands a bank deposit book, in which there was entered to his credit \$250; that since coming to the meeting he had received additional sums. (Other sums were handed in, so that the whole soon amounted to \$274.75.)

Mr. Duff gave a feeling reply to the address, during which there were not a few moist eyes in the meeting, and a large congregation which had assembled to witness this part of the service showed the high esteem cherished, especially among the people of his former charge, towards him. Addresses were then given by Mr. John Davidson, of Alma, Mr. R. J. Beattie and Mr. Charles Davidson, of Guelph; Mr. Mullan, of Fergus, and Mr. James Anderson, of Puslinch, who knew Mr. Duff, and had heard him preach in Scotland. All the speakers bore testimony of their personal regard for Mr. Duff, and the high name he bore as a preacher of the Gospel and for Christian character, and those who had taken an active part in getting up the testimonial spoke of the kind and cordial manner in which they were received by all to whom they applied. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mrs. Rose for her gratuitous services in illuminating the address, which was examined and admired by a large number of those present.

The occasion was felt to be a deeply solemn and interesting one, an excellent spirit pervading the meeting. It must have done good to the heart of Mr. Duff to see so many present, and to hear the good and comforting words of the speakers.

**DISTRIBUTION OF PROBATIONERS.**

The General Assembly's Committee on Supply and Distribution held its first meeting in Hamilton, on August 5. All the members were present with the exception of two.

It was stated by the Secretary that, in reply to the circular which had been issued some time previously, only three Presbyteries reported vacancies. In the Presbytery of Barrie there was one, but arrangements had been made for supplying it till the end of September. In that of Hamilton there were eleven, but only one of these, Drummondville and Chippewa, was prepared to call or ready to receive supply through the committee. In that of Maitland there was also one, Lucknow, which was looking for the best supply possible, and in Gaelic, if possible. Some other Presbyteries stated that no action had been taken as to the vacant congregations in their bounds, and from a number, even of those in the Province of Ontario, there was no report; and there was none from any Presbytery outside of that Province.

On the other hand the names were sent in, through Presbyteries, of eighteen ministers or licentiates, who were awaiting appointments, so that, as must be evident, the committee had to leave the majority unprovided for.

Messrs. McGuire and McColl were sent to the Presbytery of Hamilton; Messrs. Sinclair, M. McKenzie and A. T. McKenzie, each of whom can preach in Gaelic, to the Presbytery of Maitland—a very limited amount of work for these—and yet leaving twelve to whom no work could be given. The secretary was instructed to keep these names *in retentis* and to let this fact be known, so that he might be able to communicate with them, and send them to any Presbytery from which an application for supply, in any degree, might come. Should the service of any of them be required, he will be ready to inform them.

A list of questions was drawn up to be forwarded to Presbyteries for replies before the beginning of the next quarter.

It was also agreed that as, in so many of the communications that had been received, vacancies were described as not prepared to call, the Secretary respectfully suggest the desirableness of ascertaining the reasons for such a state of things, and of sending in the names of all vacancies, whether prepared or not to call, in accordance with that provision in the scheme as adopted by the Assembly. In reporting their requirements Presbyteries shall state the general circumstances of all the vacancies within their bounds.

Next meeting was appointed to be held on the Oct. 5.

**OBITUARY.**

ALEXANDER CRANSTON.

This old and well-known resident of Galt and Dumfries, who died recently, after a week's illness, was a native of Roxburghshire, Scotland, where he was born on February 1st, 1822, being in his sixty fifth year at the time of his death. In 1831, says the *Dumfries Reformer*, the family emigrated to Canada, and after living at Kingston for some two years, removed to the township of North Dumfries, which was at that time being settled by residents of the Border shires. The family took up the farm now occupied by the only brother of the deceased, Mr. Robert Cranston. In 1845, the subject of this brief obituary was married to Marion, third daughter of the late John Dickie, of Dickie settlement, and immediately afterwards went to live upon the homestead now occupied by his son, Mr. John D. Cranston. After thirty years of successful farming, in 1875 he purchased a residence in Galt, where he resided up till the time of his death.

Mr. Cranston was a man of most exemplary character, and lived the life of a true and consistent Christian. He always took a very active part in church matters, and had been an elder in Knox Church for seventeen or eighteen years. Prior to his removal to Galt, he had filled several public offices in the township, and was held in general esteem by all with whom he came in contact. He was possessed of a good healthy constitution, and never required medical attendance until his last illness.

The deceased leaves a widow and six of a family, his youngest daughter having died in 1880. The surviving members of the family are Mrs. H. Dickenson, of Wood stock; Mrs. D. H. McLean, Richmond; Robert, of San Francisco; John D., North Dumfries; James K. and Alex. B., of Galt. Of the original family, the mother of the deceased, one brother and five sisters survive him, his father having died in 1876. The other members of the family are: Robert Cranston, residing upon the old homestead, Cedar Creek; Mrs. John Veitch, Mrs. W. Amos, Mrs. James Kersal, Galt; Mrs. Thomas Kerr, Cedar Creek, and Mrs. Thos. Hunter, Beverley.

**Sabbath School Teacher.**

**INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.**

BY REV. R. P. MACKAY, M.A.

AUG. 29, 1886. { JESUS COMFORTING HIS DISCIPLES. } John 14: 1-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me."—John xiv. 1.

**INTRODUCTORY.**

These chapters, xiv-xvii, are worthy of the most attentive study. They have been called the holy of holies of the history of Christ. After the Lord's supper had been instituted, and Judas had left the company, Jesus drew their attention to the glory of the cross—how by it, God was glorified in Him, and He, as a reward, was to be lifted up into the life of God. Although they were yet but as children and unable to follow Him, they were to seek, and live in mutual love, and by-and-by they would be able to go and be with Him. Peter thought he was then able to follow, and able to lay down his life for his Master. He was humbled by the prediction of a denial, of which he was afterwards (chap. xviii.) guilty. But Peter grew to such strength as to be able to die for his Master.

**EXPLANATORY.**

This is an answer to Peter's question, "Whither goest Thou? (Chap. xiii. 36.) The thought that he was going to leave them was the great trouble. Although only Peter spoke his determination to follow, even unto death, they all felt pained, and entertained the same purpose. It is as an antidote to this great trouble, and to all the coming trials and sorrows of their lives, and of the lives of all future disciples, that He spoke these comforting words. How often they have brought peace to His afflicted children!

I. Faith and its Object. (Verse 1.)—Faith and trouble are the opposites of each other. The cure for a troubled heart is faith in a living and infallible God. If no shadow of doubt entered our minds on that point, we would rejoice instead of being troubled.

In God . . . in Me.—The one implies the other. A right belief in God, as a covenant God, to whom we can look for mercy, is only through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, a right belief in Jesus Christ includes a belief in God—for He and the Father are one, so that the two are not only inseparable, but mutually helpful. The more faith we have in the one, the more in the other. That—if the following verses had not been spoken—is cure for all trouble if obeyed. To all their perplexing thoughts about His departure, and Judas' betrayal, and Peter's denial, He says: "Leave it all in Our hands, trust Us. Although it is full of mystery to you, to Us the future is not doubtful." "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

II. Encouragement to Faith.—It is strange, but sadly true, that we are not willing to trust God and walk by faith, believing that when the time comes the darkness will flee away, and we shall see the unspeakable things He has been preparing for us. In order to help our faith, He gave these hints about the future.

(1) Many Mansions.—The leading thought in the word "mansion" is that it is an "abiding place," from the Greek word "to abide." How different from our homes here! They are soon broken up. It is a perpetual change. There will be no painful partings when we enter upon our home above. And there is room for all—many mansions. We may spread the proclamation all the world around. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "They will come from the east and west and north and south

and sit down with Abraham," etc. The word "many" may also convey the thought that there will be adaptation of place and enjoyment to the various wants of its inhabitants. The cup of happiness of each will be full, but not all of the same kind.

(2) If not so, I would have told you.—There were good reasons why He should have told them, if there were not such accommodation in Heaven. He had often spoken to them about the future. He had sought and won their affections, and if the present separation were forever, they might have regarded Him as a deceiver. He would not and cannot deceive any that give Him their confidence and love.

(3) I go to prepare a place.—It is the Father's home, and none can enter there who are not admitted by the Father and Son. Jesus by His atoning blood purchased the right of introducing His ransomed ones into these mansions.

(4) I will come again, etc.—His coming for his disciples will include all the drawing influences of Christ, by which they are prepared and brought home to be forever with Himself. His resurrection, Pentecost, His second coming and final judgment, are all parts of this mighty influence by which the elect are to be gathered into His presence forever.

(5) The way, etc. (Verse 6.)—Now, He says, in an encouraging way—as if to impart His own confidence—"you know whither I go and the way ye know," and will not be troubled about my departure. To Thomas there was dimness, and uncertainty, and consequently, trouble. He therefore said, "We know not whither, and if we know not whither, how can we know the way?"

Jesus replied that it was not a way that could be sketched in a map, that could be traced with the bodily eye, but that every one who was in living union by faith with Him was already in the way, and would eventually come to the Father's home and be with Him. I am the way.

The truth.—Jesus is the revelation of Deity. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3), and because He is the truth, He is the true way. How many other ways in which men walk, hoping to reach heaven that are not true!

The life.—He is the source of all life. From Him came all life natural, intellectual and spiritual. Hence the way is not only a true way, but also a living way—which is and will end in eternal life—other ways lead to death.

The Father, (Verse 6.)—This is interchanged with mansions. They would not be mansions of blessedness if God were not there. Happiness in this world and the next consists in knowing God. 17:3. Heaven is both a place and a state.

No man will reach the Father in any other way, but all who walk in this way will be blessed.

(6) Unity of Father and Son, (verse 7-11).—Much of the perplexity of the disciples arose from their inability to understand the nature of the Trinity. Jesus was down here with them, and the Father, they thought of as up in heaven. How then did He so frequently speak of Himself and the Father as one? He here (verse 7) repeats the great truth that if they had known Him, they would have known the Father also, for the Father can only be known as revealed by the Son, either in this life or in the next. 1 Tim. 6:16.

Phillip, still misunderstanding, thought, like Moses, of the blessedness of seeing the glory of the Father, and asked that he might be satisfied (verse 8) with such a view. Jesus remonstrates with Phillip for his want of appreciation, "Have you been so long with me, hearing my words, and seeing my works, and yet have not recognized that I am God? And there is only one God; therefore I am in the Father and the Father in Me—but, if you do not accept my testimony, believe it, because of My words and works, which are not by Me but by Him. Having seen Me, you have seen My Father also."

III. The power of Faith. (Verse 12.)—Great and marvellous as these works done by Jesus were, He promised to His believing disciples that they will do greater. The superiority is to be, not in the quality of the work, but in the quantity. The disciples never wrought a miracle greater than the raising of Lazarus from the dead; but it is probable that there were more converts on the Day of Pentecost alone than during the whole ministry of Christ. It was because He ascended to the Father, and sent forth the Holy Spirit, whose work it is to convert men by taking of the things of Christ and revealing them to the soul.

IV. Prayer the instrument of Faith. (Verses 13, 14.)—Where there is faith in God, there is prayer to God. If no prayer ascends, it is proof that there is no faith. They might be almost said to mean—the same thing. A believing dependence is an asking. Asking without believing is not prayer.

In My name.—In going to God, we mention His name as having sent us, and God always honours the reference. It may indicate the more intimate connection between us and Christ. By taking His name, we go in His person, as members of His body, in His place, as if it were Himself.

Elsewhere, the conditions of prayer are taught, such as that, we ask for things in accordance with His will, and the interests of His kingdom.

What a responsibility to have such a power placed in our hands! It will be well for them who use it.

**PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.**

1. There is a remedy for all trouble.
2. The heroism of Christ who spoke so cheerfully on the evening of Gethsemane?
3. What do we know about heaven?
4. What shall we know about God the Father?
5. How can we exercise greatest power in the world?

The number of Japanese in the Mikado's empire professing the Protestant faith is now 12,602, showing an increase during the past year of 2,706. The total number of churches is 151.

The sum of \$710 was realized at the St. Boswell's district annual bazaar for zenana missions. Hon. Major Baillie presided at the opening, and Mr. Clement Scott, missionary, South Africa, delivered a brief address.