

approval of the Presbytery. It was agreed to remit the same to a committee consisting of Hon. Justice Taylor, Dr. Bryce and Rev. A. McLaren; and the said committee was instructed to report at the next meeting of Presbytery. A letter from Dr. Middlemiss, anent the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund was read, and the Clerk was instructed to assure him that the Presbytery would use all diligence to secure increased contributions to this fund. The Clerk was further instructed to notify congregations that the General Assembly requires them to make their year correspond with the calendar year, and at the same time to inform them that their reports this year will need to be for the full term of twelve months, ending 31st December next. Hon. Justice Taylor, Professor Hart and the Moderator were appointed a committee to draft a minute for the adoption of the Presbytery, expressing the feelings of the court anent the death of Mrs. King, and to submit the same to the next meeting of Presbytery. Mr. Bryden was appointed interim Moderator of the Session of Knox Church, Rat Portage. The Superintendent gave notice that he would submit at the next regular meeting a motion as to the appointment of missionaries for definite periods. The Moderator brought the state of the funds for the maintenance of the theological department of Manitoba College before the Presbytery. The following committee was appointed to bring the requirements of the department before the congregations, viz.: Hon. Justice Taylor, Convener, Messrs. Gordon, Pitblado, Quinn, McFarlane and McLaren, ministers, and Messrs. C. H. Campbell, D. McArthur (Emerson), P. R. Young, A. H. Coubrough, R. McBeth and Dr. Smallee, elders. The Presbytery then adjourned to meet in the same place, on the first Tuesday of December, at half-past seven p.m.—D. B. WHIMSTER, Pres. Clerk.

MISSIONS IN THE NORTH-WEST.

The following statements from the report of the Superintendent of Missions in the North-West will be read with interest. The crop in Manitoba was about two-thirds of an average, while in Assiniboia it was not so good. At Edmonton and along the base of the Rocky Mountains the crop was everywhere good. No damage was suffered through frost, all grain being harvested long before the frost came. The quality of the grain is everywhere good, although the yield may be short and the price low.

The brighter outlook has encouraged congregations, and the prospects are that six or seven of the mission fields will at once take steps to call ministers of their own. The work of organization has been carried on as widely as circumstances are favourable. A good deal of new ground was occupied, and now there are eleven self-sustaining congregations, eighteen augmented congregations and seventy-three mission fields. This of course does not include any of the Indian missions. A good deal of attention is being paid to the organization of Sabbath schools. In a country where family religion is not too prevalent the Church must see to the religious education of the young.

CHURCHES BUILT.

There were seventeen churches and one manse built at an estimated cost of \$32,000. Of these, five are stone, one brick and eleven frame. A number of other congregations are preparing to build in spring. The Church and Manse Building Fund has been drawn on for the great majority of these churches.

The report congratulates the Church on the ability and adaptability of men occupying important outposts like Battleford, Edmonton, Calgary, High River, McLeod and Lethbridge, and expresses regret at the withdrawal of Mr. McWilliam from Prince Albert. All the fields were occupied during the summer and gratifying progress is reported. Communion rolls have been considerably augmented, and many of the accessions have been on profession of faith.

Some anxiety is expressed about the supply of mission fields this winter. For the 102 fields offered during the summer not more than seventy-five ministers and missionaries are available, and silent Sabbaths mean numerical and spiritual loss. Will not men of missionary zeal volunteer for this work?

The Superintendent travelled during the summer 1,450 miles by buckboard and 5,650 by rail (not including distances travelled in attendance on Church courts), and preached and gave addresses on 175 occasions.

The report is cheerful in tone, but earnestly prays for at least a score of the right kind of men to occupy the vacant mission fields.

It is mentioned incidentally that of the ninety-four churches and twenty-one manses belonging to our white population no fewer than seventy-seven of the churches and nineteen of the manses were built during the last five years. The total value of church property in the Synod east of the Rocky Mountains is computed to be about \$300,000, while in 1871 it was below \$14,000.

OBITUARY.

THE LATE MRS. KING, OF WINNIPEG.

The memory of Mrs. King will always be cherished by those who knew her, and especially by those who enjoyed her friendship. Admiration and affection will be united in all their remembrance of her.

It is well known with what ability and success she, in connection with her excellent sister, the late Miss Skinner, conducted a school for young ladies. As an educationist she had, in her own province, no superior; and while she displayed the highest ability both in teaching and organization, a decided and entirely healthful Christian spirit pervaded all the work and arrangements of her school. The amount of good there accomplished was certainly very great, and her memory will be revered and loved by all who were her pupils.

Those who knew the history of this school will delight to associate the names of the Misses Skinner, with that of another admirable lady, the late Mrs. Burns, who founded

the seminary, as they will rejoice that its educational and religious character are still worthily maintained.

As a minister's wife, Mrs. King was a model of kindness, prudence and constant—though noiseless—activity in good works. In the Sabbath school her high qualifications as a teacher, in union with an earnest spiritual aim, drew her classes very near to her, and gave her great power over them for good. But her influence was felt beyond the circle of her husband's congregation; for in all that was done by the Presbyterian ladies of Toronto, in the cause of Foreign Missions, Mrs. King, while she always sought to avoid undue prominence, was necessarily a leader. Her sound judgment, energy and courage, united as they were to great kindness and gentleness, made her a most valuable office-bearer of the Ladies' Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church.

It was well known before Mrs. King's removal from Toronto that the state of her health was critical; but her friends entertained the strongest hopes that she might be spared for many years. But after several months of confinement to her chamber, during which, as all who saw her testify, the beauty of her character shone out with remarkable lustre, the Master whom she loved and served, and whose presence had been her joy and strength, called her away to her home and rest.

Many will join in the prayer that such a life may become a pattern and a stimulus; and that the "God of all comfort" may comfort and sustain in arduous labours him upon whom the stroke of bereavement especially falls, as well as the little ones by his side. W. C.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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

Nov. 7, } **THOMAS CONVINCED.** { John 20:
1886. } 19-31.
GOLDEN TEXT.—"And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God."—John xx. 28.

INTRODUCTORY.

There are recorded eleven appearances of our Lord during the forty days He was upon earth, after His resurrection.

No doubt there were other appearances not recorded. John says (chap. xx. 30) that He wrought many signs in the presence of the disciples, not written in the Gospels. Enough is given to teach us to believe in Him as the Christ.

That Sunday, on which He rose, He devoted to His disciples. Their faith had received a great shock—their hopes were well nigh gone. In order to rally them He appeared to the women returning from the sepulchre, to Peter, to two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and then to the ten assembled with closed doors. Before the day was over the disciples were lifted into a confident assurance and joy hitherto unknown.

EXPLANATORY.

I. First Appearance to the Apostles Assembled. (Verses 19-23.)

(1) *Place.*—They were perhaps assembled in the same room in which He instituted the Supper, and spoke the farewell address. They had the doors closed for fear of the Jews. It might have been expected that after the priests got rid of the Master they would endeavour to exterminate His disciples.

They were in fear assembled and in perplexity discussing the strange reports that came to their ears about His resurrection. Mary and the other women, Peter and the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus gave their testimony. And then the wonderful story of the soldiers who saw the angel that rolled the stone away leaked out, notwithstanding the bribes given to keep silence.

(2) *Jesus stood in the midst.*—He thus showed them that He lived bodily, but with a body different in some respects from what He formerly had. The appearance in this way was miraculous, but similar to all His appearances during the forty days. He did not stay with them as formerly—but came and went as if to teach them that although He was not always visible, yet He was always at hand. They were thus prepared for His ascension.

(3) *Peace be unto you.*—This is His salvation. It linked the present with the past (chap. xiv. 27). He was the same Saviour still. The word peace includes a completed salvation. It is intended to mean forgiveness of sins, forgiveness of their unfaithfulness to Him since they had parted in the garden, and to take away fear of the Jews. What a word! So does Jesus quiet the troubled soul, when the door is thrown open for Him.

"Oh Lord, how gracious is Thy way,
All fear before Thy presence flies,
Care, anguish, sorrows, pass away,
Where'er Thy healing beams arise."

(4) *Evidences of a real resurrection of the body.*—The disciples were afraid, thinking Him to be a spirit. In order to convince them He showed them the prints of the nails in His hands and feet (Luke xxiv. 39), and the wound in His side. He then asked them to handle Him, and see that He had a real body—flesh and bones. And in order to make the matter still more certain He asked for food and ate a piece of broiled fish and of an honeycomb before them. Thus they were assured that He was the Crucified, risen from the grave and were filled with joy.

These wounds were not only an evidence to the senses, but they were tokens of that peace that He imparted to them. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him." It is through the sacrificial wounds that salvation is provided. No Saviour without wounds.

(5) *Peace be unto you: as My Father . . . so send I you.* (Verse 21.)—The former "Peace be unto you" was the salutation, this is the farewell. He emphasizes it, that

it may be established. Let us especially notice its connection with their commission. "I send you as messengers of peace, because ye are the possessors of peace." We are not fit to teach others what we have not got ourselves, but having the light ourselves we are bound to give it to others.

In the comparison drawn between Himself and the disciples notice four points. (1) He is a Sender as well as the Father. (2) He had revealed the Father who sent Him. They were to reveal Him who sent them. (3) As He lived a life of self-sacrifice, so were they to deny themselves and take up the cross, to live and do and suffer as He did. (4) He had the Holy Spirit, and so had they.

(6) *He breathed on them, etc.* (Verse 22.)—This might be taken as another sensible evidence that He was not a spirit. But it is principally to be considered as qualifying them for the commission. They were to go out as messengers of peace. This gives the power by which to go. It consecrates them to the work. At the creation, God breathed on man and made him a living creature. Now Christ breathes, and imparts the new life needed for their service.

That act taught that His glorified humanity was the source of divine energy for them, and suggested that ever afterward the word that proceedeth out of His mouth is to be the medium of the Spirit.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost.—In chap. xvi. 7, it was said that the Spirit could not be given until ascension. Hence many regard this as a promise simply—that His breathing was a symbol of that mighty rushing wind that came upon them at Pentecost. But whilst that is true, it may also be taken as a pledge and a preparation for what was to come. Before God can bestow great gifts the heart must be prepared to receive them.

(7) *Whosoever sins ye remit, etc.* (Verse 13.)—This is easily understood when connected with what preceded. Its abuse arises from losing sight of that connection. Jesus says that they who have this peace, and this Spirit shall be able to preach the truth and so to interpret men's spirits as to be able to declare whether they are in the faith or not.

The abuse of this has been in thinking that the power of absolution is given to a class of men, who can exercise it independently of all gracious influences upon their own hearts.

II. Second Appearance to the Disciples. (Verses 24-29.)—Of Thomas not very much is known. He was absent from the first meeting—probably through doubt and despondency. He loved his Master so that he had been willing to die with Him (John xi. 16), but being of that disposition that looks on the dark side of things, and is difficult to persuade into belief, he is more discouraged than the others.

Except I shall see in His hands, etc. (Verse 25.)—The other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, had handled Him, but Thomas held out against their combined testimony. He said he would not believe unless he saw and handled for himself. In this there is self-will. He had no just ground on which to question the testimony of the ten.

To the disciples it must have been discouraging to meet this obstinate unbelief. Would they find such difficulty in persuading men when they went out to preach the Resurrection to the world?

After eight days . . . Thomas was with them, etc. (Verse 26.)—Thomas was in so far influenced by what he had heard as to be present on the next Sunday evening. And our Lord encouraged such assembling on that day by again manifesting Himself to them as before, with the same salutation, "Peace be unto you."

Be not faithless, but believing. (Verse 27.)—The Lord looked at Thomas, and then in his own words (verse 25) invited him to put his finger into the wounds, etc., adding, "Be not faithless, but believing," i.e., not only believe in this case, but do not cultivate this critical habit of requiring an unreasonable amount of evidence. Be more open to conviction.

My Lord and my God!—We are not told that Thomas did put his finger into the wound. The probability is that at the sight of his Lord the love of Thomas' heart arose into such a tide as to sweep away his rationalistic scepticism, and he threw himself at His feet, exclaiming: "My Lord and my God." O, the preciousness of the pronoun *my*!

Because Thou hast seen Me, etc.—Let it be noted

(1) That He does not say that Thomas and the other disciples were not blessed, because they had seen. Their seeing and testimony of sight is the ground upon which we can believe without sight.

(2) He does not encourage that credulous disposition that will believe without investigating any thing that is offered, in worldly and other affairs.

(3) That after this, the rule is to be that blessedness is to come from faith in that sight. They are to believe because of the evidence of others, but especially because they have that within themselves—that light that can see and discern the true light. That is the most blessed faith—which gives substance to things not seen. In that case sight comes last. It is through faith, to sight. We shall see Him, but not now. In the meantime we have in faith all the blessedness with which the Sermon on the Mount begins, so that John returns at the close of the Gospel to where Matthew began.

Believe and have life. (Verses 30-31.)—More might have been written, John says, but this is enough to convince any honest inquirer that Jesus is the Christ, and to enable him to say "my Lord and my God," and thus be possessor of life eternal.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Jesus appeared to the disciples in the first day of the week—our Sunday.
2. The commission to preach was given on the day of His resurrection. True preaching is resurrecting—awakening the dead.
3. The Holy Ghost qualifies us to preach.
4. Belief should be more of the heart than of the head.
5. Strong faith is great blessedness.