

T H E

Free Presbyterian Magazine

And MONTHLY RECORD.

VOL. I.

JANUARY, 1897.

No. 9.

The New Year.

THE beginning of a New Year is an event that arrests the attention of all classes of society. It is celebrated by young and old in a great variety of ways, many of which, we are sorry to say, are far from commendable. It would seem as if at the very time people should stand still for a moment's reflection on the past and concern for the future, the devil is busily engaged in distracting their attention by numberless diversions suited to the carnal taste of mankind. We, therefore, find that at this season of the year human ingenuity is taxed to its utmost to provide amusements for young and old. Now is the time for theatres, balls, concerts, soirees, and all sorts of foolish entertainments in private and public, and now is the time, it is sad to contemplate, for indulgence, excess, and drunkenness. The departure of the old and the entrance of the New Year must be welcomed, forsooth, in a Christian land, by well-nigh heathen orgies. This is the way in which the greater part of society acknowledge the goodness and mercy that have been shown them in the past by their Creator, Preserver, and bountiful Benefactor. Many may give a lip acknowledgment of their indebtedness to God for past mercies, and we have all reason to fear our acknowledgments are not much better than this, while their whole life and conversation savour nothing of God or of the things of eternity. It becomes us, therefore, to consider how the New Year should be spent, and on this subject we desire to make a few remarks.

The New Year should be spent with reflection on the past. The devil and the flesh do their best to make men forget the past. Our years pass away, and we hasten onwards towards eternity. The great adversary likes men to forget this, and cheers them up with the hope of many days to come. We also naturally shrink from thoughts of a near eternity, and drown such in the interests and pleasures of the moment. It becomes us, however, to consider how long we have lived in this world, and that every year is bringing us nearer and nearer eternity, an eternity either of happiness or of woe. It is our duty, therefore, to reflect upon

our *past sins*. The Word of God and true experience declare that we are transgressors even from the womb. Every year, therefore, adds a new instalment of countless sins to a former too large record. If we are still in an unregenerate condition all these sins are against us in the book of God's remembrance. Strange it is that they who, more than others, should seek for godly sorrow and repentance on a new year's day are the loudest in their shouts of laughter, mirth, and frivolity. On the other hand, if we are among the true seekers after God, then it would be very comely on our part to consider our past sins, and seek the Spirit of God to convince us of their vileness and guilt that, by His grace, we might flee to the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The forgiveness of all our past sins would be a precious gift from heaven on a new year's day. It becomes us, also, to reflect upon our *past mercies*. The mercies of God have been showered upon us from our birth. We have been born in sin, but yet not in hell. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." We have been born in a land where the Bible is to be found, and where the Gospel is preached. Many have had upbringing in Christian families. During the past we have had many privileges which, when contrasted with our deserts as sinners, might make us marvel at the boundless mercy and forbearance of a holy God. Some have tasted in truth that the Lord is gracious, and have got a faith's glimpse of Christ and the glorious redemption He purchased for sinners with His precious blood. Surely such, if any, should recount with adoring wonder and praise past mercies.

The New Year ought to be spent with reflection upon the present and future. What are our present needs? Some are concerned about temporal necessities, and no other. Let these straits be an occasion for approach to a throne of grace, so as to obtain pardon for sin, a new heart, and a saving interest in Christ, who has secured temporal as well as spiritual mercies for His people. It is a leading mark of the true people of God that they cry continually, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." They seek not only forgiveness for past sin, but also a clean heart. They seek after holiness of heart and life. It is by the Spirit's infusion of new grace into the soul time after time that the believer is renewed in holiness and righteousness. The true believer also feels, as a present need, the necessity of a new sight of Christ in His glory and suitableness as a Saviour. It is this that makes the soul happy. It is this that makes the world and its vain pleasures sink out of sight. "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." What should be our reflections for the future? If we are still in our sins we ought to consider that the messenger of death may come at any moment, and if death find

us out of Christ then we shall be cast into never-ending misery. We ought to remember that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The future will bring new privileges and new responsibilities. How shall we meet these in a way glorifying to God if we are without Christ? Get a saving knowledge of Christ and your privileges will prove a blessing, and not a curse, and your responsibilities, while continuing the same, will yet be but a light burden, for Christ is willing to carry the burdens of those who put their trust in Him. Again, if we have reason to believe that we were once brought as poor sinners to the feet of Christ, let us seek for the future that we live more a life of faith upon the Son of God, and strive after greater attainments in the life of grace than anything known in past experience. Verily, it is to be feared in these days that we are like the door upon its hinges, moving to and fro, but making no progress, the same to-day as yesterday, the same year after year. This ought not so to be. An outpouring of the Spirit of God is much needed, and everyone who has the least desire for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom in the souls of men should labour and pray for this issue.

It may be said, in the last place, that the New Year should be spent with reflections upon the state of the public cause of Christ. Scotland in the past has been the scene of "years of the right hand of the Most High," years in which the glory of the Lord shone forth in the conversion of sinners and in the edification of His true people. The Lord was pleased to raise up many noble witnesses for Himself who were the ornament and strength of society. During recent years He has removed the greater number of these fathers and mothers in Israel to the Church triumphant. Truly, the land mourneth and the vine languisheth. Many parts of the country where there were clusters of trees of righteousness are now bare and desolate. The stillness of death reigns where the voice of melody and health was wont to be heard. People talk of advancement in these days! If there is advancement it is largely the advancement of the tide of spiritual death, profanity, and atheism. Dangerous errors in doctrine and practice have flowed into the professing Church to a greater extent than in any previous age. The Word of God, as far as many are concerned, has been torn from their hands and cast in tatters upon the downward stream by the very men who should have esteemed it as the most precious earthly treasure. The prospect for the future is, therefore, truly dark for the generation. Many call light darkness, and darkness light, and so delude themselves to their everlasting shame. It becomes us, at the present season, to mourn this state of things, and to seek for the returning power and presence of Jehovah to our land.

In conclusion, we desire to say that however gross the darkness that prevails, and however strong the tide of error that surges on many hands, let us not forget, in view of another year, that the Lord who sits on high is more of might by far than all the billows of sin and wickedness. He will make all things redound to His own glory. He will not lose one of His elect people. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me," saith Christ. His purposes shall stand fast for ever. Difficulties may arise, and difficulties have arisen that give occasion to enemies even to mock us as a Church, who profess to maintain a pure testimony for Christ. We have reason to mourn for our sins that such an occasion should have existed. But let there not be discouragement. The Lord is able to make darkness light before us and crooked things straight. May He do so to the praise of His glorious grace!

Outlines of Two Sermons

BY LATE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, BRUAN, CAITHNESS.

PREACHED ON 16th AND 23RD FEBRUARY, 1840.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water."—JOHN iv. 10.

WE mentioned on the last occasion two ways of asking knowledge respecting "the gift of God." Christ Jesus. The first way was *to ask at the Word*. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."—(John v. 39.) There is no true light of the Spirit but in and agreeably to the Word. See that it be the Word that is the candle. The second was *at or from the Spirit*. "He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." It is only the Spirit that can make the Word to shine. We need light with the truth in order to "search the deep things of God."

We also endeavoured to show from the Word:—

First. The way in which God gave the gift, that is, "with his whole heart and his whole soul."—(Jer. xxxii. 40, 41.) He gave Him with the full consent of all His attributes. "In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily," all that constitutes God. He gave Him, therefore, with the consent of the following attributes—(1) *His goodness*. "Thou art good." In Christ He makes "all his goodness pass before us." "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."—(Eph. ii. 7.) The whole cabinet of His goodness is opened in Him; and alas! that we cannot see it. (2) *His love*. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son."—(John iii. 16.) In Him "God is

love," and to those who receive Him nothing but love. Where will you find a God of love? In Christ. (3) *His mercy*. In Him are "the sure mercies of David." The psalmist speaks of Him as "the God of my mercy." (4) *His wisdom*. He is "the wisdom of God." In His person, work and offices as mediator, He is the result of infinite wisdom and knowledge how to save. (5) *His power*. Jesus Christ and Him crucified is "the power of God unto salvation." The Father says, "I will help thee" in conquering all opposition. (6) *His justice*. Justice "laid on him the iniquities of us all," that is, of all the elect. Justice, therefore, had nothing to say against the bestowal of the gift, and will have nothing to say no more than if men had never sinned. It will acknowledge the receivers of the gift as just. (7) *His righteousness*. Therefore it became Him "to fulfil all righteousness." In Him is no deficiency, His people are "complete in him." They are "complete in him" in every service. (8) *His holiness*. Christ was "holy harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He was holy for His people, and He makes them holy. Holiness entrusted Him to bring no unholy thing to heaven. (9) *His truth*. It had said to sinners, "Thou shalt die." He assumed, therefore, their nature and became their representative and so actually died. As their sense of spiritual death is a passage to life spiritual, so their temporal death is a passage to life eternal. To show Christ's absolute power over death there are three bodies that shall be witnesses in heaven. His own personal body, the glorified body of believers, and the mystical body, the whole company of the redeemed, delivered from death eternal. (10) *God gave the Son freely*, "without money and without price." He gives Him to the most worthless, to "the chief of sinners." (11) *He is offered to everyone*. "Ho, everyone that thirsteth," whatever that thirst may be. In Isaiah lv. 2, they were thirsting for the world. Zaccheus had the thirst of curiosity. This woman thirsted for common water and for sinful lust. Manasseh and Paul thirsted for the blood of the saints. O sinners of each class come ye to the waters! (12) *He is given irrevocably*, "without repentance." Not only will He never withdraw Christ, but He will never grudge anything to any who receive Him. "If thou knewest the gift of God thou wouldest ask of him and he would give thee living water."

(Fourth Outline) Second. *Let us now show in the second place what things are in the gift.*

Hitherto we have been speaking of the sovereign freeness with which the gift is given, that there is nothing in the nature of God drawing it back. Whatever the value of it be to them who receive the gift, it is absolutely given by everything in the divine nature. Now observe what is in the gift:—

I. *Intrinsically or in its own nature.*

II. *Its properties, or uses to which it is applied.*

III. *The ends for which it is applied, and which give additional value.*

I. *Intrinsically, or in its own nature.*

Now here we are at a stand at the very outset. For the gift is not only "the gift of God," but the gift is God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."—(John i. 14.) Here we may say, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" "What is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He is "the express image of his person," yea, "God over all blessed for ever. Amen." But Jesus was not only God in order to draw near to Him, but man to draw near to us. "The Word was made flesh." "A body hast thou prepared me." This body was a part of the gift. In the mysterious union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ there are many wonders. (1) The two natures constitute but one person. "Of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.—(Rom. ix. 5.) (2) These natures will be united for ever. "This man continueth ever."—(Heb. vii. 24.)

II. *The properties or uses to which the gift of God is applied.*

First. The work which the Son of God did in the flesh, in human nature, was all done in the room of men, in the room of the elect, and not for Himself. He was born for men, "Unto us a child is born." They could never "bring a clean thing out of an unclean," and the Son of God became the seed of the woman to "bruise the serpent's head." He fulfilled all righteousness. He lived a life of obedience for sinners. He was "made under the law to redeem them that were under the law." He was made unto His people righteousness. He also was engaged in doing good in their room. All His sufferings were endured for sinners. He was cut off, but not for Himself. He was made sin, and made a curse in their room.

Second. It is further true that what Christ did in the flesh had divine value ascribed to it as if the divine nature had done it. (1) Consider in this light His being born. "The holy thing shall be called the Son of the highest." Hence also He is called "the mighty God." From this flows His people's being made partakers of the divine nature through the promise. For "He is the first-born among many brethren." So also the Holy Ghost comes upon them and they are born into the kingdom of God. They are conformed to Christ's image. Their souls are restored in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and their bodies are made eventually wholly sanctified. Seek nothing lower. From this flows also the infallibility of the people of God from grace or glory. They are joint heirs with Christ. As His natures cannot be separated from one another, so their souls and bodies being

united to Him by the Holy Ghost and faith, can never be separated from Him without, as it were, tearing Him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?" Oh! if we had known how near the elect are to Christ it might make us afraid to meet them, and yet glad to do anything for them. The first Adam was made a holy man, and all men were united to him. The second Adam is the Son of God, and all who believe are united to Him. (2) His righteousness is ascribed to the divine nature. It is said to be "the righteousness of God." Sinners are "made the righteousness of God in Him." Hence observe (1) the immense *spirituality* of the righteousness of Christ. God seeks spiritual worship from His creatures, and here He found it. We may say in this case that it was God worshipping God! "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—(John xvii. 4.) Here is something to which poor carnal creatures may go to seek "grace for grace." It is here also they may obtain support, for it is not on the strength of their own graces, except as evidences, they ever enter heaven. (2) *Its infinite extent*. "Thy righteousness is very high." Though this righteousness was wrought out in one body, yet, that body being united to the divine nature the righteousness extends to infinity. We, therefore, hear David, Paul, and others all saying "My God, my Saviour," as if He was the God and Saviour of none else. But He is a God and Saviour to each and all of His people. Hence a wedding garment is prepared for every one of them. See to it that you have a garment for yourself. He has plenty. (3) It is an *eternal* righteousness. Like God's inherent righteousness, it will last for ever. A work will seem to wax old, a promise may seem to wax old, but get Christ in the promise, and then it will stand for ever. We take the promise and not Christ when we do not see Him to be the purchaser of it and the ground of its fulfilment. If you are living on promises, and not by faith in Christ Jesus, they will fail you in a strait. If you have no view to Christ they will fail you altogether. (4) It is an *unchangeable* righteousness. For He is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." This righteousness is like the clothes of the people in the wilderness, it waxes not old. All other righteousnesses will wax old. (5) The righteousness of Christ is *redolent from "the ivory palaces."* So God is well pleased for His righteousness' sake.

"Of aloes, myrrh, and cassia,
A smell thy garments had,
Out of the iv'ry palaces,
Whereby they made thee glad."—Psalm xlv. 8.

Christ's righteousness filled heaven with odours sweet.

(3) All His sufferings have divine value as if done by His divine nature. Hence it is written, "The Church of God which he purchased with his own blood." It is also said that "the Lord of glory was crucified," and "the Prince of life killed." (1) Here again we observe His spirituality comes in view. His blood is

spiritual blood. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"—(Heb. ix. 14.) Hence His blood can cleanse "from all sin."—(1 John i. 7.) As the presence of God can go through every place so this spiritual blood can be conveyed by the Holy Ghost into any crevice of the heart. If you can tell in what part of your soul or body the divine presence is not, then say what the blood of Christ cannot cleanse. The existence of hell affords no objection to this doctrine. The blood of Christ is not appointed for hell more than for the fallen angels. But the blood of Christ has cleansed the believer's hell already. Christ endured His people's hell, the wrath of God, and as there is but one hell, as the wages of sin, they shall never enter another. (2) It is *infinite* blood. "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." As the sea cannot be fathomed so this blood cannot be. He casts their sins into the depths of infinity, never to rise any more. As salt water kills dry land creatures, so this sea kills sin. Yet the sea is never defiled. The blood of Christ is not only pure blood, but it is also purifying. (3) It is *eternal* blood. He offered himself "through the eternal Spirit." Its effects are eternal, either in killing or healing. It is either a cup of salvation or of damnation. It will be true concerning us either that He "washed us from our sins in his own blood" or that we have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." (4) Lastly, it is *unchangeable* blood. "He which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is holy let him be holy still.—(Rev. xxii. 11.) "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet." Hands and head were already washed in the blood of Christ in regeneration and justification. The believer further requires to be washed once for all, in the whole soul, body, and spirit, in order to complete sanctification.

Application.—(1) *To openly unholy.* Come and ask for washing in the blood which cleanseth from all sin. The apostle says, "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." But he adds, addressing the Corinthian believers, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—(1 Cor. vi. 9-11.) If you do not come and ask, it were better you had never been born. (2) *Hypocrites.* Some pretended to take Christ and did not. Another said, "I go, sir, and went not." (3) *Those seeking Christ,* striving against sin, come to this blood. Whatever else you go to will not do. Try this open fountain. Seek the Spirit of God who can baptise you with the water and the blood.

(Fifth Outline) III. *Let us now consider for what ends or purposes God gave the gift of His only begotten Son.*

All these ends or purposes are included in the word "everlasting life." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He sent Him, not "to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," not to give a cup of damnation, but a cup of salvation. It is living water the Son gives, "the earnest of the Spirit," spiritual life now, which will end in eternal life. Indeed "this is the condemnation," when we refuse Christ; and if we had known that it is not by coming to Christ, but by staying away from Him, that we are ruined, we would ask of Him, and He would give us "living water." Death was the disease that fell upon sinners, and, therefore, life must be the cure. As it was by breaking a covenant, the covenant of works, "by one man" that "sin entered into the world and death by sin," so there is no life till the covenant be fulfilled. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The purpose, therefore, for which this gift, even Christ Jesus, is given is all summed up in one word—"I will give thee for a covenant of the people."—(Isaiah xlii. 6 and xlix. 8.) Now, in the Father's giving the Son for a covenant, three things are implied:—

(I.) His fulfilling the first covenant requirements. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. v. 19.

(II.) His kingly power to bring them out of the miserable state of bondage in which they are held by sin and Satan: "Say to the prisoners, Go forth."—Isaiah xlix. 9.

(III.) That He shall be a new covenant head and surety to instate them in an infallible covenant: "Jesus was made a surety of a better covenant."—Heb. vii. 22.

(I.) Let us then consider, first, His fulfilling the first covenant requirements. This includes two things. 1. An obedience of suffering for every transgression in disobedience. 2. An obedience of fulfilling the commandments as given to Adam in a state of innocency.

1. While Adam stood, he had only to perform what the law required, but when he fell he required to suffer, and that willingly, for the offence he had done. The willingness with which it is done constitutes the principal part of obedience. Hence, so much weight is laid in the Word of God on Christ's willingness to obey and suffer. "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."—(John x. 17-18.) It is also said, "He became obedient unto death."—(Phil. ii. 8.) Hence on the other hand, in virtue of unwillingness, all the sufferings of men and devils in hell, can never satisfy for one sin. But by Christ's willingness we are sanctified. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God."—(Heb. x. 9-10.) He not only

suffered, but suffered most willingly. As His sufferings were otherwise of divine value, so they were endured with divine willingness. The Son was willing in Himself to suffer, and so willingly He did the Father's will. As the Father gave the Son with his whole heart and soul, so the Son by His obedience and sufferings pleased the whole heart and soul of the Father. He is well pleased for Christ's righteousness sake. Learn (1) the impossibility of man's obeying. He cannot suffer without impatience. If Job cried for death, and cursed the day of his birth, for earthly trouble, though he had some grace, yea much grace, what impatience must sinners have in the torments of hell, ever adding sin to sin, and never, never, diminishing one! (2) The infinite satisfaction which was to the Father in Christ's sufferings. "Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me?"—(Jer. xxx. 21.) The whole heart of the Father and the whole heart of the Son met. All the divine attributes were satisfied by the obedience of Christ. The Son's heart was as much set upon giving obedience, as the Father's was in receiving obedience. (3) Is it not then a woeful hard heart we have? We not only deny the obedience of our own heart, but we would deprive, if we could, the Father of His Son's hearty, willing obedience. Oh Capernaum! Oh Bruan! What will come as the reward of such hardness? (4) Those truly willing, behold here ground of hope. If even any of these sufferings were in your stead, they were willing sufferings, neither forced, nor grudged, and therefore Christ upbraids not any who come asking to be made partakers of His obedience. Nay, He freely offers it all. Why did the Son of God become poor? Was it not that He might be a Saviour for the poor, for flesh and blood, for those under the law, for sinners, for the accursed, and all with willingness? He does not grudge His sufferings to any who will take them. As for despisers thereof, His blood will yet cry aloud for vengeance against them. Seek, then, to get a sense of your lost and miserable state. Seek to get the blood of Christ applied to your consciences, and also the heart of Christ implanted in your souls.

2. His obedience of fulfilling the commandments. Just as Christ said "It is finished," when His sufferings were finished, so He also said, "I have finished *the work* which thou gavest me to do"—(John xvii. 4). The elect not only owed suffering, but also serving ever since the fall. They owed serving all the time of suffering. They could never do both. But Christ both served and suffered. He was all His life "a man of sorrows," and He went about all His life "doing good." He not only paid the original sum of debt to justice, but kept the books clear of new debt. His whole life was one of suffering and obedience. The Son became the covenant head of the elect before they sinned. Though they are actually interested in His work of salvation when they believe, yet they were in Him, in one sense, from all eternity. He took them up when Adam left them, and carried them to His

dying moment. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive." Christ was the plague of death. "He swallowed up death in victory." It cost Him a battle, yet He conquered. Here, again, learn (1) the impossibility of man's satisfying the law and justice of God for sin. He would have to suffer for all the debt, and satisfy the law at one and the same time. You would need to "wash and make you clean," yea, to go back to the innocency of Adam, before this could be done. Further, those who would be justified by the law would need to live without meat, drink, clothes, light, or any comfort. Their mourning would require to be as deep as hell, their fasting as long as hell, and their praying as loud as hell. And throughout all this, they would require to give perfect obedience, serving God day and night. Where are old prayers here? Bring them forth, and burn them as filthy rags. Communicating will not justify you, unless you could eat hell-fire with it. On the other hand, though you give your body to be burnt, there is no profit without charity, the love of Christ begetting love in you. Give up hopes from the law. Seek to be "dead to the law by the body of Christ." (2) Observe the exact fulfilment of the law by Christ. "Thy law," saith He, "is within my heart." His righteousness is "the righteousness of God." It is of His own appointment, and by His own working. "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels," saith the Son.—(Ps. xxii. 14.) The heart that had the law within it was God's heart, for the Son is God, and he was as tender of the honour of the law as the Father. (3) Those who will not take this righteousness, refuse God the obedience of Christ. They despise all He did. Better despise all the worship of heaven than this. All that has been or ever will be done that is of any value is only the fruit of this righteousness. They shall die without mercy who despise the blood of the Son of God. Such would have no honour done to Christ through eternity. Our guilt is truly of a crimson dye. Truly we say in our hearts, "There is no God." There is more guilt in unbelief than in all other sins. It shut the greater number of the children of Israel out of the promised land. (4) Those, then, who get Christ's righteousness, get the righteousness of God, *done with the heart*. A poor creature can do nothing with the heart. Get this righteousness first, and it will engage your heart also. If we believed that Christ engaged with all His heart, then He would engage us. "The love of Christ constraineth us." Behold, on the strength of what obedience believers go to a throne of grace and duty. They go depending upon the obedience of Christ, which was heart obedience, the obedience of the heart of God. This source of strength gives life to faith and works.

3. We add a third part of Christ's work as covenant head. He is mediator between God and sinners in order to bestow all this. "He is exalted to give repentance and forgiveness of sins."—

(Acts v. 31.) None can give the benefit of Christ's obedience and sufferings but the Holy Ghost, and none but He can give the sense, and feeling, and enjoyment of this benefit. Now, Christ possesses the Holy Ghost without measure, and all who get Christ, get all the blessings we have mentioned. He procures by His obedience and intercession the way, that was shut up by law and justice, for the Spirit to go forth, and the Spirit goes forth that He may show to sinners the things that are Christ's. What! will He show all this? Then, "it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon us."—(Hos. x. 12.)

Application.—(1) To those who have fled from self, sin, and the law to the Gospel. You may rely upon the oath and promise of the Father. "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant."—(Psalm lxxxix. 3.) You may trust in the blood of the Son. It is "the blood of the everlasting covenant." (2) To those who cleave to self, sin, the law, and works. Remember there is no other atoning sacrifice, there is no righteousness but Christ's. There is no other intercessor for transgressors but Christ. May He bless His Word, and to His name be everlasting covenant praise through Christ.—Amen.

Diary of the late William Sinclair of Wick.

(Continued from page 301.)

JANUARY 8th, 1884.—Rested pretty well last night. In bed till 8 A.M. Our minister (late Rev. George Stevenson) was here to-day catechising the family. Before he came I intended not to be present until the children were examined, fearing that my negligence in training them might be observed, and that the excitement might be too much for me. I was resolving to be more diligent in time to come. I then remembered the great day, and how would I stand the final judgment, and give account of my walk and conversation among them, and if I had been travailing in birth for them until Christ be formed in their souls. These considerations overcame my previous purpose, and I went to the room as soon as the minister came, and was pleased the children answered so well, and the service was agreeable. This I considered was cause of renewed thankfulness that I was not dealt with as I richly deserved, to be made "ashamed before all Israel and the sun." May I be enabled to "walk with a perfect heart within my house at home," and to be more earnest in instructing the children!

9th.—Sleep very disturbed last night. Often out of bed, the cough being very troublesome. Last night I was very pleased,

getting a letter from Donald Duff, Stratherrick, and another from Donald Swanson, Thurso, though I must acknowledge, owing to my present weakness, that the former had much to do in keeping me awake during the night, and scared me with dreams regarding the dear faithful brother. I was led by experience to know that communion with him could not give peace, although I fancied so, as there is no other I would like better to hear from. He says, "When I look for more than forty years on my profession I am ashamed to lift my head before the Searcher of hearts." His speech bewrays him when shame still remains. (Ezek. xliii. 10, 11.) Dear Mr. Swanson seems to feel the sad aspect of the Church and of individual professors, not excluding himself. Read the hundred and third psalm to-day, and found it wonderfully precious. Wrote my brother George, Donald Duff, Mrs. A——, and G—— S——.

10th.—Rested rather better than former night. What frail, dependent creatures we are! He that fills "all and in all," the Wonderful, takes notice of our breathings and desires. I was asking in prayer this morning that He would allow me to mourn when He did not manifest Himself. Since the above was written, at worship read the twentieth of St. John. Saw how a weeper was attended to after Peter and "that other disciple" had gone home. She got the first and sweet sight of Him whom her soul loved, and was told before separating, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." She went and told the disciples she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Afterwards He stood in the midst of the assembled disciples, saying, "Peace be unto you," and "He showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." "As my Father hath sent me even so send I you." "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

I went to-day to the office. I have had a pretty good day as to my health. The swelling still continues, but no pain. Wrote D. Sinclair, Lybster, and Roderick Macleod, Lewis.

11th.—Much scared with dreaming the first part of the night. Got fair rest towards morning, thanks to the Giver. At family worship read in Acts where Peter went to the house of Cornelius, and the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word. Thought of the unwillingness of families to gather to hear the Word. Since Adam fell there is by nature no desire after the knowledge of God, or to learn His holy ways. It is most awful to see the indifference to and despising of the worship of the blessed Creator. But it is no new thing. Even prophets were not honoured by their kin, and of the Saviour it is told, "Neither did his brethren believe on him." This requires to be revealed by the Father. The light is not comprehended by the darkness, the god of this world having blinded their eyes. Lord, open their eyes that they may see the wonders of Thy law, and the unspeakable love and holiness opened up in the gospel of salva-

tion for such rebels, that they may joy and rejoice with thine inheritance. Wrote William Elder.

12th.—Rested pretty well. Kept fire up all night. Up four times, and rose at seven. This is old New Year's day, and no one seems to remember it. Who would believe there would be such a change within so short a time? It looks, also, as if our Sabbaths will be forgotten soon, and holidays put in their place. Free ministers, or rather free-of-all-good ministers, are hastening this issue. Highland glens may escape longer than the towns, because they are not so much infested by college-made blind enemies to all righteousness, calling themselves by fine names to deceive the simple—Reverend, &c. Yet, alas! the people glory in their own deceivings, and love to follow their learned, foolish, carnal, light leaders, instead of fasting, prayer, and self-loathing. We have concerts, soirees, organs, money, and holidays, which ministers contend more for than for "the faith once delivered to the saints," even the faith that worketh by love and purifies the heart. Many of them are mere vain, silly lads wanting a fine position. Take away worldly honour and money from the pulpits, and they will soon empty. "The heads thereof judge for reward, the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us."—(Micah iii. 11.)

13th.—I have been for a long time almost always afraid to read the 4th to the 8th verses of the sixth of Hebrews, and lately the case there was often making me tremble. While on my knees the case of Peter came before me. After he had a revelation of the Son by the Father he denied Him, and that openly. Yet he got repentance, and was commanded to feed the sheep and lambs, and was greatly owned in the vineyard. Thanks for the record of Peter's sin, the prayer by the Intercessor for him, and the repentance that followed, and that the blessed Saviour, after His resurrection, did not disown him, but rather otherwise. Many an unwatchful creature has been encouraged to hope through Him.

14th.—Rested better than expected. Slept five hours during night, and was able to rest in bed till half-past seven. The greater part of yesterday I was reading the Bible, and finding reproof and encouragement while reading Job xlii., "Now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." A blessed seeing, and such a One to behold, glorious in holiness, great in loving kindness and tender mercies, coming near to instruct a troubled child.

15th.—Letter to Mr. Daniel Louttit, Lybster. Dear Mr. Louttit—Being confined to the house for several weeks through cough, weakness, &c., but no pain, though much tossing during the night, often scared with dreams, and little sound sleep, I find my mind leads me back to former times. Among others I am led to the first times I came to the prayer meeting in the parochial school, Wick, where you, your brother, George Dunoon, Peter

Taylor, and others assembled. It was my first appearance at a public meeting. I was then quite willing to sit next the door, being afraid to come near you, or to be seen amongst you. It is now over forty years since then. How have they been spent? I cannot say with the apostle that I am writing with many tears, but surely confusion of face belongeth unto me considering what I profess to be. Where is the corresponding fruit? Have I walked worthy of God, adorning His doctrine in all things? When we measure and compare ourselves among ourselves, the standard is so low amongst those who assume to be examples to the flock, we may pass on. But if we take the holy standard of the Rule, where are we? If they walk not according to the Rule, there is no light in them. You and I have gone far to hear sermons. Might it not be well for us to examine how we stand the test of the first recorded sermon by Him who came to reveal the blessed will of the Father? And you might let me know the result. "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin." You might also read what may be called the Mediator's last sermon to the seven churches of Asia. What blessed calls to return and repent! May we be of the blessed number who abhor themselves and repent in dust and ashes! "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." "We beseech you, also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee."

Pretty well to-day. At family worship read the fifth chapter of Hebrews. How wonderful are the seventh, eighth and ninth verses. I heard the Rev. John M'Rae, late of Lewis and Knockbain, preach from the ninth verse. "And being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." He said, "To an enquiring mind this text would suggest a question, Wherein did the imperfection consist? He was perfect God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father. He was perfect man, having a true body and a reasonable soul. Let us then enquire wherein the imperfection consisted. It was in the office of Mediator. In it He was made perfect through suffering, that 'He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.' He thus became the author of eternal salvation. Salvation to us would be an unmeaning term had we not known its opposite. Shall I mention it? It is eternal damnation." Mr. M'Rae then opened up salvation in a most glorious manner, and damnation in a most awful aspect, enough to terrify the hardest heart. He then said, I think "I hear some poor soul say, What interest have I in this salvation or in its Author? Well, if ever the foundation stone of true religion was laid in your soul, you have been convinced in a day of power that you have no claim upon Him for this salvation. The Holy Ghost

has revealed to you God in His purity, holiness, and justice, and set your sin in order in your sight before the glory of the holy, sin-hating Jehovah. Under such a revelation the creature is ready to cry, 'Undone! Thou art just in whatsoever Thou art pleased to bring upon me because I have sinned against thee.' He is not desirous to be sent to hell, but he agrees with the justice of the sentence. But if the Holy Ghost is taking a saving deal with your soul He does not leave you here, but reveals this God to you, not as another God, but in another aspect, even in Him who is the author of eternal salvation, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, thus reconciling you to himself by Jesus Christ, not imputing your trespasses unto you. 'For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.'"

Letter to a member of the family. My dear — I know that you will be glad to hear that I am rather better than when you left. I am getting more rest during the night, and am up all day. I know you have some concern about your salvation, and that you had some consolation. Perhaps I have been too silent to you, but knowing that the Holy Spirit ordinarily works through and by the Word, I was sure that He could guide you into all truth, and that possibly I might only spoil instead of aid. You may have followed the devices of your own heart instead of waiting and following His blessed counsel as revealed in the Holy Word; therefore it would be a blessed thing to see our sin and folly in departing from the Holy One. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," he may be an old minister, an elder, or a prodigal. Job abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes. Peter wept bitterly, and was much honoured afterwards in the vineyard. The Father ran to embrace the returning son. See that you do not stay nor linger long, prepare hastily to keep His precepts. "I commend you to God and to the word of his grace." The Lord will not cast off for ever. Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. Be much in prayer, and searching the Scriptures, for He hath said, "Seek and ye shall find." Try and find a sound minister. The more broken-hearted he is the better. Wait on the Lord, and do not cease to hope for deliverance. You may rely on the Intercessor for transgressors, and the love that provided Him. I was just now looking at the fiftieth of Isaiah. You may read it. It would give me much pleasure to hear from you on this all-important subject.—Your loving father, in "light affliction,"

WM. SINCLAIR.

There are no more Christians than there are martyrs in resolution and affection.—*James Renwick.*

Notes of a Monthly Lecture

BY THE LATE REV. GAVIN PARKER.—ABERDEEN, 9th March, 1824.

(Taken by a Hearer.)

Third Commandment. Exodus xx. 7.—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

THE law of God is much esteemed in heaven. It is highly esteemed by the people of God on earth, but it has been long despised in the world. Yet God's law will speak, if not in this life, at judgment and through eternity. Better to receive the law now than despise it. Better to return to Christ and God than continue in sin and perish. There is a wrath to come. God will appear in righteous judgment.

The first commandment requires that God be honoured and obeyed. The second refers to the external manner of worship. God Himself has given instructions for the manner of worship, and it is presumptuous for mortals to infringe these laws. This the Church, called Christian, has done. Thereby God has been mocked and insulted upon this earth, and though there may not as yet have appeared a manifestation of divine judgment on this account, we do think there will, on a coming day, be a discovery of displeasure. The reason of innovations is found in an endeavour to bring down the worship of God to suit the taste of men who love themselves more than God, and though applauded, this manner of worshipping God is without His authority. We are inclined to swerve from the too prevalent innovations, and return to simple worship.

The third commandment respects spirituality of mind in worship. 1st.—The duties required. "The holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works." Everything belonging to God and worship must be considered sacred. (1) In all acts of worship we ought to reverence God. This will not be the case unless we are afraid of offending Him. This will banish vain thoughts from the mind, and induce humility, without which worship cannot be acceptable to God who is holy. There is an immense distance between God and us. It is necessary when praying to be afraid of worshipping another being than God. Beware of allowing a careless disposition of mind. Think well what is to be asked in prayer lest you mock God in the exercise. In giving thanks you ought to feel lively gratitude. In all worship it is proper you should fear God. Beware of vain thoughts and levity of mind in entering the sanctuary. Cherish a reverential awe, and with the patriarch Jacob say, "Surely this is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." (2) In speaking of His Word,

works, and ordinances, feel sacred awe. You are not to enquire into them from mere curiosity or for amusement. It is dangerous to speak of the Scriptures or read them as a common book. It is dangerous to learn the Book of God as a common task. It is not from anything external we should reverence the Bible, but from the majesty of God who requires that we should show unto all that we fear Him. And this leads us to observe (3) that a holy reverence is necessary in thinking of God and His attributes. "Sanctify the Lord of Hosts in your heart ; let him be your fear and your dread." And (4) it is necessary to fill up other intervals of time in maintaining a habitual reverence in the mind. There should ever be a watching to testify that we honour God in our acts of worship, conversation, reading, thinking, even when not directly occupied in sacred duties.

2nd.—The third commandment prohibits all kinds and degrees of profanity. God's name and attributes mentioned unnecessarily with levity, and in a common state of mind, and speaking of sacred as if they were common things. (1) Acts of worship which are only apparent. (2) Vowing without sincerity. Vows are made at baptism and at the sacramental table, in both of which there is a solemn dedication of the person to God. We judge not of the sincerity of the vow from the feelings of the person at the time, but in its effects, and who will deny its frequent gross profanation? How often is the solemn rite of baptism profaned, in which the parent dedicates his child to God, and promises to bring it up for God, but its education is diligently pursued merely for this world! How frequently are the exertions of parents employed to get their children made clever, cunning, and active for this world, while God and religion are neglected! At the communion table there is a solemn surrender of all to Christ, an engagement to be the Lord's ; but how is this ordinance profaned amongst us! How frequently do those thus vowing return to the world and their covetousness! The people of God come far short ; they feel it is their grief and complaint. But such as can abuse this most spiritual ordinance of God are ready to do anything against God. Who can approach a sacramental table with a hard heart, and remain or be satisfied in a common state of mind in that most solemn of days, a Communion Sabbath, which is awfully profaned in this country? (3) Swearing unnecessarily. Oaths are necessary, and these are frequently profaned by those in power, or servants of the king. (4) All uttering of imprecations, or cursing others. God hath said, "Vengeance is mine," and if they have the curse of God it will be sufficient punishment. They can have no need of the ill wishes of men. (5) All kinds of blasphemy, all words against God the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, the Scriptures, or Christianity in general ; calling God's people enthusiasts by way of reproach ; holding up to ridicule that religion which is the image of God. (6) Transference of property by lot. Transference of property is right, but this is not

God's way, which is by frugality, industry, and such means. In some cases it was allowed to make an appeal to God by lot, but it is a gross profanity to make it a common thing. (7) When the name of God, His titles, and attributes are mentioned or introduced in common conversation the third commandment is broken. If the children of God do use ejaculatory expressions in conversation they should either avoid it, or if they mean to pray, show that they do so by a solemn manner, lest they encourage the careless use of such expressions in others. These chiefly prevail in genteel life, and are frequently introduced in fashionable novels.

This commandment we have said prohibits (1) only apparent acts of worship; (2) vowing without sincerity; (3) swearing unnecessarily; (4) uttering imprecations or ill wishes; (5) all kinds of blasphemy; (6) transference of property by lot; (7) the name of God used, and appeals made to Him in common conversation.

By what has been considered of this subject we perceive this command to be exceeding broad. Verily we are guilty concerning it, and have reason to tremble this night because of transgression, and turn to God through Christ.

(CONCLUSION.)—6th April, 1824.

“The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.”

In former discourses we have been illustrating the law of God. Unless He had given us a law we could not know how to regulate our conduct, and without it we should have come short of duty. “By it is the knowledge of sin, and the law is a schoolmaster.” It is very possible for us to have the law in our hands, and yet live without it. Many professors live like the world, and follow the multitude. If the law has not come to our understanding and heart, what will mere profession do? It is possible to think that we do attend to the law while we follow the world chiefly, and when convenient, observe the law of God externally. There is a want of honesty. Many know not they are thus despising, insulting, and opposing the living God. It is mournful to contemplate this state of things in a country called Christian and enlightened. God will not change His law to suit the fashions and practices of men. Unless implicitly received and diligently obeyed it is rejected. This introductory remark may be useful.

The first table of the law refers to the duty we owe to God, which is worship. There are other duties, but all resolvable into this one—worship, incessant, habitual. This demand will sound harsh to such as spend their time in levity, but God's law remains in all its magnitude, and must not be abridged.

The first commandment refers to the object of worship, God Himself. The second, to the external manner of worship. The third, to the state of mind in which worship is to be performed.

In worship there is a variety of feeling, but love to God is the chief. Unless worship proceed from this principle it cannot meet the approbation of God. True worship will always be accompanied with reverence at all times, fear of offending and desire to please God. All kinds of profanity are prohibited.

At present we will consider the explanation given of this commandment. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." The reason annexed to it: "However the breakers of it may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape His righteous judgment." Now here are three things supposed. 1st.—Men think lightly of this sin. 2nd.—The crime itself. 3rd.—Its punishment.

First.—Men hold themselves guiltless. This is a very common feeling among the children of men. Ever since the profligate reign of the second Charles common swearing has been, in some measure, fashionable. But not only are crimes which are shocking to decency forbidden, but all kinds of profanity. In worshipping assemblies and at the communion table there may be grosser acts of profanity than the profane swearing of the hero on the field of battle. What more profane than coming to a communion table saying they love Christ while they love themselves.

(1) Profanity arises from the low and mean thoughts of God which prevail in the minds of the ignorant. Few know the real character of God. The great God is very much unknown. He is treated as a feeble, condescending, fond Being who will easily pass by transgression, and receive His enemies into favour. They know not what sort of Being the great God is. If so, they would have fear, for His righteous judgments are revealed against all ungodliness. They think repentance an easy work, and delay and delay it till a deathbed. If they avowed their sentiments they would likely declare they have never been afraid of the Divine attributes.

(2) The violations of this law pass for being innocent. They are so common, few think them criminal. Instance, in families how frequently are children taught prayers, but unless they are explained to them, unless they are taught the nature of that Being they address, and the meaning of what is asked it is profanity, it is hypocrisy. Though thus taught to pray it is a hypocritical form instead of prayer. Thus profanity has prevailed. It is also fashionable to make a profession of religion. It is thought despicable to be without it—to be called an infidel or an atheist, but it is respectable to be called a Christian. In approaching a communion table they think they are doing something good. Instance, in our own country where the gospel is not preached the parishioners, almost to a man, are found attending the communion table. Multitudes will not diminish the crime.

(3) Long habits of profanity stupify the conscience and harden the heart. In youth they would be startled to think of

making a profession without sincerity. Depraved as our nature is we do not think it is just so hardened then. But after they have ventured forward natural conscience gets quiet, and after persevering in this manner for twenty or thirty years it is likely they will not be troubled with convictions. And not only does the conscience grow dead in attending a communion table, but the same effect is produced in profane swearing. They say they mean no harm, and thus sin without remorse.

(4) This sin is easily retained because it gratifies pride. They think themselves bold and manly in getting the better of natural conscience. It is also gratifying to the pride of such to be called Christians.

(5) The want of punishment to this crime in the present life.

Second.—The great wickedness of this species of impiety. We cannot tell its extent. (1) It is directly committed against God. Not only an expression of indifference, but of contempt. (2) It is voluntary, and in many deliberate. It is from choice. In some constitutions there is a stronger propensity to particular crimes than in others. The constitution itself is good, but it is abused. There is no constitution made for profane swearing. Nothing is gained by it. It adds nothing to wisdom. It promotes no good purpose whatever. The plea of its strengthening the authority of a master proves only the hardened profanity of the leaders and the men. Though it is the practice in this country to profess Christianity, none are obliged, it is on their part voluntary. Now, if persons ignorant and self-willed do this, they do it voluntarily. Sinners despise God because they choose to do so.

Third.—We consider the punishment. "He will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." The punishment refers both to this world and the next. (1) They are kept far from God. Every profane individual is so. God will not hold communion with him; he is under the curse, cursed in the city, cursed in the field, cursed in the house, cursed in the congregation! It is a very severe punishment to be kept at a distance from God. What good have your prayers done you? (2) We cannot describe the punishment in this life, much less describe the punishment in the next. It is a strange punishment. Deuteronomy xxviii. 58.—"If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD." Hosea iv.—They shall be visited with everlasting destruction from His presence.

Application.—1st. We, my brethren, have much reason to tremble at hearing this part of the law because it is profaned in our country, in our conversation, in our churches. 2nd. We have great reason for self-examination. Look not around merely, but look within. Have we loved God as we ought in the sanctuary, in secret prayer? Verily, we are guilty. None who know themselves will plead guiltless. We have all gone astray. 3rd. Surely we should return.

Letters of the late Rev. Hugh Martin, D.D.

(VI.)

LASSWADE, 6th June, 1875.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I was putting on my coat to take some letters to the post when yours came in, so I sit down again, and will take this with me when I go. I regret to learn you have not been quite well, “down” in body and mind as you say, and that as I am “Hopeful,” you need a word of comfort from me. As to my being “Hopeful,” let me first clear off that misunderstanding. On our first acquaintance you represented yourself at your worst, and what could I do but try to fulfil the command, “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,” which is not difficult to do when Jerusalem is made willing to accept no comfort but such as comes, not only in loving kindness and mercy, but also in righteousness and judgment. Hence, perhaps, “Hopeful” did make an impression on the line of buoyancy, but he is for all that a very sorrowful fellow, and often after making such impressions, he has to go away by himself and groan, and sob, and sigh, and suffer deserved chastisement. As to needing a word of comfort from me, if your need touches my sinful heart how must it tell on His heart who is the gracious and sympathizing High Priest, and who is infinitely more tender and more ready to help than any fellow-sinner? I think, however, that this depression of spirit of which you speak is one of the “ manifold dispensations ” through which the Lord sometimes takes His children—one of the “ways of the wilderness” through which He sometimes leads them round about, so that they may learn the rich variety of covenant provision made for all their need. You know the science of the rainbow. We cannot have the rainbow, unless there be the cloud for it to rest upon. The beautiful rays are there, streaming away into invisible space, but in order to the revelation of the beauty, the interception of the cloud is essential. “I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall come to pass, saith the Lord, that when I do bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of the covenant between me and the earth.” May we not say that when the Lord brings a cloud, not over the earth, but over the heart, then He “sets a bow in the cloud,” such a “bow” as this—“Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God.” Do you not see “the bow?” “Hope thou in God who is the health of my countenance and my God.” “My God”—is not that “the token of the covenant, the echo of the covenant promise, “I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people?” And a

people that shall "yet praise Him." So you see the "praise" is in the covenant with all else, but you and I would stint the praise until we are relieved from our cast down state. "Gratitude," says a sardonic writer, "is thankfulness for favours received that have satiated the greed of human nature." But in the kingdom of grace gratitude is thankfulness for favours to come, favours that will come, because they are in the covenant, and faith is already the substance of them, and the evidence of them, while yet they are unseen and unenjoyed; therefore "why art thou cast down, O my soul?" Really, though I am not "Hopeful" you make me write as though I were, and why should I not be, and you too? Answer that if you can, at least if you can consistently with your duty to glorify Him who is the Hope of Israel.

I was meditating this morning on the words, "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion," and I thought, "The Lord is gracious," that is true, because He says Himself He is so. It is also inexhaustible, because it reveals the character of Him who is infinite, therefore, being true and inexhaustible it should be enough for me—enough to live upon, and enough to die upon. But is it apprehended and appropriated by me? there's the weak point of the argument. Well, is He not gracious enough to enable me to apprehend and appropriate it? Is He not gracious enough to be willing that I should apprehend and appropriate it? He is; therefore it just comes round again to the simple but blessed statement, "The Lord is gracious," and more or better cannot be.

You would observe from the newspapers that I took no part in the Church and State debate, didn't even vote. I could have voted with Sir Henry Moncrieff, for his motion was harmless, but I knew it was framed not so much with the view of emphasising our Free Church position as of keeping in check our more advanced men, and I was glad on that account it got such a large following. But I am happy to tell you that I expect soon to be out of earshot, for a season, of the alarm of war, as I am looking forward to a six weeks' sojourn in the Highlands. I go to Dornoch (D.V.) on the third week of this month to the Communion there, afterwards to Rogart, and there will remain on until after the Dingwall Communion, first week of August. Indeed, my heart's in the Highlands already, so add no more at present, but that I hope soon to have good accounts of your improved health, and remain, yours, &c.,

HUGH MARTIN.

Let zeal be accompanied with meekness, that you may be free from passion and prejudice; and let meekness be backed with zeal, that you may be free of lukewarmness and indifference.—*James Renwick.*

Excessive Adornment in Dress.

THE subject of dress is one that calls for attention in the times in which we live. It is admitted on many hands that society is at present on the down grade, and it is quite apparent that the downward movement is not confined to the region of the invisible, but appears openly in a variety of forms. One of these forms, we think, is excessive adornment in dress. So widely prevalent has excess in this direction become that not only are light and profane worldlings distinguished for the vanity of their attire, but also many people who are members of churches, and profess to follow Christ. Now, this ought not so to be. In fact, vain attire does not become the man or woman of common sense. How much less does it become those who profess to be dead to the world and its follies and alive unto God through Jesus Christ? Apart from all subordinate considerations, we direct attention to the explicit testimony of the Word of God in favour of the utmost sobriety of apparel. Observe first, the judgment which the Lord of hosts declares against the daughters of Zion for their sin and vanity in respect of dress and adornment. "Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel (embroidered robes), and the mantles, and the wimples (cloaks), and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. And it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty" (Is. iii. 16-24). These are the words not of man, but of God, and we would do well to lay them to heart in these days lest the same judgment should descend upon us. Again, in the New Testament there are positive and minute injunctions as to modesty of apparel. The apostle Paul says, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10). The apostle here expressly forbids "costly array," not to speak of that which is showy. It is evident, therefore, that they who expend much in dress, plain or otherwise, are disobeying the apostolic command. Further, the apostle Peter gives a similar

injunction, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves" (1 Peter iii. 4-5). Let us not forget that these are the words not merely of the apostles, but of the Holy Ghost, and therefore we are bound to respect them as possessing the authority of God.

Now, a word or two as to objections that are sometimes raised when plainness of dress is advocated. Some say, "Oh, if the heart is right, one's dress does not make much difference. We should be engaged chiefly in examining our hearts." To this it may be replied that it is invariably a sure proof the heart is wrong in important respects when vain attire is indulged in, and also that in the large majority of cases it is a real sign that the heart is not right at all. No one can consistently claim credit for anxiety as to the state of his or her heart who is not equally anxious to cleanse and reform outward behaviour according to the directions of the Word of God. It is also clear that when people wilfully disobey the divine commands about apparel which may easily be got rid of, they are not endeavouring to get the heart put right, which is a much more difficult matter. It is by the outward bearing and demeanour that persons are known in the world, and in vain does the tongue speak of Christ and religion, when the head and the whole body speak of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Another objection sometimes brought forward is that some good people have been or are showy rather than plain in their dress. What we have, however, chiefly to attend to is not the example of men, but the precept of the Word of God. The best of people may err, and are therefore not infallible guides. But the fact is that in the past the great body of people professing piety were exceedingly plain in their apparel. A distinction could be observed between the Church and the world. Now the distinction has to a large extent disappeared. It is told that on one occasion a girl went to a woman of eminent piety, professing concern for the state of her soul. The latter simply looked up to the girl's head, and beholding it adorned, said, "Lassie, the devil is only making a fool of ye, speaking about religion and all these flowers on your head." It may thus be seen how the holy women of old time regarded adornment in dress. It is also affirmed by members of the female sex that it is exceedingly difficult to get the vast majority of dressmakers to make plain attire. But who is to reform the dressmaking if persons tamely submit to any kind of attire that is made? This objection only springs from a lack of moral courage on the part of the objectors. Another, and last objection we shall mention is the common one, "Are we to dress differently from other people and make ourselves conspicuous?"

Yes, if you are to follow Christ and to have that modesty which becomes His "peculiar people." And you who make no profession of Christ be plain in your apparel that you may not grieve the Spirit of God, nor the hearts of those who desire that all things should be done decently and in order according to the rules of His Word.

In conclusion, it may be said that it is generally at times that people should clothe themselves with the utmost modesty that they are most vain and gaudy. We consider it to be nothing short of a desecration of the Sabbath, and a profanation of the house and worship of God for people on such a day, and in such circumstances, to appear in showy dress. This may seem strange doctrine to those who make the Lord's day the time, and the house of God the stage, for exhibiting their flowers and finery. But it should be remembered that sackcloth and ashes would become sinners infinitely better in the presence of a holy God. It is further most shocking to see persons in light attire approach a communion table, where the death of the Son of God is showed forth, and where it would become sinners to mourn as one that mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness as for a first-born. The Spirit of God is undoubtedly grieved by the vain attire of worshippers in the public assemblies of His Church. It is said that many years ago in the north of Scotland there was an awakening among a number of young people under the preaching of the late Rev. Peter Davidson, of Arran, who was at that time a missionary. One Sabbath a gaudily dressed young woman appeared in the congregation. Her appearance caught and fascinated the attention of the young. The awakening was sensibly checked, spiritual impressions declined, and the same hopeful signs were not to be seen. The subject may now be left to the serious consideration of our readers who, in their several places and stations, ought to set a good example in the matter treated of. We subjoin an excellent extract from a sermon by Dr. Thomas Manton, one of the eminent Puritan divines of England, and also a Modern Protest, which deal with this subject.

Dr. Thomas Manton on Dress.

Dr. Manton in discoursing upon Titus ii. 11-14 (vol. 16) takes occasion to speak of sobriety in dress, and concludes with the following considerations:—

1. Consider, curiosity in clothes argues deformity of mind; a godly, serious, humble Christian is above these things. Therefore how can we choose but think that a man or woman hath vanity in his heart that is so clothed with it upon his back? Look, as plasters argue a wound or sore, so do these exotic and vain attires argue a wound and blot in the soul; that there is pride, vanity, and levity there. Clemens Alexandrinus observes that the Lacedemonians (heathen) permitted only harlots, and infamous

women, and common prostitutes to go in gorgeous attire. Clothes, then, are the flag and ensign which pride hangs out, and the nest of wantonness.

2. To be proud of clothes is to be proud of our own shame. Before sin came in man did not need a garment. Look, as the sun is adorned with light it needs no trimming and ornament, so man in innocency was adorned with grace, and needed no other robe; but when he sinned he needed garments. So then he that is proud of his clothes is but proud of the rags with which his wounds are bound up. Clothes are a memorial that we were once disobedient to God. Shall a thief be proud of his shackles, or a malefactor of his brand or mark on his forehead? This is a time of mourning, not of triumph; therefore God at first clothed Adam with skins, an habit that becomes mourning. We shall not need these things in heaven, clothes are only there in use where sin is.

3. Consider that habit (dress) makes not the man. A horse is not chosen by his trappings, but by his strength and swiftness; the trappings are things external that conduce nothing to his goodness, so man is not to be valued by his habit, it is but the excrement of silk worms; not by the ornaments of the body, but the endowments of the mind. And, therefore, if you would excel others indeed, you should excel them in grace and virtue. Alas! many are but dung finely dressed; the hidden man of the heart, that is the man. Grace is the best dressing, and that which is never out of fashion, by this men are valued. The more wise and excellent men are indeed, the less curious in their apparel. Cato, that had been consul at Rome, never wore apparel that exceeded one hundred pence. Let great ones be known by their modesty of apparel.

4. Consider, when you are most gorgeous, the beasts excel you. Croesus, king of Lydia, being gorgeously arrayed, asked Solon if ever he had seen a more beautiful spectacle. He answered, "Yes, sir, I have seen peacocks, and pheasants, and other birds." And, Matt. vi. 29, Christ takes notice of this, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies. The draughts and colours of nature are more beautiful than art. Therefore, neither delight in bravery (finery) nor envy in it, when thou seest the bravery of others, thou hast a fairer flower in thy garden.

5. Think often of Jesus Christ hanging naked upon the cross, who was stripped of his garments to satisfy for thy excess. Oh! shall we again put him to an open shame, as if he died in vain? Say, shall pride live when Christ died to subdue it, and mortify it, and to expiate for it?

A Modern Protest.

The house of prayer is a poor place in which to exhibit beads, ribbons, gewgaws, and trinkets. The evils of such extravagances are many. It keeps people from meeting, when they have not apparel as gorgeous as their neighbours. It loads the poor with burdens

too heavy to be borne to procure fashionable clothing. It leads many into temptation, debt, dishonesty, and sin. It causes many a poor shop-girl to work nearly all of Saturday night, that some customer's fine clothes may be ready for the Sabbath show. It keeps people at home in cloudy or stormy weather, when, if they wore plain clothing, they could defy clouds and storms. It consumes the hours in dressing, crimping, and fussing, keeping people from worship, and wasting time, hindering the reading of the Scripture, and making Sabbath a day of folly. It makes the poor emulous, malicious, and envious, and plants many a bitter thought in the minds of children and others, when they see their neighbours decked in finery, often unpaid for, and feel that people are respected, not for the integrity of character, but for the vanity of their clothes. It causes many a frivolous, trifling mind, to forget God and Christ and the Gospel, and to spend the hour appointed for religious service in comparing garments, studying fashions, and arranging their own gay attire. It causes vanity in the rich, and murmuring in the poor. It wastes the Lord's money that is needed for more noble and important purposes. It leads the young in the path of pride, gratifying the lusts of the eye. *It is forbidden in God's Word.* And yet we seldom find a minister that dare open his mouth against this fashionable sin. Let us dress plainly before the Lord, for example's sake at home and abroad, for decency's sake, and for the sake of Christ.—*The Bulwark.*

Sketch of Address

DELIVERED BY THE LATE REV. ALEXANDER GUNN,
SENIOR,* WATTEN,

AT INDUCTION, IN 1831, OF THE LATE REV. W. ROSS TAYLOR, D.D.,
AS MINISTER OF THURSO.

~~~~~  
 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God."—2 TIM. ii. 15.  
 ~~~~~

DEAR BROTHER,—We who bear the name of the ministers of Christ should often put the question to ourselves, Are we approved unto God or not? We ought often to consider what tokens we have in our own souls, and in our work, of being approved unto God. And we ought often to examine ourselves as to our own standing and progress in the Divine life, lest when we preach the gospel of salvation to others, we ourselves be cast away. Ministers are called in Scripture "the glory of Christ" (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3). Those, therefore, are surely approved unto God

* 1773-1836.

who are concerned that Christ be magnified, and that self be subdued, who look on themselves as less than the least of all Christ's servants. The apostle, although he thought highly of his office and of his great Master whose name and whose message he bore, yet he thought meanly of himself: "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Thus all those who are approved unto God have low thoughts of themselves. "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Again, Christ's true ministers seek to be approved unto God only in and through Christ. We cannot be approved unto God unless united to Christ by faith. Paul says, "Salute Apelles approven in Christ." We are approved unto God only as seen in Christ, and our persons and our services are accepted only in the Beloved. And in order to this faith in Christ, and as a sure ground and foundation of your faith, I would remind you of Christ's own promise to His servants, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He promises to be with them, to teach them, to guide them, to strengthen them, to plead their cause, and to grant His blessing on their labours, that these may conduce to His own glory, and to the good of their fellow-men. If their labours are hard, His presence is sweet; if their labours are disappointing, His presence is consoling, yea, His presence can transfuse sweetness and peace into the most painful steps of their way. In this promise, "Lo, I am with you," there is a sufficiency for your support under all the trials and discouragements you may meet with. Trials and discouragements you will meet with, for what is the work to which you are called? You are called to contend with the powers of darkness, to overturn the devil's kingdom in the hearts of men, and to rescue the prey out of the mouth of the roaring lion. And in the face of all this, you may see in yourself nothing but weakness, emptiness, and helplessness, you may feel you are in yourself unable to overcome the least sin or to resist the least temptation. How then is the work to be carried on? Only in and through the faith of Christ's word of promise, "Lo, I am with you." That is sufficient for you, be against you what may; that is the promise you are to plead, and to employ in answer to all the difficulties that may beset you, and all the opposition that may assail you. No doubt you may sometimes want the sense of Christ's presence, your inward peace may be interrupted, and your outward lot may be perplexing. But whatever be your case, cleave to the Lord's word, and keep to His work, and assuredly He will cause you to hear His promise anew in your experience, saying to you, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." O! then cleave to the Lord at all times, cleave to His Word and to the work to which you are called, stedfastly pursue the great ends of the ministry, faithfully testify of Christ, and prayerfully warn souls, and you will find the Lord

ever nigh unto you for all that you wait upon Him for. And may God bless you out of Zion, and give you to see the good of Jerusalem, and at length lift up your head with joy.

Let me now say a few words to you, my brethren of this congregation, concerning the duties you owe to your pastor, who is, I hope, the Lord's anointed unto you. He is now separated to the work of the ministry among you, and I trust it is in answer to many prayers on behalf of this event. Receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness, and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. Be not as those that lay snares for him who reproveth in the gate, for if you are really to profit by the ordinances dispensed by him, you must submit your consciences to the power of the Word of God of which he is an ambassador unto you. Also, let him have a special interest in your prayers. Pray for him personally, for the better it fares with your minister's soul, the more will your own edification be promoted. And pray for him ministerially, that utterance may be given him that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel. His work is difficult, and there is no doubt but that he will meet with various trials and discouragements in the faithful discharge of the duties of his office. Be earnest, therefore, in pleading with the Lord that He would enable him to show himself approved unto God, that being by grace an able minister of the New Testament he may prove, in the performance of all that he is called unto, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Seek that he may be taught rightly to divide the Word of truth that God in Christ may be glorified, that the Church of God may be fed, and that the world lying in wickedness may be left without excuse. And finally, brethren, pastors, and people, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, and may the Three-One-God get praise in you all, now and for ever.—Amen.

Principal Rainy on Union with the U.P. Church.

PRINCIPAL Rainy was one of the speakers at the soiree in the Synod Hall, held on 14th December, in connection with the centenary of St. James Place U.P. Church, Edinburgh. He congratulated the congregation upon the noble meeting which had gathered together to celebrate their centenary. He also congratulated them denominationally on the grand position which their Church occupied, a church which, he would venture to say, was emphatically Scottish. There was no more Scottish Church than the United Presbyterian Church. He did not think it could have grown anywhere in the world except in Scotland, and how

interesting, he said, had been the phase of Scottish Christianity which it had developed from its earliest days down to the sincere and sagacious energy and work of the present. He again congratulated them on their congregation, and he said he did not know why he was in the position of having to do that from the outside. (Applause.) He felt that there was something in that very absurd, and he felt as if he had a kind of right, as a Scottish Presbyterian, to get in somehow. He knew there were friends who looked upon the fence dividing the Churches as a sacred thing, but they had seen a great many fences pulled down, and he could only say that he believed there was a good time coming, and that it could not possibly be far off, when they would have a right to take up each other's position. When that day came it would be of great importance that they should so guide the whole matter that there would be no sinking by either side of anything that was worthy of being retained. When they came to celebrate their second centenary, he wondered in which hall they would meet. Perhaps, he said, it would be in the Free Assembly Hall. They might possibly commemorate their next centenary services in St. Giles' Cathedral—Applause—or even with his friends the Scottish Episcopalians in St. Mary's Cathedral. (Laughter.) There would be great changes before another hundred years had gone past.

The late Alexander Maciver, Lewis.

IN our last issue we mentioned that this old worthy had passed away. We now endeavour to give a brief sketch of his life and character. In the year 1805 Alexander Maciver was born in the parish of Lochs, Lewis, and about the age of eighteen he underwent a radical change. At this time there was a blessed awakening throughout the island, when many were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. These days are now long passed away, and successive years have done their work in calling the children of grace, who were then raised up, to their eternal rest. One of the last of that generation, if not indeed the very last, was Alexander Maciver. Soon after he was converted he attended a school taught by the late honoured William Urquhart, who was for some time a teacher in Lochs. William took notice of his pupil as a promising lad, and suggested to him the advisability of his following up his elementary course of education with a view to preparation for the gospel ministry. This advice was for some time acted on, but at length, owing to ill health and depression of mind, this course had to be abandoned. During this period of trial our friend went through deep waters that had their own effect on his whole after life. His grieved soul shunned consolation, and when he sought comforters he found none. Such had not been his state of mind before this fiery trial met him. For when

he first came to know the Lord, the glory of His name shone forth in everything, so that, turn what way he would, he saw the beauty of God's thoughts revealing itself to him. Sea and earth and sky were all new now. But his sky became overcast, and for a time neither sun, moon, nor stars were visible. Troubles great filled his soul, and these troubles lasted for a space of a few years. At this time among other visitors who came to see him was Finlay Munro, and of his visit and conversation Alexander retained a vivid memory. Contrary to expectation, these great troubles passed away, but they left him with shattered health that seemed to promise no long sojourn in this world. This shattered health, however, remained with him to his old age, and thus he was a marvel to many, and not least of all to himself. Like most of his neighbours, for some years he spent the fishing season on the East Coast, and here he came into contact with such men as Donald Mackay, Clashchreggan, and Alexander Gair. The first time he met Donald was in a house near Lybster, and as an illustration of the latter's brevity and sententiousness in social worship, Sandy used to tell of the first grace he heard Donald utter, "Advance the kingdom of thy dear Son, and destroy the kingdom of the devil." At Helmsdale our friend made the acquaintance of his future wife, one that was like-minded with himself. After her death he married again, but died a widower.

During his long life he took an active part in the work of his Master's house in Lewis, and wherever he went. His heart's delight was to be engaged in such services. Prayer, singing, reading, and exposition were his happiest exercises on earth. When he himself engaged in any exercise he held the attention of his hearers. He possessed a fine doctrinal discrimination, and thus his statements of doctrine were clear and systematic. But what he excelled in was in delineating Christian experience, its joys and sorrows, its failures and victories, its ups and downs. In applying the features of natural life around him to the realm of grace he likewise excelled. He kept his eyes open to see in nature illustrations of Scripture, and thus in connection with what he saw around him we remember him to have illustrated in particular the parables and figures of our Lord. Speaking once of "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," he referred to the growth of the divine life in the believer's heart and experience, as shown forth in what each of us could see for himself. "When the corn is in the ear the nights are short and the days are long, and it is the summer time of the whole year. Then the stalk stands up erect. This is the boldness of access obtained by the young Christian when enjoying the light of the sun of righteousness. True, the night does intervene, but at this part of his course the night does not last long, and day soon breaks. But as the ear fills, the head of the stalk gets heavier and heavier, and as it grows heavier it bends and bows downward, as though afraid to look up. Now, the nights are growing

longer and the days shorter. There may be less sunlight, but the corn is ripening for the harvest and the sickle. And when the appointed time comes it is cut down. So the Christian advancing in grace has to live less on sense and finds abundant reason for hanging his head in shame. Yet he is ripening for the heavenly garner, and when the due time comes he will go to his own place." At Friday question meetings he was ever an esteemed and welcome speaker. Having been himself in the depths and on the heights, he knew well how to deal with those alike who were tried and those who were rejoicing.

His old age was beautiful, and the sunset most beautiful of all. He had fought a good fight, he had kept the faith. When in 1893 our congregation was formed in Stornoway our venerable friend conducted the meetings. He was already in his eighty-ninth year. But for some time his youth seemed to be renewed, and his addresses were delivered with a vigour not only wonderful for a man of his age, but more particularly for one whose health had been long enfeebled. By taking the step involved in casting in his lot with us he alienated many of his old friends. Not that he cherished cold feelings towards them, but he experienced unkind treatment from many. This grieved him, but he bore it all with Christian meekness. His heart was bound up in the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom, and his zeal for truth and righteousness led him to stand by the Word of God in its integrity and by those doctrines that are founded upon it. The congregation in Stornoway was much in his thoughts, and when two of its office-bearers visited him on his deathbed he sent a solemn message to his old friends in parting. He told them to "remember the great eternity that was before them, and to see to it that their hopes were founded on the Christ revealed in the Scriptures. No other Saviour would stand the test of the great day. Let them see that they had their life from the Lord's death. Anyone who professed to have spiritual life, and who drew it from any other fountain would find it to be an eternal death, unless sovereign grace intervened."

The last time he visited his many friends in Stornoway was on the occasion of the funeral of the late Mrs. Nicolson of Laxdale. He then lectured at some meetings with all his old vigour, and even with more than his usual life and freshness. His health, however, showed now dangerous symptoms, and he hastened to return homewards. After reaching his home at Ramish he lingered on for four months. At times he seemed to forget where he was, and if he saw any about him would engage in prayer or lecture as though in a public meeting. His faculties were fresh up to the last, and his interest in the public affairs of the Church. For a while his faith was severely tried, but it came out of the furnace victorious. He then spoke of the trial he had just passed through, and of the victory granted him through grace. "Long have I been trying to keep myself from

sin, and have been ready to draw myself out of my Father's hands. Now, however, I lie in His hands, and do not wish to withdraw myself from His hold. O Father, wilt thou now take me to be with Thee? I am resigned to Thy will. If it be Thy pleasure that I go, that is welcome. If it be Thy will that I stay, and even suffer here, let Thy will be done. All my keeping of myself has been but Thy keeping of me, and I thank Thee for keeping me faithful to Thy cause and truth in spite of the enmity of hell. For hell has opened her mouth at my weak testimony. Friends, I would not take myself out of my Father's hands for all the world. I have ceased to keep myself. I am depending entirely on His keeping of me. What has His keeping been to me! No thanks seven thousand times to the enmity of hell."

For a number of years death had been a cause of anxiety to him, lest in the weakness of the last struggle he should say what would cause another to stumble. For some time, however, before he passed away, this fear had gone, and in his last illness he seemed after one period of trial to enjoy almost unbroken communion with his Redeemer. The last words of consciousness were his favourite text, "Happy are thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee! a people saved by the Lord." Speaking once of faith, hope, and love, he said that "eternal love, when it takes possession of those beloved, manifests itself in these three ways. When, however, the ransomed soul enters the eternal world, the three revert to their original oneness, for love is the life of the eternal world." Now that life has been entered on, and the Redeemer's prayer has received fulfilment once more, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Alexander Maciver entered on his rest on the 19th November, 1896, in the 92nd year of his age.

J. M.

Alasdair MacIomhair.

O CHIONN mios air ais dh'innis sinn d' ar luchd-leughaidh gun do chaochail an seann duine fughail so agus gheall sinn gum biodh iomradh air eachdraidh a bheatha agus air a chliu againn air son a mhios so.

Rugadh Alasdair anns a bhliadhna 1805 ann an Leodhas. Mun robh e fichead bliadhna a dh' aois thainig atharrachadh slainteil air: aig an am so bha dusgadh beannaichte air feadh eilein a dhuthchais nuair a bha moran air an toirt gu eolas spioradail air Criosd agus slighe na slainte. 'S fhada o chaidh an uair sin seachad a nis agus bha na bliadhnachan mar a chaidh iad seachad a' gairm dhachaidh gu'm fois cloinn nan gras a chaidh a

thogail aig an am sin. Bha Alasdair air fear do'n fheadhainn mu dheireadh do'n linn sin-Goirid an deigh dha bhi air iompachadh chaidh e do'n sgoile a bha seann Uilleam Urchadan diadhaidh a cumail ann an sgìre nan Loch. Thug Uilleam an aire dha mar ghille ro-ghèalltanach agus chomhairlich e dha leantuin air aghaidh leis a sgoile le suil ri obair na ministreileachd. Ghabh Alasdair a chomhairle so agus lean e car uine ris an ionnsachadh ach mu dheireadh gheill a shlainte agus thuit e ann am mimhisnich. Chaidh e a nis tre uisgibh domhain agus buairidhean lionmhor agus bha buaidh aig na nithibh sin air fad a bheatha as an deigh. Bha 'anam a diultadh solas a ghabhail agus luchd-comhfhurtachd cha d' fhuair e nuair a dh' iarr e iad. Cha-n ann mar sin a bha inntinn roimhe so mun tainig an deuchainn theinnteach so. Oir nuair a thainig e an toiseach gu eolas a ghabhail air an Tighearn chunnaic e gloire Dhe a dealrachadh anns na h-uile nithibh cruthaichte. Agus mar sin ge be air bith rathad o thionndaidheadh e bha e faotainn maise agus oirdheirceas smuaintean Dhe 'gan taisbeanadh fein dha. Bha sealladh ur aige air muir agus tir air an iarmailt agus na h-uile nithibh timchioll air. Ach a nis dh' fhalbh an solus so uaith. Bha e 'ga iomain le gaoith nam buairidhean. Cha bu leir dha grian no gealach no reultan. Lionadh 'anam le trioblaid, dh' iadh dorninnean geura a bhais uime rinn piantan ifrionn greim air. Chaidh moran d'a chairdean a choimhead air agus nam measg bha Fionnladh Munro agus bha deadh chuimhne aig Alasdair gu deireadh a la air Fionnladh agus air a chomhradh. Ach mu dheireadh thionndaidheadh sgaile a bhais gu maduinn. Thainig e a ris chum an t-soluis agus chunnaic e fireantachd Dhe. Ged a fhuair e thairis air an trioblaid inntinn mhoir so bha a shlainte gle bhriste agus bha e anacomasach air obair throm sam bith a dheanamh. Cha robh e coltach gum biodh e fada beo anns an t-saoghal so: fhuair e ma ta saoghal fada ged a lean a shlainte a bhi gle bhriste. Bha so 'na aobhar iongantais do mhoran agus dha fein cuideachd.

Coltach ris a chuid a's mo d'a choimhearsnaich chaidh e air son beagain bhliadhnaidh gus an Aird an ear aig am an iasgaich. Ann an sin fhuair e eolas air moran do na h-aithriche diadhaidh mar a bha Domhnall Macaoidh chlais-a-chreagain agus Alasdair Gearr. A cheud uair a chunnaic e Domhnall thachair iad a bhi anns an aon tigh fagus air Liath bost. Dh' iarr Domhnall beannachd air urachadh a bha iad a faghail agus mar chomharadh agus dhearbhadh air cho sgiobalta agus a bhiodh na seanairean sin air ceann dleasdanas fhollaisich is tric a dh'innseadh Alasdair an t-altachadh sin. "Cuir air aghaidh cinneachadh rioghachd Mic do ghraidh agus cuir as do rioghachd an donais." Cha robh e fada ach bha moran ann. 'S ann an nuair a bha Alasdair anns an duthaich sin a fhuair e a cheud bhean a bha a dh' aon inntinn ris fein. Nuair a chaochail ise phos e an dara uair ach chaochail e 'na bhantrach.

Re a bheatha fhada bha e gnìomhach ann an obair tìghe a Mhaighstir ann an Leodhas agus anns gach aite far an tachradh e a bhi. Bha tlachd a chridhe anns an t-seirbhis agus cha robh e 'g iarraidh an tuilleadh toilinntinn anns a bheatha so na gheibheadh e eadar urnuigh agus seinn agus leughadh. Nuair a bhiodh e fein an ceann na seirbhis ghlacadh e aire an t-sluaigh. Bha fìor-bhreithneachadh aige ann an teagasgan na fìrinn agus mar sin bha e an comhnuidh soilleir agus ordail nuair a laimhsich-eadh e iad. Ma bha teagasg ann nì's trice air am biodh e tighinn na cheile 'sann air gradh sìorruidh an Athair, a Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh agus toradh a ghraidh sin ann a bhi tarruing am fagus air an Athair le obair an Spioraid tre eifeachd fuil Chrìosd nam peacach bochd a thaghadh o ghras chum uchd-mhacachd na cloinne. Ach 'sann gu h-araidh nuair a laimhsich-eadh e fein fhiosrachadh na h-eaglais a bhiodh a ghliocas agus a thairisneachd rim faicinn. Labhradh e m'an aoibhneas agus ma'm bròn—uairean air an togail an airde uairean eile air an leagadh a sìos uairean 'gan claidheadh leir naimhdeibh agus 'gan ruagadh agus a saltairt orra. Bha aon nì sonruichte eile aige: bha a shuilean fosgailte gu bhi faicinn samhlaidhean anns a chruthachadh air nithibh spioradail. Tha cuimhne againn aon uair air e a bhi labhairt air "an tus am fochann an deigh sin an dias agus an deigh sin an lan-arbhair anns an deis." Tha so 'na shamladh air beatha Dhe ann an anam a Chrìosduidh. Nuair a tha an t-arbhar a tighinn fo dheis tha na h-oidhchean goirid agus na laithean fada agus 'se so an t-am a's grianach e do'n bhliadhna uile gu leir. Tha an coinnle an sin a seasamb dìreach suas ris an iarmailt. 'Se so freagradh deadh choguis tre shoillseachadh "Grian na fireantachd" air an anam nì a tha an Chrìosduidh og gu tric a mealtuinn. Is cinnteach gu bheil an oidhche a tighinn eadhon aig an am so ach chaneil i mairsinn fada agus cha'n fhada ach am bris an la a ris. Tha fas mor ann. Ach nuair a tha an dias a lìonadh tha i a fas nis Truinne agus a toirt air a cheann a bhi cromadh agus a lubadh sìos mar gum biodh eagal air sealltuinn suas. Nise tha na h-oidhchean a fas nì's faide agus na laithean nì's giorra agus ma dh'fhaoidte cha'n eil a ghrian cho tric ann. Ach tha an t-arbhar ag abuchadh air son a chorrain agus an fhoghair. Agus nuair a thig am foghar gearrar sìos e. 'Sann mar sin cuideachd a tha an seanna Chrìosduidh. Mar a theid e air aghaidh ann am beatha nan gras tha e ga shaoradh o bhi tighinn beo air fairichidhean agus tha e ag abuchadh ann a bhi siu bhal cha'n ann a reir seallaidh ach a reir creidimh. Tha e a faotainn iomadh aobhair a mach air son a bhi cromadh a chinn fo naire. Ach air son sin tha e fas nis ullaimhe air son 'aite fein shuas agus nuair a thig an t-am theid e an sin.

Air Di-haoine na ceisde bha e riamh 'na fhear labhairt taitneach do chloinn nan gras. Bha e fein anns na doimhneachdaibh agus air an t-sliabh agus b' aithne dha laimhseachadh cor nam bochd co dhiubh a bha iad anns an dorch no anns an t-solus.

Bu bhoidheach a shean aois agus nuair a bha a ghrian a dol fuidhe 'sann bu mhaisiche a bha e uile. Bha e ri deadh chombrag-chrioch-naich e a chursa ghleidh e an creidimh.

Anns a bhliadhna 1893 nuair a thainig an dealachadh anns an Eaglais agus a thoisich an coimh thional againn an Steornobhagh air a bhi cruinneachadh 'se Alasdair a bhiodh air ceann na coinneimh agus re uine bha 'oige air ath nuadhachadh agus ged a bha e 88 bliadhna a dh' aois b'iongantach cho cumhachdach soilleir agus a bha a ghuth gu h-araidh nuair a bha e cho diblidh fad a bheatha. Nuair a dh' fhag e an Eaglais anns an robh e chaill e moran d'a chairdean ged a bha am fuachd a nochd iad dha 'na bhron cha do ghluaiseadh e o sheasmhachd 'fhiannis. Ghiu lain e gach ni ann an spiorad na macantachd. Bha a chridhe ceangailte suas ann an soirbheachadh aobhair Chriosd-agus thug 'eud air son fireantachd agus fiorghloine na flrinn air seasamh air taobh na muinntir a chum ri seann steidh na-h-Eaglais shaoire. Bha an coimh thional ann an Steornobhagh gle dhluth ri a chridhe agus nuair a chaidh dithis do'n luchd dreuchd a choimhead air agus e air leabaidh a bhais chuir e fios leo thun a choimhthionail. Dh' iarr e orra cuimhneachadh air an t-siorruidheachd mhoir a tha rompa agus a thoirt an aire gur ann air Criosd air fhoillseachadh anns an fhocal a bhiodh an dochas steidhichte-oir cha deanadh ni eile a chuis aig an la mhor. Dh' iarr e orra bhi cinnteach gum biodh am beatha aca o bhas Chriosd oir an fheadhainn aig am bheil a bheatha so bidh iad maille ri Criosd gu siorruidh. Neach sam bith aig an robh beatha a tobar eile gheibheadh e mach gum biodh i 'na bas mur tigeadh gras anns an eadairginn.

An uair mu dheireadh a bha e ann an Steornobhagh thainig e gu bhi lathair aig tiodhlacadh a bhana charaid urramaich Ban trach Caluim Mhic-Neacail ann an Giurseadar. Chum e beagan choinneamh aig an am so agus bha e cho sgairteil agus a bha e riamh agus ni bu bheothail agus urail eadhon na b' abhaist dha bhi. Bha a shlainte ma ta a briseadh agus e fein a dol uaith agus chaidh e dhachaidh. Bha e ceithir miosan beo an deigh so. Aig amannaibh dhichunnhnicheadh e far an robh e agus nam faiceadh e neach no dithis a stigh rachadh e an ceann na h-urnuigh no an fhocail mar gum biodh e air ceann coinneimh. Bha a bhu adhan air an cumail ris gus a chrich agus bha togail aige ri gnothuichean follaiseach na h-Eaglais. Car uine bha a chreidimh air a dhearbhadh gle mhor ach thainig e a mach as an àmhuinn gun chron. An sin dh' innis e mu'n deuchainn agus mar a shaor an Tighearn e. Ag coimhead air ais air a bheatha thubhairt e gun robh e daonnan a feuchanin ri e fein a ghliadhudh o gach coslas uilc agus ullamh air e fein a tharruing a lamhan 'Athar ach a nis bha e soilleir gur e Iehobhah a ghleidh e. Thug e buidheachas dha airson gun do ghleidheadh dileas e ri' fhirinn agus sin dh aindeain innleachdan agus naimhdeis na h-ifrioun. Tha mi nis 'nam luidhe ann an lamhaibh m' Athar agus chaneil mi ag

iarraidh mi fhein a thoirt as a sin. Deanadh e mar is toil leis ma chi e freagarach mo thoirt as a so tha mi reidh ri' thoil agus ma chi e iomchuidh gum fuirichinn seadh agus gum fuilinginn an so a thoil gun robh deanta. Sguir mi o bhi gam ghleidheadh fhein tha mi 'gam fhagail fhein air a ghleidheadhsa. Cah toirinn mi fein a gleidheadh m' Athar airson an-t-saoghail.

Bha e fada fo eagal roimh 'n bhas oir dh'fheudadh e nithean a radh aig a chrich a bhiodh nan ceap-tuislidh do fheadhainn eile. Ach air son beagain uine roimh a bhas dh'fhalbh an t-eagal so uaith agus aig a chrich bha e mar gum biodh e sealbhachadh cochuinn gun bhriseadh ris an Tighearn. Bé na briathran deireannach a chualns aige rann a bhiodh aige gle thrie "Is sona thu o Israel co tha cosmhuil riut sluagh air a shaoradh leis an Tighearn." Bha e aon uair a bruidhinn air creidimh dochas agus gradh-agus gur e gradh a's mo dhiubh. Thubhairt e gum bheil an gradh siorruidh nuair a tha e gabhail seilbhe dhe a chuspairean 'ga thaisbeanadh fein anns na tri grasan sin Ach nuair a shuibh las an t-anam as an t-saoghal so thig na tri gu bhi 'nan aon mar a bha iad riamh a thaobh gne agus mar a bha iad an toiseach. 'Se an gradh eileamaid na siorruidheachd. Fhuair e fein an gradh iomlan sin a nis agus aon uair eile tha eadar ghuidhe Chriosd air freagradh fhaotainn anns an ni a dh' iarr E. "Athair, is aill leam an dream a thug tha dhomh gum bidh iad maille ruim far an bheil! Mi a chum gum faic iad mo ghloir a thug thu dhomh."

Chaochail Alasdair air an naothadh la deug do cheud mhios a gheamhraidh so anns an dara bliadhna deug thar a cheithir fichead d'a aois.

Notes and Comments.

A PRIEST KIDNAPPED IN LONDON.—The Bishop of Marlborough when presiding on 7th November, at a meeting of the Highgate Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, gave remarkable information with regard to a Romish Priest of Alsace who desired admission to the Church of England. The priest's preparation for this purpose had been committed to him. He then found what a remarkable man that priest was. That man's testimony was that in France and Spain there was, a few years ago, not one Bible in every thousand homes, but that things had since improved in this respect owing to the efforts of this Society. When the time, however, came for the priest's admission to the Church he was suddenly found to be missing. It was afterwards discovered that one night when in Kensal Town, London, he was kidnapped, and eventually taken back to the place he left in France. Letters had been received from him since which showed that he still wrote under constraint. *The Echo* states that the priest, who is M. Gurjot to name, was induced to temporarily visit the Continent on being assured by certain Roman ecclesiastics that his sister was

dangerously ill, and desired to see him. The latest information received in London is to the effect that he is incarcerated against his will in a Trappist monastery at Delenberg, New Lutterbach, Alsace, and is suffering seriously.

THE MODERATORSHIP OF THE FREE ASSEMBLY.—This honour has been declined by Professor A. B. Davidson owing to infirm health, and the post has been conferred on Rev. Hugh M'Millan, D.D., LL.D., of Greenock.

THE SEASON IN FULL SWING.—The annual ferment among the nations is now proceeding. At Archangel, New York, Berlin, Inverness, Copenhagen, and throughout Christendom all ranks and classes are celebrating Christmas. What is Christmas? Ostensibly it is a commemoration of the Heavenly birth of Christ—really it is a carnival of feasting and frivolity, seasoned in some places and cases by religious views and emotions. To devout persons who may think that they verily ought to mark the anniversary of the Saviour's birth by some special observance we would point out that though the custom is very old, yet it is not old enough. It does not reach back to the times of the Apostles. Paul would have said of it "We have no such custom nor the Churches of God." And like as God by blotting out from the remembrance of man the real place of the holy sepulchre has made vain all devout pilgrimages to the spot, so by quite hiding from human research the true date of the Saviour's birth He has signified that anniversary commemorations of the event are not His intention. Let men busy themselves in fulfilling His whole revealed will (and then they will have enough to do) without heaping up ordinances of will-worship which, however pious they may be in appearance, are yet without all warrant of the Divine wisdom.

To the promiscuous crowds of revellers throughout the Christian world who presume to associate Christ's name with proceedings which resemble the heathen feasts to Jupiter or Bacchus, it may be fitting to say that Christ is a living King able to avenge all mockery of His name. In persons of a shrewd and cynical turn of mind it must excite very satiric thoughts to see newspaper editors, railway managers, theatre proprietors, and other individuals, who spend their whole lives breaking the Sabbath, and warring against the power of godliness—to see them suddenly seized with a fit of loyalty to Christ and crowding in with the wise men from the east to present their offerings—evergreens and congratulations. Are you indeed glad that this Grand Enemy of the works of the flesh was born in Bethlehem? What a sudden and superfluous piety is yours my friends! What a grotesque piece of new cloth on the old garment is this affectation of gladness at the birth of the king of Israel, contrasted with your well known hostility to all the main objects for which He died, and for which He now lives. Scottish Presbyterians who are beginning to dote on this Christ-

mas vanity may be reminded that the thing smells very strongly of the old cask. Christ-mass—the word sufficiently declares the origin of the thing. Scotchmen surely have become blind, they cannot see afar off, they have forgotten that at a great cost to Reformers and Covenanters was this nation purged from these vanities of a false religion. Romanists are glad to see Scottish Presbyterians dallying with their rites and ceremonies, and they shrewdly consider that falling in love with the forms and fashions of the worship of “Holy Church” will be an effectual inlet to her as yet unpopular doctrines.

The Suppression of Convents.

STARTLING INCIDENT.

SPEAKING at a meeting recently held in Exeter Hall for the suppression of convents, the Rev. W. Lancelot Holland, M.A., said there was a great deal of false sentiment about convents. It was usual in this country to regard them as the abodes of peace, love and sanctity, but they were the antithesis of all this. Behind those lofty walls all sorts of horrors were perpetrated. He created a deep impression on the audience by stating that not long since a girl was passing a convent and heard terrible screams from the grounds, and the piteous pleading, “Don’t put me there! oh, don’t put me there!” The cries subdued into low moans, which were heard more and more faintly till they ceased. It was not only this girl who heard them, but some men who were near. One said it made him feel ill to hear them, and they haunted him long after. This was not a solitary instance, for, when the priests have not fenced off the public out of earshot, cries of terror and pain have been repeatedly heard from convents. Nor is this surprising when we bear in mind that English law does not run in convents, but canon law is supreme. Mr. Holland gave samples of this law, of which the following is one: By that law it is ordered, “If a nun puts off the frock (*i.e.*, attempts to escape from her confinement and be free from the three terrible vows) no allegation shall be heard, but, being compelled to return to their convents, they must be punished as apostates.” This punishment consists of imprisonment, tortures, or death in the most hideous forms. The speaker referred to Dr. Wylie’s statement that convents come into collision with the most fundamental rights of the British constitution, viz., the rights of property, personal security, and the locomotive faculty. It has been said there is the Habeas Corpus Act. True, but it is not of the slightest use to a nun, any more than it is for a famished beggar to know that there is turtle soup in the mansion house.—*The Bulwark.*