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The Assemblies.

THE annual General Assemblies of the Established and Free Churches concluded their deliberations in the ordinary course. In last issue we referred to the opening services. We now endeavour briefly to pass under review some of the more notable matters that occupied the attention of these Courts.

THE ESTABLISHED ASSEMBLY.

At this Court, on Friday, 21st May, Dr. Scott laid on the table the report of the Committee on Legislation and Church Reform. Dr. Macleod, Govan, made a statement on the general scope of the report. The Reform Committee suggest that in addition to the training received at the Divinity Halls, probationers should have further training under the pastoral oversight of duly qualified persons, whereby their devotional habits and ability for practical work should be developed. It is also recommended that after a period of probation, say of two years under this regime, young men should then be ordained to the office of the ministry, although not called to a pastoral charge. They would, however, be qualified to act the part of assistants to other ministers in the pastoral office. Now, this scheme has in our eyes a very suspicious appearance. Dr. Macleod and his co-workers are ritualistic in their tendencies, and have a liking for the Episcopal form of Church government. The recommendations here given point in the direction of establishing, as a new order in the Church, men who are neither probationers nor pastors and yet are ordained ministers. The Presbyterian and Scriptural practice has always been to have only one order in the ministry, that of pastors ordained over congregations. This new scheme raises the pastor to a higher rank than the merely ordained minister, and thus at one and the same time lowers the Scriptural character of ordination, and unduly exalts the pastorate. No such distinctions exist in Scripture, and as surely as the divine rule is being set aside as certainly is all reform of this kind fitted to do evil rather than good. We regard this step as a pronounced shadow of approaching Episcopacy.

On Monday, the 24th, among other things, there was introduced an overture from the Synod of Angus and Mearns on the subject of religious education in schools. With this overture we feel in the fullest sympathy. It set forth that the religious training of the young in all educational seminaries had always been the distinctive policy of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and the Act of 1872 was a fundamental interference with the policy, in so far as the State abandoned recognition and responsibility for such education, and since that time the moral and religious condition of the Scottish people had thereby been endangered. Mr. Stewart Lindsay, Kirriemuir, in moving that the overture be received, said he had no hesitation in saying, that, if the public were fully alive to the importance of this question, the expression of opinion would be much stronger than that contained in the overture. He said in closing, that if the State could give grants to encourage the study of Greek and Roman history, could it not give equal encouragement for the people to acquire a knowledge of the ancient kingdom of Israel and her God-given leaders, and a knowledge of the life and work of our blessed Lord and the acts of His apostles; and surely the everlasting principles of morality contained in the Bible were as important as the principles of any of the scientific subjects of which they now heard so much. What the great body of the people of Scotland desired was the removal of that bar whereby Her Majesty's Inspectors refused to acknowledge as a class subject these important Bible truths. Subsequent speakers did not come up to the hearty and genuine ring of Mr. Lindsay's speech, and more than one characterised the views of the Synod of Angus and Mearns as "very gloomy." We are glad to know that there is one Synod of this Church that has what are called gloomy views of the education of this country, and trust it may continue to hold them firmly. Education will continue to degenerate, and breed infidelity until Bible teaching gets its proper place in our schools. The overture, along with some additions, was received.

The Assembly then proceeded to consider what is known as the Kilmun heresy case. At last Assembly, the Rev. Alexander Robinson, minister of Kilmun Parish, was proved to be the author of a book entitled, "The Saviour in the Newer Light," in which it was held he had published views containing unsound doctrine and teaching subversive of the Church concerning (1) the authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness of the four Gospels, and the divine inspiration and integrity of the writers; (2) the divinity of Christ; (3) the holy sacraments; (4) the miracles wrought by Christ during his earthly ministry; and (5) Christ's resurrection. Mr. Robinson was suspended from the ministry for a year, enjoined to withdraw the book, and instructed to appear before this General Assembly to state whether he was prepared wholly to repudiate the statements in the book.

After some discussion about the mode of procedure, the

Moderator, addressing Mr. Robinson, who was at the bar, called for his answer to the deliverance of last Assembly. He replied he was ready to give his answer in any form, but said he had drawn up a careful statement which set forth his exact theological position, and asked the Assembly to accept this statement as his answer. Mr. Robinson, however, was informed that the Assembly could not enter again into the procedure or merits of the case as put before them last year, but they would be glad to hear any explanation within these limits. Indulgence was granted him to read his statement, but not as an answer to the demand of the Assembly. It is not our intention to criticise at length Mr. Robinson's statement. It was a very unsatisfactory production. He tried to show that the ideas contained in his book were developments of the teaching of the Confession of Faith. But what these developments have led him to may be gathered from the fact that he asserts the universal fatherhood of God, and claims that this newer conception had been for "just about fifty years not only tolerated but adopted within this Church." The proof of this he gives, to quote his own irreverent language, "in the banishing from its pulpits of those imaginations according to which it was supposed possible for the Creator to torture everlastingly His own creatures, and in the proclaiming of the Father-name from every side." Mr. Robinson, in consequence of his erroneous view of the divine fatherhood, here repudiates the doctrine of everlasting punishment, describes it as an imagination, and gives a distorted view of it, leaving out of sight the fact of sin and its deserts. He claims that the Established Church has banished this doctrine from its pulpits. We are not in a position to say whether this is true or not, but it was rather significant that no member at this or any other stage in the discussion contradicted Mr. Robertson's statement on the subject. We fear it is sadly too true that the declaration of the everlasting punishment of sinners in hell has been banished from the majority of pulpits in Scotland. The doctrine may be flatly denied by but a few, but it is practically denied by hundreds of the clergy for they seldom, if ever, preach it. This was not so in Scotland's best days. It was those eminent men who preached most fully the riches of the love of God in Christ Jesus who also warned sinners that "the wages of sin is death," and "that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment." It is a spurious and accursed charity that hides this fundamental truth from the world. But Mr. Robinson tells us how he got rid of this doctrine, for he says that "so long as there was only Biblical literalism," or the letter of the Bible "to appeal to, the (newer) conception seemed a forbidden act in the face of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew and the eighth chapter of John." The former chapter records the words of Christ in reference to the events of the great day of judgment, when the Lord shall say to those in the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," and the latter chapter records His

words to the Jews who claimed to have "one Father, even God." "If God were your father, ye would love me;" "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." It was by disowning these words altogether that Mr. Robinson found room for the new conception of the universal fatherhood of God. This simply shows the desperate resorts to which men flee in order to get rid of truths unpalatable to the flesh. They have no hesitation in denying the integrity and inspiration of the Bible. Mr. Robinson, towards the end of his speech, contended that he acted in his interpretation of Scripture on the principle of distinguishing between the representation and the reality. This means that he claimed for himself liberty, or rather licence, to distinguish Christ, the reality, from the representation of Him given by the evangelists. The claim proceeds upon the unwarrantable and dishonourable hypothesis that the evangelists did not give a real record of Christ's life; in fact, that not only were they not inspired of God, but that they were untrustworthy men who coloured their narratives to suit their own ideas. Of course, this remarkable principle of interpretation also involves the assumption that Mr. Robinson and men of his stamp are better able to find out the true Christ than those who were His devoted personal followers and were eye witnesses of His actual work. We think that this new principle is thoroughly discreditable in its character, and serves to exhibit, if nothing else, the extreme to which, in the case of men of some culture and learning, the carnal mind will go in its opposition to the Word of God.

After Mr. Robinson concluded his statement the Moderator put to him the question whether he was now prepared to repudiate the teaching condemned by the Assembly and expressed in his book, to which he answered, "No." At this juncture considerable discussion arose as to whether the decision of the Assembly should be given at once, and it was finally agreed to resume consideration of the case on the following Friday.

On the evening of the same day there was taken up the Forth Church Concert case. This consisted of an appeal by William Darling, coalmaster, Glasgow, and others, trustees of the Church, against decisions of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, and the Presbytery of Lanark, dismissing a petition of the trustees, craving them to find that the Rev. Walter P. Brock, minister of the Church, in granting the use of the Church fabric for a secular concert had committed a contravention of the laws of the Church of Scotland, and thereafter to adopt measures to prevent in future the repetition of such action. The evidence bore that there was "a tremendous degree of the comic element and the burlesque" in the concert, which was to be the first of a series, to provide funds for Sabbath School and other purposes. Proof was brought forward to show that the deeds of the Church provided that "the Church shall be used only as a place of worship, in connection with the Church of Scotland."

The Assembly, with commendable wisdom, sustained the appeal of the trustees, recalled the judgments of the Synod and Presbytery, and found that the use of the Church for a secular concert was illegal and improper, and appointed a copy of this deliverance to be engrossed in the minute books of the Presbytery and the Synod. Rev. Mr. Scott, Camelon, suggested that the injunction should be sent down to all the Presbyteries and Synods of the Church, but this was said not to be competent.

On Thursday, 27th May, the report on Church Reform already mentioned came up for discussion. The first section of it anent Institutes for the pastoral training of candidates for the ministry was adopted, with the condition that the subject would be reported again to next Assembly before any formal steps should be taken to carry the proposal into effect. Several members raised objections to the proposal, and one, we think, struck the nail on the head when he hinted that they were about to set up "monastic walls." The Divinity Halls should provide sufficient preliminary training, and the ordinary field of the ministry should supply the rest. This new institution is but a germ of the monastery, however strongly the promoters of it may deny the same.

The other section of the report in regard to making all probationers eligible for ordination was received (not approved) and was ordered to be sent down for the consideration of the Presbyteries. There came out in the deliverance on this subject moved by Dr. Lang, Glasgow, what we have already hinted at, that practically a new order is to be set up. A pastor may have a number of these ordained probationers assisting him in his parish, and this looks very like a bishop with a number of curates under him. The proposal is a step in the direction of framing the Presbyterian order on the lines of Episcopacy. No wonder that one member said that this Committee was "wishful to give them a new Church, lock, stock, and barrel."

On Friday, 28th May, the Kilmun Heresy case was resumed. A long discussion arose in which a considerable amount of sympathy was shown with Mr. Robinson, especially by the younger ministers of the Church. Three motions were proposed, one which simply desired the case to take end, and two which embodied, along with this proposal, censure of Mr. Robinson. But these, although vigorously supported, fell out of sight, and Dr. Scott's motion was carried, to the effect that Mr. Robinson's suspension be continued, and that, in the event of his resignation not being tendered within a month, the Presbytery of Dunoon pronounce sentence of deposition against him, and receive no appeal. Several dissents were recorded against the Assembly's decision which, we fear, is only too manifest proof that heretical views are not confined to the minister of Kilmun.

At this date we are able to announce that Mr. Robinson did not tender his resignation, and so was deposed on 8th June, by the Presbytery of Dunoon.

An indication of the Episcopal tendency of the Church was given on Saturday, 29th May, when the Assembly carried a motion, there being only three dissentients, in favour of sending fraternal and friendly greetings to the Church of England as about to meet at the Lambeth Conference, and of expressing sympathy with the celebration at that Conference, of the 1300th anniversary of Augustine (not Augustine the great), who came from Rome with Christianity, to Kent in England. This man was an emissary of Pope Gregory I., and brought over the heresies of that period.

The Assembly was closed on the evening of 31st May, by an address from the Moderator, Dr. Mair, on "Loyalty: the Christ our King." The address was characterised by an orthodox tone and spirit.

The proceedings of this Court were a strange medley. Considerable firmness was shown on the right side in important cases, such as the Kilmun Heresy case, and some others in which ministers of loose character were deposed from office. But after all, we fear that elements prevail within this Church essentially obstructive of the cause of truth, and of real spiritual prosperity. A day of God's renewing and reforming power is much required within her pale.

THE FREE ASSEMBLY.

This Assembly, on Saturday, 22nd May, received the report on Education. Rev. Dr. John Macewan referred to the Bill for Voluntary Schools recently before Parliament, and pointed out that Roman Catholics gave as a reason for their seeking Government support in education the fact that special religious instruction of a denominational character was supported in the schools in Scotland. Dr. Macewan, it appears, is now prepared on this account to give up the teaching of the Shorter Catechism in our schools and simply ask that the Bible should be taught. We think it very weak that any concession of the kind should be made for such a poor reason. Romanists have no right to receive support in any form from the government of this Protestant country. We, again, are the loyal citizens of a Protestant and Presbyterian nation, and the Shorter Catechism, along with the Confession of Faith, is a precious part of Scotland's heritage. England, also, at the Reformation, practically endorsed both documents, but speedily relinquished her hold of them. It ill becomes us as a nation not to do everything in our power to secure a permanent place for the Shorter Catechism in our schools. Mr. Archibald Macneilage, Glasgow, expressed his surprise as to whether the Dr. Macewan of to-day was the Rev. John Macewan who a number of years ago was a staunch supporter of Dr. Begg in his efforts on behalf of the Shorter Catechism in the schools.

On Monday, 24th May, Dr. Stalker, Glasgow, gave in the report of the College Committee. He took occasion to eulogise

the memories of Professors Candlish and Drummond. Rev. Mr. Macaskill, Dingwall, said there was no question that there was a feeling very strongly abroad that young men were coming out of their Halls who were really not what their predecessors were. It was not lack of learning and knowledge that was complained of; it was lack of knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and utter lack of preaching that gospel to perishing sinners. He recently heard of a lady who, when asked her opinion about a sermon from one of their young men, replied, "All the while he was preaching I was thanking God that all he was saying was not true." He had also been told of a licentiate of their Free Church who lately asked some one, "Do you believe in the supernatural?" Let them imagine a licentiate of their church who did not believe in the supernatural. Two speakers vainly tried to obviate the effect of Mr. Macaskill's remarks. What although they could have proved them to be incorrect? It is perfectly possible to substantiate other things of a similar character against young preachers that have emanated from these Halls.

On the 25th May, a private conference was held by members of Assembly in regard to union with the U.P. Church. The chiefly conspicuous result of this conference was the bringing to the light of the views of Rev. Mr. Macaskill, Dingwall, in regard to the proposed union. It would appear from the report of his speech that it was chiefly occupied with quotations from statements of Dr. Begg in 1863, which were in favour of a union between all parties. The report then states that Mr. Macaskill went on to give Dr. Begg's views as justifying his own position now in appearing to be in favour of the proposed union. This expression was received with dissatisfaction by several of the Constitutionalists present. Mr. Macalister, Edinburgh, pointed out that there was a great difference between 1863 and 1897, and that Dr. Begg would have taken up to-day an attitude on this subject of a character considerably changed from that expressed in the statements quoted by Mr. Macaskill. The impression left by the conference was that the Constitutional party was divided on the subject of union, and that some, such as Mr. Macaskill, were not prepared to take a decided stand against it.

The Assembly this day proceeded to the election of two theological professors. Rev. Alexander Martin, M.A., of Morningside Church, Edinburgh, was unanimously appointed to the Chair of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology at the New College vacated by Professor Blaikie. Dr. W. R. Taylor, Glasgow, proposed Mr. Martin, and it was rather significant that amid all his allusions to Mr. Martin's qualifications he made no reference to his father, the late Dr. Hugh Martin, one of the ablest theologians of a past generation. To have alluded to Dr. Martin, however, would have introduced an unpleasant element into the present Assembly, as he was a vigorous opponent of union with the U.P. Church, and also one of the most powerful defenders of sound doctrine and purity

of worship in modern times. It may be objected that no reference to Dr. Martin was necessary, but it is customary when the occasion suits for proposers of men, even to theological chairs, to advance everything that is fitted to add honour to the name of their candidates. But on this occasion the circumstance was not taken advantage of. We are convinced, however, that Mr. Martin does not follow in his father's footsteps in many important respects. If he did, he probably would not be in the Free Church to-day.

The next chair that was filled up was that of Systematic Theology in Glasgow, rendered vacant by the death of Professor Candlish. Dr. James Denney, Broughty Ferry, was elected by a large majority to this office. Rev. Murdo Mackenzie, Inverness, proposed Rev. John Macpherson, M.A., Findhorn. In the course of his speech, he said that Dr. Denney had given utterance to views on the canon of Scripture and inspiration of the Bible that would be most disastrous to the Church if their students were to imbibe them. Mr. Macaskill, who seconded this proposal, stated also that Dr. Denney was not right on the doctrine of sin and the atonement. The Assembly paid little heed to these statements. It is very questionable, however, if even Mr. Macpherson, who was proposed by the leaders of the Constitutional party, is everything that he ought to be. We have never heard of his name being associated with the party who stood up for the principles of 1843, and as a public witness in Assembly or conference against the downgrade movement he has been nowhere. He even by the mouth of Mr. Lee disowned the references made by his supporters to Dr. Denney, and we are greatly mistaken if Mr. Macpherson is not also an advocate of disestablishment. The Constitutionals are evidently in a miserable plight when they have no man to propose to a theological chair who is an out-and-out defender of the principles of 1843. As for Dr. Denney, it is evident that he is one who will do little against the advancing tide of infidel criticism of the Bible, and has already helped on the tide himself. This is the kind of men the Free Church delights to honour, men of gifts and learning, but men who have made shipwreck of the Faith.

A second private conference on the subject of union was held on the morning of the 26th May. The chief features of interest were speeches by Mr. Hay Thorburn and Mr. Archibald Macneilage, Glasgow. Mr. Thorburn deprecated the union altogether, but Mr. Macneilage gave the conference to understand that, under certain conditions, he would not oppose the union. We are afraid that Mr. Macneilage, like Dr. Macewan, is not the same man he was a short time ago, and that he has come under the potent spell of Dr. Rainy.

On the 27th the debate on the Union Question took place. Dr. Rainy made a motion that concluded as follows:—"Accordingly, in the earnest hope and prayer that there may prove to be

no bar to union between churches already so closely related, the General Assembly reappoints the Committee, authorising and instructing them to consider and confer with the Committee of the U.P. Church regarding the practical questions which bear on incorporating union, and to report to next Assembly." In the course of his speech it was brought out that the two bodies were already very near one another. Each had the same Confession of Faith, and they each had a Declaratory Act. At the same time, he stated, that they must take each other as they stood, and have mutual liberty of opinion on any points of difference.

Rev. Mr. Macaskill, Dingwall, moved as an addition to Dr. Rainy's motion, that "the General Assembly at the same time think it right to declare, for the guidance of the Committee, that no adjustment of these practical questions will be satisfactory which does not provide that the doctrine of the Confession of Faith as to the powers and duties of the civil magistrate, with reference to the public profession of the Christian religion, will continue obligatory on the ministers and elders of the Church, subject to the explanation contained in Act 12, Assembly 1846, and that does not plainly preserve liberty to the members of the United Church to strive, as they may see occasion, to secure the performance of the magistrates' duty contained in the last clause of the Protest of 1843." One would have naturally expected that Mr. Macaskill, in his speech supporting this motion, would have dwelt very strongly upon the Scriptural character and far-reaching importance of the duties of the civil magistrate towards the Church of Christ. But he took up the time chiefly in showing how little difference there actually was between even the principles of national religion as held by Constitutionalists and those held by the U.P. Church. He said there was only one point of difference; the right and duty of the civil magistrate to set up an establishment of religion. The tenor of his remarks on this head led one to think that he considered this only a subordinate point. He summed up by saying was this point of difference, *if* it were modified by the liberty desired in his motion, the liberty, namely, to strive after the attainment of the establishment principle, so important as to bar all negotiations for union? It could be easily seen that Mr. Macaskill was smoothing the way for final acceptance of the union. The fact, also, that he proposed his motion only as an addition to Principal Rainy's shows that he had already accepted the overture of the leader of the Assembly, in which it is stated that "the religious necessities of the country, and the situation of the two Churches, point to an incorporating union as alone adequate to the present circumstances." Mr. Macaskill may say that the reason he proposed his motion as an addition to the Principal's was in order that it might find its way into the hands of the Union Committee for consideration, but what was this but an unworthy compromise in order to keep up the appearance of faithfulness to original Free Church principles?

Rev. Mr. Dingwall, Poolewe, who seconded Mr. Macaskill's motion, said there was no doubt a leakage would follow on account of the union. But he was of opinion that that was no good reason for refusing to enter into the proposed negotiations. If Mr. Macaskill's addition was added to the motion it would not stop the leakage altogether; it would lessen it very much. We understand by "leakage" a secession from the Free Church of people opposed to this union. It is to be hoped that there are some still in the Highlands who won't be hoodwinked by their leaders, and that the leakage they fear will in no way be lessened by their unworthy devices. Rev. J. L. Robertson, Rayne, moved to the effect that no urgent circumstances have arisen to justify a reopening of negotiations for incorporating union. He said his reason for objecting to the going on with union was one of principle. He knew perfectly well that within the United Presbyterian Church, so far as liberty was concerned, he would have freedom personally to hold to the principles of Church and State which he held at the present time, but they would not be at liberty to apply their principles. The right and duty of the State to establish the Church was a principle held by the Free Church throughout its whole history, and embodied in the very heart of its constitution. It was a question in their Church now whether they really held that principle at all.

Rev. M. Mackenzie, Inverness, seconded this motion. He said reference had been made to Dr. Begg's utterances when negotiations for union began, but there was no reference made to Dr. Begg's utterances when he was compelled to resign his seat on their Union Committee. He (Dr. Begg) said on the floor of this Assembly that he would prefer to be a minister of the smallest body in the country with a testimony than to be a minister of the largest body without a testimony. The late Dr. Kennedy said that the principle for which they contended was a principle for which not only was it worth living and fighting, but that it was a principle for which it was worth dying. The principle on which the negotiations were to be completed was that they must take the United Presbyterians as they were, and they on their side must take the Free Church members as they were. What did that mean? There was to be no testimony for the distinctive principles of the Free Church in the United Presbyterian Church. In regard to a disruption in the event of union, he said he was not a great lover of disruptions but of the one, and he would stand by the principles advocated at that time, and embodied in the testimony of the Church. If some of the great leaders of the Church of former days were on the front bench of the Constitutional side of the House, there would have been no question that day about their resuming the union negotiations.

Rev. W. Whyte Smith, Edinburgh, said he could not accept Mr. Macaskill's addition. He considered that the only consistent thing for the Constitutionalist party to do was to dissent at this stage

from the opening again of union negotiations. He held that the responsibility for the present state of affairs rested with Dr. Rainy. The members of the Church looked to Dr. Rainy for light and leading, and they would be guided as Dr. Rainy led them as flowers turned to the sun. Major Macleod, Dalkeith, who spoke in his usual military fashion, said he would have no concern in encouraging this unholy and immoral union. Mr. Archibald Macneilage, Glasgow, said he preferred Mr. Macaskill's motion to that of Mr. Robertson. He congratulated Dr. Rainy on the consideration he showed for the Constitutionalist party, and acknowledged that new light had been brought in.

Principal Rainy replied to the debate, and in doing so raised the usual quantity of dust in the air as to the position of the Disruption leaders in regard to the principle discussed. He took special occasion to express his recognition with great cordiality of the tone Mr. Macneilage had shown towards himself, and hoped that, in regard to the matter of debate, Mr. Macneilage would continue his studies. He asked him to make an independent study of the subject apart from the spectacles furnished by the controversialists of the period between 1863 and 1873. He then proceeded to handle Mr. Macaskill's motion, and the result finally was that Mr. Macaskill's motion was put to the House as against Mr. Robertson's. The latter only received 27 votes, while the former was supported by 338. Mr. Macaskill never before had such a large following in the Assembly, and it looks very bad that it has come at this time of day. The Assembly then agreed to send his motion to the committee simply as expressive of the anxieties of brethren. Dr. Rainy's motion, to which it was proposed as an addition, thus became the finding of the Assembly. Mr. Robertson, Rayne, lodged a dissent, which was signed by several members.

This debate has shown the broken, divided, and hopeless state of the Constitutional party. The Declaratory Act of 1892 has left them no real standing ground, and the majority are the undoubted masters of the situation. We have been surprised that nothing was said in the debate about the doctrine of the atonement on which the U.P. Church is wrong, but it may be supposed that the F.C. Declaratory Act being exactly wrong in the same way, left no room for contention on the subject. From various points of view the attitude of the Constitutional party is a very inconsistent one. They have no business, for one thing, to be in the present sham Free Church. For another thing, it is vain and ridiculous for them, when they are in it, to contend against union with the U.P.'s, seeing they are united already to a body that has more grievously denied the faith than ever the U.P. Church has done.

On 31st May, the report on Sabbath observance was submitted. One member thought the committee weak in numbers and other respects, while Major Macleod asked why the Church was all

round silent on this matter of Sabbath desecration? He had spoken to ministers of all denominations, and he had never heard them lift their voices against Sabbath desecration, or seen anyone who heard them lift their voices. Mr. Macaskill said this was not the fact, as many ministers did so. But we have to say there was a great deal of truth in what the Major stated. If the ministry of this country were to rise as one man against Sabbath desecration that day would assume a different aspect from what it does at present. Many of the ministers help on the desecration by example.

Dr. Macewan, Edinburgh, presented the report on Romanism and Ritualism. He said there were five Episcopal churches in Edinburgh where "confession" was being regularly practised. Rev. D. M. Ross, Dundee, who is one of the leading younger ministers, gave but scant welcome to this report. He said, in reference to a Romish university for Ireland, that he was as strongly opposed to sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism as anyone, but he could not overlook the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland was a widespread organisation which had in many ways a beneficial influence on the moral well-being of the people of Ireland, and the Government of the country must take account of that. One can hardly understand a man being capable of making such a statement as the above unless he were himself a Papist in disguise. Mr. Ross was prepared to move the discharge of the committee, and this had the sympathy of several members, but it was not carried out.

The report of the Committee on the State Regulation of Vice was also discussed. We make some general remarks on this subject elsewhere. Many other matters came up unnecessary for us to touch upon. The Assembly was closed on 1st June by an address from the Moderator, Dr. Macmillan.

There was nothing in the above proceedings that revealed any sign of reformation, but almost at every point the downgrade tendency appeared. It is to be hoped that the union negotiations, which will undoubtedly attain the desired end very soon, will have the effect of opening the eyes of many to the exact position of the Free Church; for the present body is not the Church of 1843, but a new organisation, guided by principles that are alien to the Confession of Faith and the Word of God.

THERE is no truth among persons of light and knowledge more generally granted in the notion of it than this, that of ourselves we can do nothing; and none more neglected in daily practice. Men profess they can do nothing of themselves, and yet go about their duties as if they could do all things.—*Dr. John Owen.*

HE who prays as he ought will endeavour to live as he prays.—*Dr. John Owen.*

A Sermon.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER MACRAE, KAMES, TIGHNABRUAICH.

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*"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."*—ST. JOHN xvi. 8.  
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THESE are words addressed by Christ to His disciples shortly before His passion. They have as yet little understanding of the eternal verities about which He had spoken to them. They are sad and downcast. They are sorrowful and miserable, for they do not conceive how it can be to their advantage to lose the bodily presence of Christ. He, however, assures them that He will not leave them comfortless. He promises to send them the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who shall lead them into all truth, and bring to their remembrance whatsoever He said unto them. He promises to give them His spiritual presence, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In the midst of the many trials and sufferings that they will be called upon to endure for Christ's sake, they shall be upheld by the strong consolations of the Holy Ghost. He tells them that they shall be put out of the synagogues, and men shall be so much under the influence of the prince of darkness as to think that in killing them they shall be doing God service. But they shall not be forsaken, they shall not be left disconsolate. He shall send the Comforter to them, whose prerogative it is to minister heavenly comfort and consolation to those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. He will not only comfort the people of God, but He will also "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

I.—Christ speaks of a certain Person, "He." We shall for a little enquire who this Person is.

God the Father, to whom the plan of redemption is ascribed, is represented as bestowing upon His people two gifts of infinite value and preciousness. He hath, in an everlasting covenant, bestowed the gift of his only begotten Son to accomplish, in the fulness of time, redemption for the objects of His love. He is the unspeakable gift of the Father. In Him truth met with mercy; righteousness and peace have kissed mutually. Without His obedience unto death, vicarious sufferings, and triumph over death and the grave, all hope of salvation would for ever be cut off. But it is equally true that we cannot be saved without the effectual and saving application to our souls of the redemption procured by Him in the obedience and sufferings of His life and death. We regret that the absolute necessity of the application of redemption is, to an alarming extent, overlooked nowadays. We may speak about the love of the Father in giving the Son, we may dwell upon

the exhibition Christ has given of His love in obeying, suffering, and dying the accursed death of the cross; but what shall redemption accomplished avail us, if it be not savingly applied to us by the Holy Ghost? The coming of the Holy Ghost to take of Christ's, and shew it unto us, is absolutely necessary for our salvation. In the plan of redemption, the Father is represented as bestowing the gift of the Spirit upon His people to quicken and sanctify them, so that He is no less the gift of the Father than the Son is, who died for them and rose again. As entrusted with the work of applying redemption, He is spoken of in the words of our text, "When He is come."

There are not a few who have had the unsanctified boldness to deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. Many have regarded Him as a mere influence or energy without a distinct personal subsistence. But if this passage lays emphasis on, or gives prominence to one doctrine more than another, it is the doctrine of His distinct personality. The whole Word of God represents Him as having a distinct and necessary subsistence in the undivided and indivisible essence of the Godhead. In the Godhead there is a unity of essence; but in that unity there is a distinction of Persons. The Holy Spirit is distinguished from the other Persons by personal properties that are peculiar to Him. He proceedeth from the Father and the Son; but with them He is equal in all essential perfections. He is thus a divine Person. He is an object of worship, praise, and adoration, so that to Him all divine perfections are ascribed.

1. He is omnipresent, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? . . . If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." All in heaven, in hell, and on earth are at once within His omnipresence. His gracious presence is a different thing. Without this presence the Lord's people feel that they are utterly powerless and hopeless. After it they vehemently long; for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Moses earnestly prayed for it, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." In secret, at the family altar, in the public ordinances of His appointment, in contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, and in the performance of all their duties, they need His gracious presence. By it they are comforted and strengthened, so that "they will not be afraid though ten thousands of people should set themselves against them round about." Without it they are in darkness, in distress, discouraged, and haunted with many fears, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

2. He is omniscient. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." His absolute knowledge of the secret counsels of eternity Christ shows in the words, "He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." He reveals the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world, and which none of the princes of this world

knew, so that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." An infinite mind only can comprehend the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God as unfolded in redemption as well as in the works of creation and providence.

The riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus are a shoreless ocean. There is a height, a depth, a length, and breadth that no finite mind can ever comprehend. It is in the measure in which the Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, reveals them to His people that they can be understood. And as "the things of God" infinitely transcend reason, the natural man cannot receive them. He regards them as foolishness; and because they are spiritually discerned, he cannot know them. "The world by wisdom knew not God." This is enough to show how utterly unwarrantable and unscriptural the position of those is, who hold that man has yet a knowledge of God and of duty. It is by the inward illumination of the Spirit only that any can have, in the smallest degree a saving knowledge of "the things of God."

3. He is the Spirit of truth. The whole Word of God is given by inspiration of Him. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." By a supernatural influence of the Spirit on their minds they were rendered fit organs for infallibly communicating the mind and will of God. Their thoughts and words were subject to His divine influence. Yet, they acted intelligently and spontaneously; for in delivering this "sure word of prophecy," their self-consciousness was not suppressed neither were their faculties suspended. They spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. They were influenced and infallibly guided by Him, so that His inspiration equally extends to every word in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; for no part of Scripture can be more inspired than another. The Church of Christ in this age is specially called upon to emphasise this fundamental doctrine of truth. Many of the Churches have already abandoned it, and the result is that they are like a ship in mid ocean without compass or rudder, tossed about with every wind that blows. A vain and silly pride influences the mind of not a few that finds expression in destructive criticism of the Word of God. We live in a time that calls for steadfast and unflinching adherence to this fundamental article of our faith. The inspired word is the medium by which the Spirit ministers comfort to His people. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me," so that as He is the Spirit of truth, He is also the Comforter.

4. He is here represented as coming. It does not mean that the Spirit was not given till the exaltation of Christ. He was the exclusive author of regeneration under the old as He is under this present dispensation. All the saints, who lived under the dispensation that has passed away, were His temples. Many of them had Him as the Spirit of inspiration; but they all had Him as the Spirit of grace and supplications. So David prayed, "Take not

thy Holy Spirit from me." The eleven disciples were subjects of His saving and gracious operations. He dwelt in them from the moment in which they were called effectually. What then can the meaning of the words be, "And when he is come?"

(1) The ministration under which the Church had hitherto been was the ministration of condemnation and death. These words have respect to the ministration of the Spirit which was to excel the former ministration in glory. On the exaltation of Christ, the Spirit was to descend in larger and richer measure than He ever descended before. The disciples themselves were commanded to tarry at Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high. They needed Him not only to create them anew in Christ Jesus, but also to fit and qualify them for unfolding the mysteries of the kingdom of God. On the day of Pentecost the words of our text were partly fulfilled when He descended in an extraordinary and visible manner. (2) As the ministrations of the Spirit will continue to the end of time, these words shall not be completely fulfilled until the last of the lost sheep is brought within the fold. They are fulfilled in some in every generation. But have they been fulfilled in us? In other words, has He come to convince *us* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment? This leads us to consider the functions discharged by Him.

II. The functions discharged by Him, as here represented, are threefold, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The original words signify, "Will *convince* the world;" and for this rendering we have a preference.

1. He will convince the world of sin. All in a state of sin and wrath are here named "the world." "The whole world lieth in sin and wickedness." They are the abject vassals of Satan, "the god of this world." Of their sins they all shall most assuredly be convinced—some in time and others in eternity. "Be sure your sin will find you out." The arrows of a harrowing conviction shall eternally stick fast in the consciences of lost men and angels, so that "the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever." But the convictions of sin to which our attention is here directed are such as evidence the beginning of a work of grace in the soul. The Holy Spirit, in His saving operations, convinces the sinner of three particular sins.

(1) He convinces him of actual sin. This is sin in thought, in word, and in deed. All sin is a transgression of the law of God, so that it is by the law there can be knowledge of sin. There is thus a certain relation in which the law and sin stand to each other; for "sin is not imputed when there is no law." The law is the instrument by which the Spirit produces true conviction. It enters into the heart and conscience armed with a terrible denunciation of wrath against the sinner. It is in its light that he now beholds the innumerable number of his transgressions. His iniquities are gone over his head, and the favourable opinion he

before entertained of his condition immediately dies. "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." He now feels that he has to do with a law that is infinitely pure, holy, and spiritual. He realises that it binds him to obey its precepts and to endure its penalty. Responsibility for all his actions is brought home upon him, and he sees that his inability to meet the law's requirements does not extenuate his guilt but only aggravates it. The law has as much right as ever to demand a perfect obedience. It will not relax one iota of its demands. He feels that it sits in judgment not only upon his outward actions, but upon his inward thoughts. It "pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and the intents of the heart." His heart indeed fails him as his iniquities take such hold upon him that he cannot look up, and beholds the face of an angry God in the mirror of the infinite holiness of His law, while His incensed justice demands the sentence of death pronounced upon him to be immediately carried out. He shews him all things that ever he did.

(2) He convinces him of original sin. He has already met with streams of sins in number numberless. Alongside of them he is by degrees led on, until he ultimately reaches the fountainhead itself. That fountainhead is original sin. Now he beholds his connection with the first Adam, and learns by painful experience how he became involved in the guilt of his first transgression. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." He is thus convinced that *any want* of conformity to the law is sin. Shapen as he was in iniquity, and conceived in guiltiness and sin without a hair's breadth of conformity to the law of God, what could he say, though he should, on drawing the very first breath of life, be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone? He would for ever have to acknowledge the justice of God; for in His sight shall no man, destitute of perfect moral rectitude, be justified. Apart altogether from actual sins, His people feel that original sin is sufficient ground for eternal condemnation.

(3) He convinces of the sin of unbelief. Christ mentions particularly this sin, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, how utterly impossible it is for him to escape the vengeance of everlasting punishment, who, through unbelief, treads under foot the Son of God, counts the blood of the everlasting covenant an unholy thing, and does despite unto the Spirit of grace? It is a most God dishonouring sin; yea, it makes Him a liar. It will have none of the gracious invitations of the Gospel. The sinner disdainfully rejects the proposals of peace and of reconciliation God makes to him on the ground of the rich provision made, in sovereign grace, in Christ Jesus. Unbelief is his crowning sin. Wisdom cries without and she utters her voice in the streets; but against her charming notes he stops his ear

like the adder. Salvation stands at his very door; but the iron bar of unbelief firmly fastened in it refuses it admission. Many are thus lost, and they shall lie for ever under a severer condemnation than the heathen themselves. The deadly nature of the sin of unbelief might well be described in the language of the women of old, "Saul had slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands." If the sinner felt the condemnation of the law to have been awful, he now feels the condemnation of rejecting Christ in the free offer of the gospel to be unspeakably more so. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And it is by processes such as these he comes to know that saving faith is the gift of God.

2. He will convince of righteousness. (1) He convinces the sinner not only of the righteousness of the action of God the Father, as the supreme Judge, in passing sentence of death, but also in executing that sentence upon him at once. He deserves to endure for ever the strokes of vindictive justice. He does not experience this till after he is convinced of sin, so that prior to conviction of righteousness there must necessarily be conviction of sin. He is arraigned before the bar of his own conscience; and, in acknowledgment of the righteousness of this procedure, he is compelled to subscribe his amen. For his sins committed against a Being of infinite goodness and mercy, of absolute purity and unspotted holiness, he deserves to be eternally cast away from His presence and from the glory of His power. His mouth is stopped; for he is found guilty before God. He is thus convinced of the righteousness of God in immediately inflicting upon him the whole penalty attached to disobedience.

(2) He convinces him of the insufficiency of his own righteousness. He is actively employed in going about to establish a righteousness of his own with a view to merit salvation at the hand of God from it. Still clinging to his legal righteousness he cherishes the delusive hope that, by his so-called good works, he can himself make up the breach effected between him and God. How many there are who stumble on this rock and fall into eternal perdition! But as a deeper sense of the inflexibility and the requirements of the law of God is given him, his delusive hope gradually fades away, and ultimately he is convinced that the best of his actions would suffice to condemn him for ever. They all bear the stamp of imperfection. The law is perfect and will accept of no imperfection. It is exacting and stringent in its demands; and his righteousness it condemns as imperfect and polluted. It is as a filthy rag. That in which he formerly confided leaves him now exposed to the condemnation and curse of the law, so that he may as well hope to cross the Atlantic on a mere blade of grass as to think that he can be saved on the ground of his personal or inherent righteousness. It is insufficient, and, therefore, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

(3) When his whole hope of salvation by the works of the law is completely cut off, another door of hope is opened up by a revelation made to him of the all-sufficiency and all-suitability of the righteousness of Christ. It is not the righteousness of His claims as the Messiah merely, or His righteousness as man that he is now convinced of, but of His righteousness as the God-man. It is within view of the awful and solemn realities of the cross that he beholds it. The law arrests the Surety. He obeys its precepts and endures its penalty. He magnifies it and makes it honourable by meeting the utmost extent of its requirements. The furbished sword of vindictive justice is unsheathed. It smites the Shepherd, and in His blood it is infinitely and eternally satisfied. Here Christ makes an end of sin, finishes transgression, makes reconciliation for iniquities, and brings in an all-suitable righteousness. But it is one thing to behold its all-suitability; it is another thing to have it made over to one's self. How can the sinner receive it? How can it become his own? His hand is withered and he cannot lay hold of it. Here he lies like the impotent man who said, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." He felt the strength of unbelief in him from which he could not deliver himself. He felt his absolute need of saving faith which he himself could not work in him. But what he needed he received, as Christ said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." So it is here. The sinner is utterly helpless, and yet for his helplessness he is himself responsible. It is as he lies in this state of extreme helplessness that, by an act of divine power exercised towards him, the withered hand is stretched forth, and instantly he is enabled to hold Christ, in his salvation and righteousness, in the embrace of faith. If ever there was an act of grace and power exercised by God, he felt it to have been peculiarly exercised here. He is now thoroughly convinced that salvation is the gift of God as well as the faith wrought by the Holy Ghost in His people through the instrumentality of His inspired word. Saving faith then is the hand by which he receives the righteousness of Christ imputed to him in justification. The Father, the law, justice, and the sinner's own conscience are infinitely satisfied with it; and, therefore, Christ says, "I go to my Father, and ye see me no more," *i.e.*, in a state of humiliation.

(4) But here he receives another view of the righteousness of God. Can the sentence of condemnation passed upon him be recalled without dishonour to any of the divine perfections? It can; and here God the Father acts in infinite righteousness. In the Gospel he beholds the righteousness of God in acquitting the guilty sinner, his acquittal is effected in strictest justice; for there can be no injustice with God. Without a sufficient satisfaction to justice, without an atonement of infinite value, He could acquit none. But in Christ, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." He is the end

of the law for righteousness. Therefore, on the ground of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Father, in the exercise of His judicial functions, wondrously exhibits the glory of His righteousness in pronouncing the condemned sinner justified, and when He justifies, who can any more condemn him? He frequently condemns himself; but he shall never again, if once justified, come under the condemnation of the law. His salvation is thus secured by the conjoint action of the three Persons to whom the glory of it shall be ascribed for ever and ever.

3. He will convince of judgment. Here an all-important case in law is to be disposed of. Judgment is to be pronounced upon it. The presiding Judge is God the Father. The question of who now is the sinner's rightful lord is to be settled, for "other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us." The prince of this world claims him as his lawful captive. He advances the plea that he voluntarily surrendered himself to him and that in justice he was handed over to him. Christ, on the other hand, claims him as his peculiar and lawful possession. He advances the plea that He engaged for him in an everlasting covenant, obeyed the law, satisfied justice, died and rose for him, and, moreover, in death bruised the head of the serpent, so that on lines of strictest justice He lawfully despoiled him of his prey. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross." Law and justice—the one fulfilled and the other satisfied—adduce their testimony in favour of the claims advanced by Christ. The case goes against the prince of this world; for the prey is in infinite righteousness taken from the mighty. Judgment is pronounced against the mighty, so that now Christ brings forth judgment into victory. The enemy is cast out and adjudged to everlasting punishment in unquenchable fire. He was judged in the counsels of eternity when he had as yet no being but in the purpose of God. He was judged in every step Christ took in His obedience and sufferings unto death. In death He perfected judgment by the overthrow of Satan, according to the announcement He Himself made, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out." When Christ sprinkled the mercy seat with His own blood, Satan was judged in the court of heaven; and when the Holy Spirit sprinkles the blood of Christ upon the heart and conscience of His people, he is judged in the court of their conscience. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Christ thus proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, so that those whom He makes free are free indeed.

In conclusion, consider the absolute necessity of knowing experimentally the functions discharged by the Holy Ghost in His regenerating influences. He convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Beware of imbibing the loose, superficial,

and unscriptural views of the new birth that are so prevalent in this ungodly generation. Seek to know the saving operations of the Spirit by experience, and be not satisfied with an outward appearance of godliness while you may be ignorant of its power in your heart. Happy eternally shall he be who receives an experimental knowledge of the Spirit's gracious operations in convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Notwithstanding all the fears with which he may now be frequently overwhelmed, he shall yet be publicly adjudged to everlasting blessedness. But inconceivably miserable shall he be for ever and ever who passes from time to eternity in ignorance of the regenerating influences of the Holy Ghost; for, in the presence of men and angels, he shall be sentenced to everlasting punishment. The worm of a gnawing conscience shall never die, neither shall the fire be ever quenched.

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

(XII.)

MONTROSE, 12th February, 1880.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I wrote you very briefly last time, and have not heard from you since the Dingwall Communion. I therefore do not know how it fared with you in your attempt to join the dear people there in spirit at that time, but I shall tell you how it fared with myself.

You will remember that I told you I had sent a card for the mantel-piece, with the words, "A brother cast down but not destroyed desires an interest in your supplications;" and I believe the card was placed where I directed, and was observed by the assembled friends. Well, on that Sabbath forenoon (the 1st inst.) as I went out at the house door to go to church, I suddenly felt a strange giddiness come over me, such as I never felt before, and my head reeled and my sight seemed to fail, and I would have fallen with all my weight to the ground had it not mercifully occurred to me to seize hold of an iron chain that was on the gravel walk, and letting myself down gradually I lay for some minutes in a half-conscious state. By-and-bye, feeling a little better, I got up and staggered back into the house, but was sufficiently ill to have to go to bed, where I had to remain for a day or two. The doctor attributed it to something wrong with my stomach, but I myself accounted for it very differently. I considered that it was sent for daring to call myself "A brother cast down but not destroyed," for one who truly is such is one who bears about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and if I took the title presumptuously the Lord was to teach me otherwise. For, my dear friend, it is no light matter to take to oneself any of the characteristics of the humbled, emptied children

of God. The Scripture cannot be broken, and he who is "A brother cast down but not destroyed" is one that has been brought low in soul as deserving the wrath of God due to him for sin; he is "cast down" because he sees no hope or help in himself whereby he can be delivered from the just consequences of his apostasy from God, and he feels that if he is not utterly "destroyed" it is because a possibility of deliverance has been opened for such as he is, through the casting down even unto death of God's Eternal Son, who was "sent forth, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons." Therefore, the Lord saw fit that I should be cast down literally that I might learn that there is but a step between me and death, and that I might also examine and see to it, that my life is a living in the fellowship of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, "bearing about in my body his dying that I may become comformable unto his death," and which means a seeking and cherishing by grace, somewhat of that spirit of lowliness, of meekness, of self denial, of hatred of sin, and of zeal for righteousness and truth, which animated the holy Jesus in all that he did and suffered. Moreover, the Lord by this incident showed me that the prayers of His dear people were not to be offered for me on a misunderstanding, but that I should in spirit; in soul, and in body, be in the very case indicated. "By terrible things in righteousness dost Thou answer us, O God of our salvation." And if God shows me that I am not to take His words and apply them to myself, except in their true connection, for the Scripture cannot be broken, may I not with adoring prostrate reverence say to Him that therefore I expect that He will not either apply them except in their true connection?—that if He gives me in answer to prayer terrible things in righteousness, I expect He will give them to me in the connection in which He Himself has put them in His own word, when He says of those to whom these "terrible things in righteousness" are given: "Blessed are they whom thou choosest and caused to approach unto thee, they shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple."

I heard from Dingwall that Dr. Kennedy's subject on the Sabbath was, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Would it not have been a feast to have heard him? Dr. Aird's text on Monday was, "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, &c." I would like to have heard that too, for that passage of Scripture has long been a favourite one with me, although too good for me ever to have tried to preach upon. How exceedingly rich and gracious, and encouraging, that there should be in Christ for the poor, weak believer the advantages to be derived from both a foundation and a root. "Rooted and built up in him." Their state and standing is laid or built on

Christ as the *foundation*, and He is also the *root* from whence they draw all the life and nourishment needed for their being established in the faith, and enabled to offer that thanksgiving which is the dutiful form in which their adherence to Him ought to be expressed—"abounding therein with thanksgiving." Still, Dingwall is not heaven, and preaching is not Christ, although, after all, the chief desire of my soul is to be enabled so to preach Christ as that by the power of the Holy Spirit He would be received and welcomed into the hearts of some sinful men and women who should be to me a crown of rejoicing in the day when I shall have to give account of my stewardship. And if this will be the "glory and joy" (as Paul says) of the poor earthen vessels, what will it be, my dear friend, to behold the King Himself in that day, to see Him, ay, and to share in "the joy that was set before him"—the joy of wearing the crown where-with His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals and in the day of the gladness of His heart!

HUGH MARTIN.

Two Dangerous Societies.

THE Scottish Church Society held their annual breakfast meeting on 29th May, during the sitting of the Assemblies. Dr. Macleod, Govan, presided, and there was an attendance of about eighty ladies and gentlemen. This society is a powerful agent in the propagation of ritualism in the Established Church, and has been referred to several times in these columns. Dr. Macleod in his address referred to Dr. Bruce's book "With Open Face," and naturally enough, from his own High Church point of view, took exception to the rationalistic principles that find scope in that pernicious book. But he also expressed regret that the Church of England should treat in so unworthy a spirit the question of the restoration of better relations between herself and her sister Church of Scotland. This shows that the Scottish Church Society are tired of simple Presbyterianism, and are longing for union with Episcopacy. Dr. Cooper, Aberdeen, presented the annual report. This gentleman issued a pamphlet some time ago, in which the erecting of crosses and communion altars, the false doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and several other things of a Romanising tendency, were advocated. The society complains of persistent misrepresentation. We fear that the truth has got out in spite of their professedly spiritual and evangelical sympathies. Their church buildings and ceremonies, hymns, music, reading of prayers, processions, altars, doctrinal views, all proclaim that they are not much better than Episcopalians or Romanists.

Another society belonging to the same Church, and denominated

"The National Church Union," held its first annual meeting on 31st May, in Old Greyfriars' Church, Edinburgh. Dr. Macquisten, Inverkip, presided, and there was an attendance of between forty and fifty. Some apologies for absence were intimated. This society embraces the infidel or rationalistic section of the Church. It has sprung into existence within the last year, and has been dubbed the Robinson Defence Association, because its members have strongly sympathised with the now deposed minister of Kilmun.

The chairman, in his opening remarks, said that the freedom of interpretation which the Church of Scotland had enjoyed during the last generation had been in great measure the secret of her success and prosperity. The Church had practised, except in one instance, a judicious policy of non-interference, trusting largely to the honour and good sense of her members, abstaining from heresy hunts, and from inquisitorial repression of honest conviction, and the result had been so far satisfactory. There had sprung up, however, of late years a movement that looked like a recrudescence of the old mediæval spirit, with its exclusive dogmatism, its impatience of rational inquiry, and its inordinate deference to the authority of mere tradition. It was not in that direction that the safety of the Church of Scotland lay. It lay rather in comprehensiveness, in a general welcome to all who would work with them towards the supreme end for which the Church existed, without exacting rigid concurrence of opinion, if only in the main there was substantial agreement. He said that the Confession of Faith had been written before the dawn of the science of historic criticism, and that divergence of opinion had arisen as the growth of an age more enlightened and humane than when the Confession was framed. Of course, there was little chance of their ever getting another Confession. To ask for that would be equivalent to asking for the establishment of a new church, and the days for establishing new churches were gone. Nor was it likely that any spick-and-span new creed could be concocted every day that would please everybody. Divergence of opinion would again spring up on a scale more or less extensive. But, although they might not expect a new creed, might they not expect some modification of the tie that bound to the present creed, some alteration in the terms of subscription, some relaxation of the hard-and-fast line that had hitherto been in use! He urged the members of the Union to ascertain if the Church herself was competent to revise the formula, and if not, to consider how best to approach Parliament on the subject. The other two Churches could hardly raise any objections as they themselves had Declaratory Acts already.

Rev. James Murray, Kilmalcolm (secretary), said that the Assembly in Mr. Robinson's case had taken a distinctly reactionary step. They had lessened the liberty that the ministers had previously enjoyed in the Church of Scotland. The Church must

have alienated from her some of the best minds in Scotland by her decision.

Rev. T. S. Marjoribanks, Prestonkirk, said that the keynote of the society was toleration. He made reference to the Kilmun case. Mr. Robinson was labelled as being unsound upon the authenticity of the Gospels, but he ventured to say that in the ordinary acceptance of the word authenticity there was not an educated man in the country who believed in their authenticity. Then, again, Mr. Robinson had been pronounced as unsound on the question of miracles. He would take only one aspect of the question. In all three Gospels they had, beyond any possibility of denial, the evidences of a complete belief in the possession of people by demons. But did anyone believe now that a devil was cast out of anybody in the Gospel history in a strict sense? Would anyone for a moment, even the most orthodox, declare their belief that a whole legion of devils was cast out of one solitary individual, and sent into an innocent herd of swine to be the means of their destruction? It came to this, then, if they were to believe strictly and literally in the miracles as recorded, they must believe in the possession of human beings by demons, which nobody did. After referring to the charge against Mr. Robinson of unsoundness in regard to the Sacraments, and the existence of views about these ordinances in some quarters, on which he believed the Church would disown, he concluded by saying that there was no warrant whatsoever, except the fiat of a few men, for putting the points he had mentioned down as cardinal points of the Christian faith. After some further speeches, and the adoption of a resolution embodying the course of action recommended by the chairman, the meeting terminated.

Little comment is needed on the above proceedings, which speak for themselves. We delight to believe in the out-and-out authenticity of the Gospels, and "strictly and literally in the miracles as recorded." It is also our belief that the devil does his very utmost to make his dupes and captives (which we are all by nature, and continue to be, if not born of the Spirit) to disbelieve his own existence and the existence of his agents. This he does in order that he may have a mightier influence over men, and succeed in getting them to call light darkness, and darkness light. That the above society is one of Satan's agencies, and possessed by the demon of infidelity, no enlightened or spiritually educated mind can fail to observe.

ALL the flagitious sins, that the world is filled withal, are not a greater evidence of the degeneracy of the Christian religion than this is, that it is grown unusual, yea, a shame or scorn, for men to speak together of the things of God.—*Dr. John Owen.*

DON'T be throwing stones at others, lest you dislocate your own arm.—*John Tait, "Ministers and Men."*

The Testimony for Christ.

THE writer desires to make some remarks on this important subject. It is greatly to be feared that such a thing as a testimony for God and His anointed is scarcely to be found throughout the greater part of this once covenanted, but now backsliding and degenerate land. By this testimony is meant the maintenance in the heart and life, by faithful men, of the doctrines of the Church of Christ in Scotland, as embodied in our chief subordinate standards—the Confession of Faith, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms—which are all founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God. Few are enlightened enough to know what a testimony is, and fewer still attach any great importance to the subject. What the inspired apostle said of the known world of his day may even more emphatically be said of the generation in which we live, “All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.”

It is obvious to everyone of spiritual discernment, that there is now no room for the testimony of Jesus Christ in any of the large bodies called Churches in our land. These are no doubt largely animated by one spirit, but it is not that of Christ, but of Anti-Christ. They are characterised by the same maxims, methods, and practices, but these are not such as are heavenly and spiritual, but evidently such as are carnal and worldly. However keen may be their rivalries, they present a wonderful agreement in one point, namely, hostility to the pure truth of God. As far as can be seen, the testimony is only with those who have been compelled to flee from the modern Babylon of corrupt ecclesiastical societies, and to seek after God elsewhere. These persons are marked out by this, that they fear the Lord, maintain His faithful Word, call upon His name in sincerity, strive to keep His day holy, and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. But, with the great bulk of the pulpit and the press in the hands of the enemy, with a growing and pervading taste for what is false, corrupt, and sentimental, it is becoming every year more manifest that unless, the Lord come speedily to our help the remnant of those who desire to be faithful to Christ is too few in numbers to produce any marked effect on the general mass of the community. The praying ones, who are called the salt of the earth, are rapidly being removed, and few, if any, are being raised up in their place. The signs of the times are dark and foreboding, and the time of reformation and deliverance seems far away. There is One, and only one, whose arm is strong enough to save: for to omnipotence nothing is impossible. But it is extremely unlikely that He will arise in mercy until the work of judgment is fulfilled. All the prophetic warnings of the Word, and the signs of the times, concur to render it only too probable that He, who for 1900 years has taken vengeance on the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah on His personal advent, shall visit

with deserved retribution upon the Gentiles their rejection of the divine Redeemer in the higher dispensation of the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost.

We must beware of supposing, however, that the testimony of Jesus Christ will be totally overborne or finally destroyed. No; it cannot be. The standard of truth planted in Eden in that first promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," shall remain as long as the world lasts, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. In Old Testament times it was described as "the banner given of the Lord to them that fear him, to be displayed because of the truth," and in the New Testament it is named as "the faith once delivered to the saints." And those who shall escape in such dark and perilous times as ours are pointed out in the wondrous prophetic book of Revelation as those "who overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." But let it not be rashly presumed by any nation that the testimony must necessarily be continued with them. We are distinctly warned by Him who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks that there may be, as there has undoubtedly been, such a solemn dispensation as that of a candlestick being removed out of its place. And the awful sentence which fell on the Jews may surely fall on the more guilty, because more highly favoured nations of the Gentiles. "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

J. A.

The West Highland Commission of the Established Church and the Communion.

THE report of this Commission laments very keenly the diffidence shown among the Highland people in becoming members in full communion. The following paragraph occurs:—"The feeling of the great mass of the people in reference to the communion is extremely painful. In some parishes very few, and these chiefly old people, partake of the Lord's Supper, 'giving as their reason that they are afraid to eat and drink damnation to themselves.' *This sad state of mind*, it is said, is not diminishing, though the ministers seem earnest in explaining the true nature of the ordinance." The italics are ours. We can hardly describe the feelings with which we read this paragraph. The Commission depicts the state of mind in the Highlands on the subject of communion as "this sad state." It appears to us that it laments as sad what was the healthiest mark in the religious life of the Established Church in those parts. The people have a certain due reverence for the Lord's Table, and are conscious of their own spiritual unfitness for it. They are afraid of "eating and drinking damnation." Now we know this

last word does not necessarily mean final condemnation, for the Lord does pardon unworthy communicating. But we also know that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse for ever, and therefore unworthy communicating deserves everlasting damnation. It is highly becoming to cherish the fear of this awful punishment, and certain we are that unworthy communicating will seal the final destruction of multitudes of sham professors of religion in this country. We think, therefore, that there is no more pitiable sight under the heavens than to see a Commission composed of men who ought to be the religious guides of the people deploring as sad a thoroughly healthy and Scriptural state of mind, perhaps the only spark in many of a reverence for the things of religion. This Commission is, we understand, chiefly composed of ministers, and thus it may be clearly seen that there is nothing which so much destroys any real sense of the solemnity of spiritual things as unhallowed familiarity with them. Unregenerate ministers are a hundred times harder in heart, more irreverent, and more insensible to eternal realities than unregenerate hearers. May the Highlands long cherish that reverence of the ordinances of religion, which has been one of its most honourable characteristics in the past! The Southern, who also have had a noble ancestry, are now for the most part casting that which is holy unto dogs, and opening the doors of sacred communion to the unclean and profane rabble.

Union Negotiations.

(To the Editor of the F. P. Magazine.)

DEAR SIR,—Many of us have been attending with considerable interest to what has been going on in the General Assemblies that met in Edinburgh in the month of May. The times we live in move rapidly, and one does not need to live long to see many strange things.

In writing you at present, however, I do not mean to occupy time and space in dealing with these strange things. Some things have taken place that we might have looked forward to, and one of these is the movement of the Free Church in the direction of union with the United Presbyterians. Of course, you and our friends and readers know something of the negotiations that were being carried on from 1863 to 1873 between the two bodies. Some of us remember these things, and others of us have made ourselves acquainted with the facts by reading. When these negotiations were being carried on they were participated in by another Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and though nothing in the way of an incorporating union took place between the two large bodies—that, in fact, has not yet

taken place—yet the result of these proceedings was the union of the majority of the R.P. Synod and the Free Church in 1876. A protesting minority of the Cameronians, as the R.P.'s are more frequently called, continued on their old ground, and refused to compromise their principles. The majority, however, of the body fell into rank with the Free Church. As far as their distinctive principles and position as Cameronians are concerned they have disappeared, and you would not distinguish one of their congregations from its F.C. neighbour by anything unless by the fact that once or twice a year its ministers, and possibly an elder too, attend a kind of *tulchan* Synod. This secures to them the possession of the churches and manses, but their principles are given to the wild winds to play with.

If, however, the Cameronians departed from their principles in their uniting with the Free Church, the Free Church in a sense shifted her position to accommodate them. Give and take is the favoured policy in modern church tactics, and this change of position enabled Dr. Rainy to hold in last Assembly of the Free Church that the Free Church is not now the Free Church of the Disruption. Should nothing else be presented in way of proof of this assertion, this of itself suffices that the R.P.'s are now united to them.

Of course, we have no difficulty in allowing that the F.C. is no longer the Church of Scotland Free. For why, it has forsaken its original position so patently, that only current use and common courtesy suffer us to call it by the name it gets. The occasion of our taking up a separate position was the passing of the Declaratory Act of 1892, by which the relation of the Church to its standards was vitally affected. The view we then took of the nature and aim of the Declaratory Act has been fully justified by the events of the past five years. We do not intend to review these events at present for proving this. It should be amply proved by the position now taken upon the matter of union with the U.P.'s: were no other proof forthcoming, this of itself should suffice for any unprejudiced mind.

We held that the Declaratory Act struck at the very constitution of our Church: that it altered that constitution in matters neither few nor unimportant, and that it laid the standard of doctrinal soundness at the feet of each successive General Assembly. For them it was to declare what did and what did not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith as set forth in the Church's symbols. Everything that the Assembly in its wisdom or unwisdom should decide to be a matter not affecting the substance of the Faith—and that itself is vague enough—was to be an open question. This Act was a masterstroke of policy. It laid the constitution of the Church at the feet of a majority determined to trample it under foot, and then all barriers were removed from effecting union with any body or bodies the Church chose.

But all this is well known to you, Mr. Editor, and your readers are quite aware of it too; only we should like to direct your attention to the connection between the hazy, dim constitution of the Free Church as it now is and union negotiations past and present.

When the Free Church and the U.P.'s were negotiating before 1873, it came out clearly that if a union was to be consummated between the two bodies various open questions must be allowed, and the standards lowered on more points than one. It was also evident that a solid minority, comprising many of the ablest and most honoured men in the Free Church, in the event of union, would refuse to become parties to it. The case, further, had a legal aspect, in event of any resolute Free Churchman adhering uncompromisingly to Free Church principles, and refusing all inducements to follow the majority of their brethren in uniting with the U.P.'s, a certain amount of property could be claimed by them, and not only claimed but kept.

The union did not come off. Which of these hindrances kept it back, or whether all together blocked the way, we need not determine. The fact is, the union negotiations were dropped in 1873. The union party, however, did not rest satisfied with this result, and some of its leaders felt, as they said, that this was the great disappointment of their lives. They were resolute men, and were not to be balked by trifles. A disestablishment crusade soon gave vent to their energy, and various projects were carried on with the end of securing as much property as possible under the Model Trust Deed. Such property, we suppose, they would count on as safely their own, and in no danger of slipping out of their grasp. The standard bearers of Free Church principles in their purity meanwhile passed away one after another. A puny race of weaklings succeeded them. Is union now any nearer? Why, yes, two of the considerations that stood in its way before have now, in whole or in part, been removed, and is the third to be left unremoved? Can no way be devised to get over the matter of open questions?

Let us see how the stream of tendencies in the Church helps the matter. Laxness in creed subscription is fast becoming the order of the day, yet there is a sense of the incongruity of this lurking in the breast of those who practise it. So a movement is originated, and kept going, to consider how far this incongruity may be removed. A committee is appointed to see to the Church's relation to its Confession. The committee sits and deliberates, and produces a Declaratory Act. This Act is passed into Church law under the Barrier Act, and it secures that there shall be open questions recognised.

The way is now paved for union. The differences have been toned down. They have been smoothed away. When this took place the distinctive position of the Free Church was forsaken. That was the testing time for Free Church principles. Those

who could continue with the majority now, with the remodelled constitution, could have no consistent objections to union with a church occupying the same position with themselves. In fact, the question for them to consider now is, What cause can be shown why union should not be proceeded with immediately? Why should we not unite? Suppose the Churches now continue separate, is there no schism, or spirit of schism, shown? Undoubtedly there is, and union as soon as possible is the only justification of the present position of both Churches. Let it be granted that there are some points in which one of the two Churches may outrun the other. Yet when they combine, their joint tradition, will stretch back on the one side to 1879, on the other to 1892. Certainly, on these terms, the burden of church tradition to be borne by the members of the Union Church will not be heavy.

But a certain number of anti-unionists have remained in the Free Church, and what of their position? It is inconsistent out and out. If they tolerate willingly or unwillingly open questions within their own borders nothing more will be the case if they and the U.P.'s are one body. The U.P.'s will not ask the number of open questions to be increased; it is sufficiently large already.

Now, in bringing forward his union motion, Dr. Rainy deprecated the idea that it was a step in the direction of disestablishment. With what measure of sincerity this was done by him we need not enquire. His account of the matter is that years will pass after the union before the united Church will be sufficiently one to present a united front to the Established Church. His hope, however, is that such a front will eventually be shown, and thus the union will contribute to the solidarity of the liberation movement.

This explanation of his, however, is very flimsy. Both parties are agreed in the matter of disestablishment, and why should they be less at one on the matter after union than they are now? Will not their union show that on a new established basis it is possible to have a united Church of Scotland? This they will employ as an argument in favour of disestablishment, that after the Established Church is done away with it may quietly fall into rank with the voluntary organisations that did its best to secure its fall. Possibly, however, Dr. Rainy meant that the ministers of the united Church will be so engrossed with internal questions for some years that an outward agitation led by them on a national scale in favour of disestablishment cannot be conducted. Even though this could be conducted, we fail to see how it would impress the people of the country, or help to secure the result aimed at. People generally resent clerical interference in politics, and the disestablishment crusade is very generally regarded as only a move prompted by jealousy, and some similar inferior motives.

In writing you at present, Mr. Editor, I purposed to touch on

some things that were neither strange nor unexpected, and before concluding I may refer to one other. Some ex-champions of constitutionalism, we need not name any names, have been following the swine downhill. Their downward progress began sometime ago, and once a stone starts properly on a downhill journey it gathers force as it goes. The swine of old went down till the waters of the lake received them. Let us hope that this will not be the course of some of our old friends. There are various other points I should like to direct your attention to, and possibly I may have an opportunity at an early date of discussing the manoeuvre by which Mr. Macaskill fell into Dr. Rainy's arms, Mr Macaskill's use of Dr. Begg's name, and some other things. In the meantime, and with sincere desire that our own body will be kept faithful to our testimony, to our principles, to our Lord.—
I am, yours, &c. J. M.

Tha h-Eaglaisean.

BLIADHNA an deigh bliadhna tha na h-Ard-sheanaidhean a cruinneachadh ann an Duneidin. Tha moran air feadh na duthcha a coimhead riu nuair a thig mios a Mhaigh timchioll dh'fheuch' am faic iad comharaidhean sam bith air aithreachas anns na h-Eaglaisean mora. Cha-n e nach eil aobharan aithreachais gu leor ann is coireach nach eil na comharaidhean ri 'n coimhead ach tha na h-Eaglaisean o cheann aireimh do bhliadhnachan air dol air falbh o'n fhiorghloine ann an teagasg aoradh agus riaghladh a bha aca uair-eigin agus a reir coltais cha n' eil iad a tilleadh ach a dol nis faide air seacharan.

Mu thoiseach a Mhaigh tha seanadh nan Cleireach Aonaichte 'ga chumail's e sin a bhuidheann ris an abrar gu h-aithghearr anns a Bheurla na h-U.P.'s. Is gann a tha aobhar araidh air son am bheil an fheadhainn so air leth o chàch a nis ach cho eudmhor 's a tha iad air son Eaglais na h-Alba a dhi-steidheachadh. Air a bhliadhna so chaidh iad ni b' fhaide na b' abhaist dhoibh ann an aghaidh teagasg a Bhiobuill anns na sgoiltean; tha iad cho fad anns a bharail nach coir do'n Stàid gnothuch a ghabhail ri creud seach creud ann a bhi 'gan cobhar. Ghabh iad ceum air aghart cuideachd an coimhcheangal ri aonadh ris an Eaglais shaòir. 'Nuair a bha gluasad ann air son Aonaidh roimh eadar an da eaglais cha robh a mhuinntir anns an Eaglais Shaoir a bha seasamh steidh na h-Eaglais toilichte aonadh a dheanamh riu air son am beachdan saor-thoileach agus cho fuasgailte 's a bha iad mu theagasgan mor na Reite. Thainig uair eile air Albainn o'n am sin agus a nis 'si an Eaglais Shaor fein is neofhallaine do'n da bhuidhinn; ach nuair a tha no Cleirich Aonaichte a gluasad air son aonadh riu tha iad a dearbhadh nach mor suim a tha iad a cur ann am fallaineachd creidimh. Ma theid leacan deighe a chur air muin a cheile fasaidd iad 'nan aon mheall ach 'se aon

mheall deighe a bhios ann. Mar sin ged a dh' fhaodadh da Eaglais a tha ann an tomhas mor meagh-bhlath agus fuirmealach aonadh ri cheile is beag a b' fheairrd iad sin. Nuair a philleas Eaglaisean na h-Alba air ais chuige-san o'm bheil iad a claonadh no air claonadh s-ann an sin a bhios an t-Aonadh beo blath agus buannachdail. Aonadh sam bith nach eil 'na aonadh ann an dillseachd do ghloir Chriosd tha e 'na aonadh air son a chuid a's miosa agus cha'n ann air son a chuid a's fhearr. Chan'eil iad ach a misneachadh agus a neartachadh a cheile ann an dearmad an dleasdanasan soluimte.

Nuair a bha e a teannadh ri deireadh a mhios chruinnich an da Ard-sheanadh eile. A reir an t-seann chleachdaidh chuir a Bhan-righ teachdaire sonruichte gu Ard-Sheanadh na h-Eaglais Steidhichte gu seasamh a h-aite fein cho fad agus a bhiodh an t-Ard-sheanadh ann. 'Se *Dr. Scott* a bha 'n cheannsuidhe air an Ardsheanadh an uraigh agus a reir a' ghnath dh' ainmich e am fear a thigeadh a stigh 'na aite *Dr. Mair*. A chionn gu bheil a Bhan-righ air rioghachadh tri fichead bliadhna bha gnothuch mor aig an t-Seanadh a cur failte da h-ionnsuidh agus chùm iad la taingealachd.

Bha cuisean fa chomhair na h-Ard-chuirt anns am feumadh smachd eaglais a bha air a nochdadh agus chaidh an da mhinistear a bhriseadh agus a chur as an dreuchd. Ann an aon eile do na h-Eaglaisean mora cha-n'eil iad a leigeil le cuisean dhe' leithid sin a thighinn am follais ach cho ainmic agus is urradh dhoibh. Tha na daoine an aghaidh am faodadh cuis-dhitidh a bhi air a a togail a faghail cead an coimhthionalan fhàgail ach tha iad a gleidheadh an inbhe mar mhuinntir a fhuair cead searmonachaidh. Nam biodh na gnothuichean so air an stiuradh le treibh-dhreas cha bhiodh a chuis mar sin. Ann an dillseachd do na daoineibh fein agus don t-sluagh cuideachd bu choir do na cuisean a bhi air an rannsachadh a mach nam biodh sin deanta cha'n fhaigheadh dithis a fhuair as mar so o chionn ghoirid-fear anns an taobh deas agus fear anns an taobh tuath-saorsa dol gu duthchaibh no eaglaisean eile mar mhinistearan-gun smal air an cliu.

Bha cuis chud-thromach eile fa chomhair na h-Eaglais Steidhichte-Thainig ministear Chille-mhuinn ri'n aghaidh aon chuid a dh' fhaotainn a bhinn no a dh' aideachadh gun deach 'e cearr. Chan aidicheadh e sin agus dh' orduich an t-Ardsheanadh do chleir Dhunothainn *Mr. Robinson* a chur as a mhinistreibheadh. Tha an leabhar air son an deachaidh a dhiteadh mar so a dol cho fad agus is urradh dha gu bunaitean a chreidimh a thilgeadh. Tha e bochd gum biodh aobhar ann airson a leithid do ni agus a thainig air an Eaglais a dheanamh; ach o'n a bha an t-aobhar ann is math gun do rinn i mar a rinn i.

Tha comunn mor dhe ministearan na h-Eaglais a rinn na bha 'nan comas air son ministear Chille-mhuinn a dhionadh. 'S e is ainin air a chomunn so aonadh no comunn na h-Eaglaise Duthchasaich. Muinntir a tha 'g iarraidh a bhi cho farsuinn fuasgailte

'nam beachdan 's a dh' fhaodas iad. Agus tha comunn mor eile anns an Eaglais Steidhichte-Comunn na h-Eaglais Albannaich a tha 'g aomadh gu beachdan na h-Eaglais Shasganaich ann an teagasg mu na sacramaidean agus ann an doighean aoraidh. Tha mor bhuaidh aig a chomunn so agus tha mor chunnart ann cuideachd air eagal gun tarruing e dorchadas na Roimhe air an duthaichsa a ris. An daimh ri cleachdaidhean na buidhne so faodaidh sinn ainmeachadh gum bheil na *Missionaries* leis an Eaglais Steidhichte ann am meadhon Africa a leantuinn an doighean. Ged a chaidh so a rannsachadh agus a dhearbhadh fhuair iad as cha mhor gun chronachadh. Nach e a bhiodh gu math nan togadh an Tighearn soisgeulaichean treuna ann an Eaglais na Stàide? Tha mor fheum aice air sguabadh. Mun do sgaoil an t-Ardsheanadh thug an Ceannsuidhe oraid mhor dhoibh air Ard-cheannas Chrìosd. Uiread 's a léugh sinn dhen oraid so bha i ciallach agus urramach. Nan strìochdadh muinntir do cheannas Chrìosd is mor an t-atharrachadh a thigeadh air an t-saoghal.

Ann an Ard-sheanadh na h-Eaglais saoire, mar a dh' innis a bha gu bhi, bha Dr. Mac-mhaolain a Grianag 'na cheann-suidhe. Air a bhliadhna a chaidh seachad chaochail dithis de na *Professors* agus thug aon eile thairis obair le sean-aois. Cha robh ach dithis gu bhi air an taghadh ann an aite an triuir oir tha an t-aite aig Drummond gu bhi air fhàgail falamh. Ann an aite *Dr. Blaikie* ann an Dun-eidin chaidh *Mr. Martin* Dhun-eidin a thaghadh. Cha do thog aon neach a ghuth ann an aghaidh so. 'Se duine sgiobalta a tha ann am *Mr. Martin*—mac do Dhr. Uistean Martainn—ach ma's maith ar cuimhne o chionn timchioll air deich bliadhna air ais bha cuis 'na aghaidh ann an cleir Dhuneidin airson beachdan fuasgailte a bha e teagasg. Chan 'eil e 'na sgrìobhadair mor agus mar sin chan urrainnear deanamh a mach ro mhath co dhiubh am bi e fada o'n t-seann bhunait no nach bi chan 'eil e 'na chomharadh ro mhath air 'fhallaineachd gun deach' a thaghadh gun neach a bhi cur 'na aghaidh.

'Se *Dr. Denney* a chaidh a thaghadh leis a mhor-chuid airson aite *Professor Candlish* a ghabhail ann an Glascho. Ged is e duine comasach a tha ann an *Denney* 's e duine cunnartach a tha ann cuideachd. Ged nach biodh e fada cli ann an rathaidean eile gidheadh dh' fhoghnadh a bheachdan mu dheachdadh agus ughdarras nan sgrìobhturran airson 'fhagail cunnartach.

Nuair a thainig gnothuch an Aonaidh air beulaobh na Cuirte bha la comhstri aca. Ghluais *Dr. Rainy* air son aonadh ris na Cleirich Aonaichte agus cha mhor nach robh a Chuirte uile gu leir a dh' aon inntinn mu 'n chuis. Nuir a bha an fheadhainn a tha seasamh ann an aghaidh Distèidheachadh na h-Eaglais Steidhichte a cur an comhairle ri cheile m'an t-seasamh a ghabhadh iad mu 'n aonadh dh' aontaich iad dol ann an tomhas mor le Dr. Rainy ach dh' iarr iad gum biodh teagasg Leabhar Aidmheil a chreidimh mu dhleasdanas na Stàide do'n Eaglais air a ghleidheadh.

Bha cordadh air chor eigin ann an doigh uaigneach air a dheanamh eadar *Dr. Rainy* agus Mr. Mac-ascaill. Tha litrichean a tighinn a mach anns na paipearan agus tha cuid d'a chairdean ag radh gu'n do rinn. Mr. Mac-ascaill am brathadh. Co dhiubh ghluais *Mr. Robertson* o *Rayne* ann an aghaidh an Aonaidh agus cha d' fhuair e ach sea pearsa fichead a dhol comhladh ris. Nuair nach d' fhuair e ach so do chuideachadh thainig a chuis gu eadar *Rainy* agus Macascaill. Rinn iad cordadh agus tha Mr. Mac-ascaill toilichte a nis ma smuainicheas an Comunn a chaidh a chur air leth gus a chuis a reiteachadh air na beachdan a chuir e f'an comhair. Cha'n eil e 'g iarraidh ach saorsa airson na beachdan aige fein a ghleidheadh dha fein ma thig aonadh. 'Sann mar so a bha a sheasamh o chionn cuig bliadhna air ais oir riamh o chaidh an t-Achd Mineachaidh a dheanamh 'na lagh, 1892, cha robh an Eaglais Shaor mar Eaglais a cumail ris an t-seann bhunait. Mar sin 'nuair a tha e dol leis an Aonadh chan eil atharrachadh sam bith air tighinn air as ùr. 'S ann o cheann cuig bliadhna air ais a thainig an t-atharrachadh. O na dh' fhuiling an taobh beag anns an Eaglais shaoir, aill ar n-aill gum biodh ceisdean fosgailte anns an eaglais agus cead aca a bhi innte cha'n urrainn iad seasamh gu coguiseach an aghaidh an Aonaidh a nis oir chan'eil na Cleirich Aonaichte ni's farsuim na iad fein. Nan robh iad air seasanig gu coguiseach aig an am a bu choir dhoibh seasamh bhiodh cuisean moran ni b' fhearr a nis d'an taobh agus cha bu mhisde sinn e ni bu mho. Ann an gnothuichean eile bha an Eaglais a dol air aghaidh anns an doigh abhaisteach gun chomharadh sam bith a bhi ann air athleasachadh no aithreachas air son mar a threig iad an ceud ghradh agus an dillseachd do dh' aobhar gloire Dhe. Bhiodh e 'na ni bean-naichte nam biodh comharaidhean ann mar sin agus bhuineadh dhuinn a bhi 'g iarraidh air an Rìgh aig am bheil cridheachan chloinn nan daoine 'na laimh fein gun pilleadh e Eaglaisean na h-Alba ann an treibhdhireas agus ann an aon fhilleachd ris fein. Agus an sin bhiodh iad 'nan aon da rìreadh o dheas gu tuath. Gun luathaicheadh, E fein an la sin.

Notes and Comments.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN'S PATRIOTISM.—Cardinal Vaughan, the Romish Archbishop of Westminster, composed a statement to be read by all his officiating clergy to their flocks on the Sabbath before the Queen's Jubilee. The document ostensibly breathes the spirit of the most approved patriotism. He gives thanks for the personal virtues of the Queen, for the material progress of the Empire during her long reign, for the improved condition of the poor, for the civilising influences of the British people upon foreign races, and with courtier like adroitness he notes the good deeds

of the Prince of Wales toward the London Hospitals. Then rising to the supernatural sphere, he praises the religious sentiments of the people and their continued attachment to the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God (*sic.*) But his highest and most religious cause of thanksgiving is to be found in the growth of the Catholic Church under the ægis of the civil and religious liberty of Britain. He traces this growth from the Tractarian movement in the Church of England, fifty years ago, which movement he again refers to in the heaven infused by the 8000 French priests banished from their country at the Revolution and harboured by England, where they shone like stars in the darkness. He notes that antiquated restrictions and disabilities have during Her Majesty's reign given place to freedom of speech and action. The people of England have said, "We are Free Traders and open wide our markets to the world. If you possess religious truths and medicines that heal the soul, come, preach and administer them as you will." This, says the Cardinal, we have done; this we shall continue to do. We seek no privilege, but equal right. We injure no one, and covet no man's goods. We preach Jesus Christ crucified, and the Church which He founded upon Peter. He then goes on to give figures, showing the great increase of his Church during the Queen's reign. In 1837 the number of Romish priests was 486, in 1897 they have increased to 2686. The Cardinal speaking of those ritualistic members of the Church of England, who have set their faces towards Rome, quotes on their behalf the apostle's words, "Being confident of this very thing that he who hath begun this good work will carry it on till the day of Christ." Some things in this document will appear very remarkable to our readers. To pose as a patriot is perhaps no new thing for a Romish official, but to render thanks for the Biblical zeal and knowledge of a people is carrying the farce too far. The Cardinal's gladness at the Scriptural tendencies of the British people, we believe to be a piece of rank hypocrisy—his patriotism is just good playacting, but his facts and figures should be taken seriously.

GARNISHING THE SEPULCHRE OF A SAINT.—Thirteen hundred years ago, Columba, the pioneer of Scottish Christianity died, and on Wednesday, 9th June, a multitude of modern religionists visited the place to garnish the sepulchre of this righteous man. We deny not, that in the great scheme of Providence this may have fallen out in fulfilment of that word, "The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance," but as a human procedure it was instinct with all the faults of the degenerate Christianity of the present day. The pilgrims to Columba's shrine on this occasion were a party of ex-Moderators, and high officials of the Church of Scotland, along with great plenty of sightseers intent to enjoy a new spectacle. They first held a Gaelic service in Iona Cathedral, a service severely simple in form, and then an English service,

which was helped out by an organ and trained choir from Glasgow. The clergy entered the Church from the sacristy, walking in processional order, wearing their gowns and academic hoods. Dr. M'Gregor, of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, preached the commemorative sermon, from the text, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place is holy ground." The newspapers report that the whole business was very impressive. A band of Scottish Episcopalians were on the scene at the same time. Next week the Romanists invaded the island in great force, intent upon a like errand. They, however, are well schooled and skilled in the art of religious playacting, and their performance was much more to the purpose than the raw timerous Presbyterian attempt. Mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles. His Grace of Edinburgh, delivered a sermon in English, and Father Campbell discoursed in Gaelic, not without argumentative heat. He made out Columba to be a Catholic of the first water, and boldly denied Presbyterians or Episcopians to have part or lot with him. Cowper speaking of perverse religious disputation, pictures "both parties claiming truth, and truth disclaiming both." The like, we think, is true here. Columba, we suppose to have been a real fleshy Christian, who worshipped God in the spirit and had no confidence in the flesh. He, yet speaking, through extant memorials disclaims all connection with a spectacular religion, and bids all that motley band not to affront his ashes.

STATE REGULATION OF VICE.—This painful subject was before the Free Assembly, and is at present discussed throughout the country. It is a subject that we would willingly keep a thousand miles away, but it is impossible consistently to ignore it. The Government of our country is involved in a system of things in India that is a blot upon Christian civilisation. It would appear that in the proximity of the barracks of our soldiers women of low character are recruited, and facilities for immorality provided. This is done with the special sanction of our authorities, and even under special medical supervision. What is the reason given for this systematic provision for the breach of the seventh commandment? It is said the avoidance of disease. It is unblushingly declared that men will not refrain from immorality in India, and that they are liable to incur disease which is inevitably transmitted with serious consequences to their families. The government, it appears, have taken in hand to supervise this state of things,—not by moral influence to check it,—but by special provision and medical superintendence to regulate it, so as to avert the physical consequences that ensue. Now, this will appear in the eyes of every moral and upright man to be a most unworthy accommodation to the vicious propensities of mankind. It secures the removal of the fear of consequences, which is one of the most powerful means of preventing vice. God has established in admirable justice an indissoluble link between vice and

disease, and what God hath joined the government of this nation has boldly attempted to put asunder. The present method is simply a criminal cure of a flagrant crime, and the remedy is worse than the actual plague. The question may be asked, What should be done? The reply will readily occur that the first and natural step is the granting of greater facilities for marriage among soldiers, and, secondly, the establishment of a law that men of immoral lives are not eligible for our armies. Better that we, as a nation, never had an army, and that we should perish from among the nations of the earth, than that the defenders of our empire should be a band of degraded men. What are the chaplains of our forces doing to check this terrible corruption? If they were doing their duty in proclaiming the whole counsel of God from Sabbath to Sabbath, and in conducting religious exercises from day to day of a vigorously Christian character, we are perfectly sure a better state of things would exist. But as long as the present system is allowed to go on no moral progress in any circumstances will be made. The officers of the army are also deeply culpable, for, we understand, that most, if not all of them, approve of the system. How appalling must be the effects of all this on young men who have been brought up in moral and, it may be, religious homes, and who, after enlisting in our army, find that this nation does not expect them to keep the moral law, but has made special provision for their breaking of it, and that without serious consequences! Truly we stand aghast at the moral degradation which has befallen us, and fear that this once Christian nation is rotting at the core. Even a few in the Free Assembly seemed to treat the matter in a half-hearted way. We find, also, that a petition is being signed by women of this country who, while professing to be against the system, have the shameless audacity to describe the evil or vice as unavoidable. Where is our boasted advance in this the close of the nineteenth century when our national morality is at the vanishing point? The infidelity of our Churches, the desecration of our Sabbaths, the immorality of our soldiers, and the licence given by law to all these evils, are voices that loudly call for judgments at the hand of God. May He arise in mercy for our deliverance, or the doom of the nation shall speedily be sealed!

THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE.—On Tuesday, 22nd June, was celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, or the Sixtieth Anniversary of her reign. London was astir with a huge procession. There were bonfires throughout the country and the population kept holiday. On Thursday following, 305,000 poor people were feasted in London. On Saturday there was a grand Naval Review at Spithead. Britain's sea power was represented by a line of war vessels extending twenty-five miles long. On Saturday night from nine o'clock till midnight the fleet was illuminated. But the royal salute, uttered by the thousand voices of the cannon, was

tame after the dread play of Heaven's artillery which the day witnessed. It was a day of mighty thunderings. We suppose the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of a peaceful and outwardly prosperous reign is a lawful cause of thanksgiving and congratulation. There are, however, many black spots on Britain's sun of prosperity. With her people there is almost universal forgetfulness of God, with her rulers flagrant violation of the authority of the King of Kings. His commandments are set at naught; His very existence ignored. Even these Jubilee celebrations have been full of godlessness. Wherefore should they trench on the sanctity of the Lord's day by such a triviality as the review of the fleet, for we have seen that the illumination of the ships continued till midnight, and doubtless there was no rest for hours thereafter? This cool setting aside of superior orders for purposes of mere play and display will cost dearly some day.

PROFESSOR JOHNSTON'S CASE. — The Privy Council have sustained the finding of the University Court against the Professor, and it is said that if the Queen sanctions their decision he will carry the matter to the Court of Session, on the ground of insufficient inquiry at the beginning of the case.

Literary Notices.

REFLECTIONS FOR AND BEFORE THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE. By W. Lancelot Holland. Newcombe, 9 Shepherd's Bush Road, London, W.

This penny pamphlet by Mr. Holland is a seasonable one—as seasonable as John the Baptist's voice in the wilderness. The seamy side of Britain's case in this year of Jubilee is well set forth. The perilous concessions to Rome on the part of those in authority—the abandoned unbelief and contempt of the Scriptures which characterise the high places of the so-called Christian Church—these things the author comments on in a weighty and faithful manner. His resumé of facts concerning the growth of Papalism, and the thoroughly illegal character of the concessions made to Antichrist by those in authority, from the Queen downwards, is painful reading to a patriotic mind. The following extract from page 2 of this pamphlet is worthy to be read and pondered: —“We may with profit, I think, remind ourselves of the Coronation Oath which every Sovereign of this realm from the time of William III. has been bound to take. The law of the land, too, makes it impossible, not only for a king or queen of the Romish faith to reign over us, but it also lays down very clearly that if our Sovereign *‘holds communion with the See or the Church of Rome,* he or she shall be excluded; be for ever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the crown and government of this realm . . . and

the people of these realms shall be and are hereby absolved of their allegiance.'

On the day therefore of our Queen's coronation the Archbishop of Canterbury administered amongst other oaths, the following :—

Will you, to the *utmost of your power*, maintain the laws of God, the *true* profession of the Gospel, and the PROTESTANT REFORMED RELIGION, established by law? &c.

Queen—All this I promise to do.

In addition, she by the *Act of Settlement*, made the following declaration :—

I, Victoria, do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, and testify and declare that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous."

THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE. By the Rev. John Parker, St. James' Parish, Glasgow. Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow.

This is No. 1 of a series of small pamphlets by a minister of the Established Church, intended to set forth the unchristian character of some books written by the pet religious teachers of the day. The present tract is a critique of Professor Bruce's book "With open Face." This work reviewed briefly by us sometime ago, is treated by Mr. Parker in an able and searching manner, and with commendable zeal for sound doctrine. "If we take this book as our guide," says Mr. Parker, "the glory vanishes, and all we see is a Jewish carpenter, who was also a great religious genius, and who is held forth by this Christian theologian in semi-socialistic fashion as the friend of working men." "No Unitarian could more consistently ignore the doctrine of the Incarnation." The title of the pamphlet is intended to indicate the help which such pervertors of the faith almost invariably receive from those who should be the guardians of the faith. "From ecclesiastical assemblies," says the author, "we expect nothing." The "Conspiracy of Silence" will effectually prevent any condemnation of these views. Meanwhile, it is the duty of all true Christians to break up the conspiracy of silence, and to withdraw themselves from those "who crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame."

WHEN thou prayest rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without heart.—*Bunyan*.