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A Brief Survey of the Free Presbyterian Church.

WE have no desire to make any vain display of our outward strength as a Church, but as there are complaints from friends in distant lands, such as Canada and Australia, that we give so little idea in these pages of our actual dimensions, we propose in this present article to mention the several places where Free Presbyterians are to be found, and to give some information as to how they are supplied. If we make any mistakes of commission or omission, we shall be very pleased to hear from correspondents, and correct same in a future issue. As the greater number of our people are situated in the Highlands, it may be suitable in reviewing the situation to start from the north and proceed southward. The county of Caithness is the farthest north, and here there are stations at Wick, Halkirk, Lybster, and Dunbeath. There are also some adherents at Thurso and Keiss, where occasional services are held. Halkirk has got a new stone church. Next comes Sutherlandshire. Here we have stations at Farr, Strathy, Helmsdale, Golspie, Rogart, Lairg, Dornoch, Creich, Lochinver, Kinlochbervie, and Stoer. There are also some adherents in Scourie, where occasional services are held. Ross-shire is the next county. In this large area there are regular charges at Shieldaig, Gairloch, and Ullapool, presided over by Rev. Donald Macdonald, Rev. John R. Mackay, M.A., and Rev. John Macleod, M.A., respectively. At Shieldaig and Gairloch there are new stone churches, and at Ullapool is an iron church. Shieldaig is also provided with a manse. Gairloch congregation embraces Aultbea; and the Ullapool congregation includes Coigach and Scoraig, the three places coming under the general designation of Lochbroom. Again, there are stations at Plockton, Poolewe, Applecross, and Lochcarron on the west coast, and at Dingwall, Strathpeffer, and Fearn on the east. Some of our people are also at Garve, Alness, and Resolis. At Applecross there is an iron church, and at Fearn a stone meeting-house. The fourth county is Inverness. Here in the town of Inverness,

we have a congregation which meets meantime in the Artillery Drill Hall. Stations are also to be found at Beauly, Daviot, Moy, Duthil, Kingussie, Newtonmore, and Stratherrick. If we pass now to the Isle of Skye we find a regular congregation at Portree. There are stations at Flashadder and Glenhinisdale, which come under the parish of Snizort, and also at Broadford, Elgoll, Bracadale, and Kilmuir. The parish of Duirinish has three stations, Vatten, Glendale, and Waternish, of which Glendale is the centre. The adjoining island of Raasay has a regular charge, over which presides Rev. Donald Macfarlane, the leading minister of the Church. This charge embraces the small island of Rona to the north as well as Raasay proper. Portree and Glendale are provided with churches, and recently a site has been procured at Raasay. If we cross now to the outer Hebrides, we find that in Lewis at the chief town, Stornoway, there is a regular charge, of which Rev. George Mackay is minister. In Lewis there are also stations at Ness, Breasclate, and Back. Again, in North Harris there are stations at Tarbat, Kyles Stockinish, and Kyles Scalpay, and in South Harris at Finsbay, Stronde, and Obbe. The island of North Uist also presents us with three stations, Paible, Claddach (Kyles), and Claddach (Kirkibost); while there is also a station in South Uist. There is a stone church at Tarbat, Harris. We have also some adherents in the islands of Heisker, Barra, and Bernera. We now come to Argyllshire. In this large county there is one regular charge, namely, at Kames, Kyles of Bute, with Rev. Alexander Macrae as pastor. There are also stations at Ballachulish (north), Oban, Fort-William, Kilmallie, Tarbert, and Lochgilphead. At Kames there is an iron church, and at Oban a stone church and hall. Kames has also a manse. In the city of Glasgow there are two regular charges; St. Jude's, Jane Street, Blythswood Square, chiefly a Gaelic congregation; and John Knox's, an English congregation, meeting in hall, 137 Norfolk Street, S.S., of which charges Rev. Neil Cameron and the writer are pastors respectively. We have a congregation in the city of Edinburgh, meeting at 20 Chambers Street. There are stations also at Greenock, Dumbarton, and Clydebank.

We have enumerated eighty places in which the Free Presbyterian Church is represented. No doubt there are adherents in other places not mentioned who frequently travel many miles to services. We do not consider it advisable to go into the subject of numbers, and therefore content ourselves with saying that there are large congregations at such places as Glendale, Portree, Stornoway, Harris, Gairloch, Lochinver, and St. Jude's, Glasgow.

It will be easily seen from the foregoing account that the number of congregations far exceeds the supply of ministers, even when we add to those named, Rev. John Robertson, assistant in St. Jude's, three probationers, and six students who are engaged in preaching. Our Church is greatly indebted to the

labours of missionaries, catechists, elders, and others who conduct meetings on Sabbath and week-days, and also look after the interests of the people among whom they are engaged. The ministers are especially busy during the summer season, as that is the chief time when sacramental services are held in the several places. This entails their frequent absence from their own congregations, and the services are then conducted by the office-bearers if no probationer or student is available. No doubt congregations are called upon to exercise self-denial in respect of this frequency of ministerial absence, but there seems to exist almost universally such a lively sense of the pressing necessities of the cause at large that this occasions little or no dissatisfaction.

One of the great necessities of our Church is manifestly an increase of labourers, and it should be the importunate prayer of all who love the good of Jerusalem that the Lord would in His infinite mercy speedily raise up living and faithful men to supply ministerially the spiritual wants of those who are still without fixed pastors. Let us not, however, give way to despondency though this prayer should not be answered as fully as we would wish. Good ministers are highly useful in their own place, but the salvation of the Church is not essentially bound up with them. The Lord is able to supply His people's wants by His Word and Spirit without the medium of the ministry. Perhaps the Scottish people in the past have been in the habit of looking too much to ministers, and the Lord is now going to try them by a lack in this direction. Well it would be if we had ears to hear the voice of Christ saying, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

The second and greatest need which we have as a Church is that of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We cannot deny but the Lord has given tokens of His presence and favour since this body was formed in 1893. Yet all who have any realisation of eternal things feel the need of more extended manifestations of the divine countenance. How many, for example, of our young people are still unconcerned about the salvation of their souls! They have followed their consciences or their friends in lifting up a public testimony for the truth of God in the land, but still their hearts and lives are immersed in worldliness and carnality, proving that they themselves are still in their sins. A sound creed, and a faithful public testimony are excellent things: better it is to have them than to have nothing at all: but nevertheless they will not save the soul. We may perish for all eternity in the most favourable outward conditions in the world; and further, the condemnation of those who die without Christ out of the midst of godly friends and a sound Church will be unspeakably greater than that of others who had no such advantages. We would earnestly impress upon parents and friends their responsibilities in regard to the young. Why is it that the divine blessing is withheld in respect of the conversion

of many who have been brought up in pious surroundings? No doubt we may account for it by divine sovereignty. But that is not all. When the Lord gave Israel over to reproach and desolation there were sins to be reckoned with. What need then there is that the Spirit would make us search and try our ways, lest our sins bring upon us the curse of total spiritual unfruitfulness. The great concern of many is to see their families getting on in the world, but let us be assured that if we put the earthly in the place of the heavenly, and bend all our energies to secure the former rather than the latter, whether it be for others or ourselves, we shall reap the bitter fruits of our work in due time. May the Lord in the riches of His grace visit our Church with such a manifestation of His glory and power that all who truly love His name may be greatly quickened and revived, and that many, both young and old, may be converted from the evil of their ways, made partakers of eternal life, and instruments to show forth His praise in the world!

A Lecture.

BY THE REV. DONALD MACFARLANE, RAASAY.

DELIVERED IN ST. JUDE'S, GLASGOW, ON MONDAY EVENING,
18th APRIL, 1898.

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 "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."—  
 HAGGAI ii. 4.  
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WE have here a word of encouragement sent to the Jews when they were building the temple after their return from captivity. We shall, in the few remarks which we intend to make, notice four things.

I.—The need there was for encouragement.

II.—Those to whom the encouragement was sent: "Zerubbabel and Joshua and all the people of the land."

III.—The encouragement itself: "Be strong for I am with you."

IV.—The duty enjoined on the people thus encouraged: "Be strong and work, saith the Lord."

They received this encouragement in order that they might not be idle, but might be up and doing, doing the work of the Lord. We also need encouragement in our day in the work of the Lord. We are now on the last day of the feast about to separate, and each and all of us ought to be engaged according to our abilities in doing something for the Lord, and if we are stirred up by His Spirit to do His work, there is no doubt this word will encourage us as sure as the Jews.

I.—The need there was of the encouragement given. They had great need of being encouraged when they had so many discouragements, and we shall notice a few of these. No sooner these people returned from Babylon than they set their hearts on the work of the Lord—you remember it was because of their neglect of that work they were sent into captivity, and they learned a lesson during their long captivity—no sooner, then, the Lord returned their captivity than they began first to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and thus we read that the foundation of the temple, which was destroyed and reduced to ashes by the enemy, was laid, and that they were purposing to continue to build on that foundation, to carry on that good work which they had begun. But Satan was, you may be sure, very much displeased when he saw the people upon whom he prevailed so to provoke the Lord as to send them into captivity, setting their hands again to the work of the Lord. Had they begun to worship the idols for which the Lord chastised them he would have let them alone, but when he sees any putting their hand to the work of the Lord, he is sure to make every opposition in his power. Satan is a spirit and a creature, and there is no doubt as a spirit he does a great deal of evil inasmuch as he has access to the spirit of man. But he cannot oppose the work of God in every way and every manner as a spirit, and therefore he uses men, and he uses those that are likely to be the more successful in opposing the work of the Lord. In this instance he uses the governor that was sent by the king of Babylon to Samaria, and his servant, Tobias. It is thus the children of the world are wise in their own generation. There is something that cannot be called wisdom, but which is like it in the Prince of darkness. He knows very well what instruments to use when he begins to combat against an individual soul, or a church, or a nation. He knows very well what instruments are more likely to be successful in doing his work. The first thing that discouraged the Jews was this, that they were opposed in the good work in which they were engaged. This reached their hearts, and this is the first thing that discouraged them. And by whom was the opposition made? It was made by the Samaritans with the governor Sanballat at their head. Who were the Samaritans? They were a mixed people. They were neither purely Jews nor purely Gentiles. They were made up of both. If you read at your leisure the fourth chapter of Ezra you will find that they were a people whom, when the Jews were removed from their own land, the king of Babylon brought from his own kingdom to plant in their place. All the Jews were not taken to Babylon, there were some left, and the children of these Gentiles and Jews were the Samaritans. Samaria was the chief town of the ten tribes, as Jerusalem was the capital of Judea. These people then, of a mixed race, the children of Jews and Gentiles, dwelt in Samaria, and offered the first opposition to the re-building of the temple. Observe what method they

took. They came forward first, when they saw the Jews beginning to build the temple and to engage in the service of God, and they offered to unite with them, and to co-operate with them. Well, some might think that it was a very unwise thing of the Jews in their weak condition to refuse the co-operation of the Samaritans. But they did refuse it. And these Samaritans, when they came forward and offered to co-operate with the Jews, used the argument that they served the same God as the Jews, and that for a long time, since they were taken by their king from Babylon. This then was an argument they used. But the Jews were justified in refusing to have anything to do with them in building the temple, and why? It was true, no doubt, that they to some extent (at least outwardly) worshipped the same God as the Jews did, but they were idolaters at the same time, and the Jews learned before they came out of captivity to say, by sad experience, "What have we any more to do with idols?" They knew very well that if they accepted the offer made by the Samaritans, who worshipped idols as well as the living God, they would be soon again sent back into captivity. Well, when the Samaritans saw that they were refused, they made it evident that they were not worthy of being entrusted to do anything in such a solemn work as the work of God. They showed that they were enemies. When they saw that they were refused they began to do everything in their power to discourage the hearts and to weaken the hands of the Jews in building the temple. That is what they did, and it proved that they had no love for the work of God, but because they saw that the Jews were doing a great work, and were doing it by the authority of King Cyrus, they wanted, from some motive or other, to have a hand in that work. When they saw that they were refused they used various means to put a stop to the building of the temple. Oh! what was the meaning of this? A people seemingly so eager and so desirous of building the temple, and yet when they saw that their offer was rejected, they tried to put a stop to the building of the house of God. They showed the very spirit that Cain manifested when he found that the sacrifice which he offered up to God was rejected, and he found himself personally and his services rejected by the Lord. Had they been the true people of God, even although they were rejected, they would try to do in a separate position what they could to encourage the work of God in the world. Well, they used various means to put a stop to it, and they succeeded in putting a stop for a time to the building of the temple. They complained of the Jews, as you may see in the fourth chapter of Ezra and the fourth chapter of Nehemiah. They reported in high quarters that the Jews were a rebellious people, and that they now showed their rebellion in the work in which they were engaged. They not only sent complaints to high quarters to provoke the king so as to command that the work should be stopped, but they also mocked these people. Ah! such is the

spirit of those who are not sincere, notwithstanding their professions. That which they cannot bring to pass by power they try by mocking. They begin to mock the work of the Lord. I am not going to dwell upon this, but simply to mention it to show that this was a great discouragement to those who were stirred up to begin such a glorious work as the building of the house of the Lord. We may mention also, before we proceed, that there is a great cry in this age for union. Well, here was a proposal for union. The Samaritans came forward and offered to unite with the Jews, and they used as an argument: "We serve the same God, but with us you will be stronger." Not at all, you will be weaker. It is a good thing, my friends, when the cause of God is prosperous, and when the Spirit of God is poured down upon the people from on high, and when the kingdom of God is enlarged in the world, it is a good thing then to have union, and I believe when the Millennium will come there shall be union. I mean by union that there shall be only one denomination. You ask what denomination it shall be. Well I am prepared to tell that, and when I do tell it I don't guess, I just tell it from the Word of God; it will be the denomination which the apostles left in the world, and that is—Presbyterianism. The apostle Peter, writing to the elders, says, "Who am also an elder (a presbyter). There will be union, my friends, when the Millennium comes. There will be a union, a glorious union, in the course of a hundred years hence, but it is too soon yet. It is a good thing for the people of God to be united, and for those who profess the Christian religion to be united in the truth, but there are times when God sees that instead of there being one denomination in the world there should be more than one. Yea, he commands divisions at certain times. How is this? Well, I have been thinking about it. I think it was a wise thing of Jacob, when returning from Padanaram to meet his brother Esau, to divide his one company into two; and why? "Lo," he says, "if he whom I fear smite one company, the other shall escape." And as, my friends, that was of the wisdom of a creature in that way and in that instance, so it is of the infinite wisdom of God that sometimes instead of there being one denomination there are more. Why? When the devil shall attack one denomination with errors of various kinds to overthrow the cause of God, another denomination shall escape. You will find this was the way in which the truth of God was preserved in past ages. It was not by one great denomination where all were united together, but by little companies that were set apart, just as Jacob divided his company. In this back-sliding age there is a cry for union. Ah! union and error is an awful thing. Union and the truth is a glorious thing. I mention this in connection with the proposal that the Samaritans made here to the Jews to unite with them in carrying on the work of the Lord.

There was another thing that discouraged them, and what was

it? The Lord rebuked them for neglecting to carry on the work which they had begun. We see, in the first chapter, that a stop was put to the building of the temple, that the Jews were forced to stop it for a time, yea, for a long time, perhaps fifteen or sixteen years. Well, that was a long time for the work of the Lord to stand still, and we may be sure, my friends, that this would be a hard thing for any that had the work of God at heart, unless they were in a back-sliding state. When they saw that a stop was put to the work, and that one year passed and another year passed, they came to the conclusion in their own minds, a conclusion to which they had no warrant to come to from the word of the Lord, "Certain things are going against us, and it appears this is a sign that the time has not yet come to build the temple." Here the Lord rebukes them. He sends his prophet Haggai to rebuke them. "Then came the word of the Lord, by Haggai, the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" The Lord reminded them that they made careful provision for worldly matters, and that they ought to be as careful about spiritual matters and the work of the Lord. "Is it time for you to dwell in your cieled houses?" Ye have built your own houses. They had got indifferent about the house of the Lord. So do sinners in regard to the salvation of their souls. How many, my friends, how many, young people especially, delay in this way. "The time has not yet come for me to seek the Lord. I am too young yet." But the Lord comes with this rebuke to you, my friend, and he says, "Is this a time for you then to attend to worldly matters and mislay the most important matter in that way? Is this a time for you to attend to the comforts of your body to the neglect of your soul? Is it a time for you to attend to the things that concern this life, and neglect the great salvation?" "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Ah! my friends, there is teaching here for all. God rebukes the Jews for their backwardness in His works, for the conclusions which they drew from the opposition made to them, and for the stop they allowed to be put to the work of the Lord. They said, "The time has not yet come to build the house of the Lord." Now is the accepted time for us, and now is the day of salvation. To-day, to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. We know not what a day may bring forth. We are now in the land of mercy, in the land of the living. We are now where the arms of a mighty Saviour are stretched forth to receive us even although we be the chief of sinners. But to-morrow we may be as naked spirits before the great Judge, and to whom then shall all these worldly goods belong? Yea, it was said to another, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." That man had no time to attend to the concerns of his soul, and yet he was very active in thoughts and in actions regarding the things of this world, but God called him

a fool, and told him that very night his soul should be required of him. This was then the rebuke, and they profited by it, for it is said that "the people did fear before the Lord."

There was a third thing that discouraged them, and this is spoken of too by the prophet in the second chapter. "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory, and how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" They thought that, although they should be allowed to build the house, it would be as nothing in comparison with the great and glorious temple built by Solomon. The Lord spoke their thoughts and their minds when He said, "Is it not in your eyes as nothing?" Not only their enemies said it was a poor thing, but even they themselves, and especially those of them who saw the first temple. There were some of the people who had been taken in their youth to Babylon, and who remembered the glory of the first temple. When the foundation of the second temple was laid these were weeping, while the others, who never saw the great temple that Solomon built, were rejoicing, so that the noise of joy and the noise of sorrow could not be distinguished. There were those who wept and those who rejoiced. It is naturally discouraging to the Lord's people to think of the great days that are past, when the Lord's people were many in gospel lands, when there were many gospel ministers, many godly men and women, many godly young and old, and to observe now to what extent the Lord has left the earth. He still calls one here and there, "one of a city and two of a family," yet is it not a thing that discourages the true people of God when they think of the great days that are past? But, my friends, we must not despise the work of the Lord however small it is. We should indeed seek to see more of it, seek that Christ should increase more and more, but we ought not to despise the day of small things. The people here who were discouraged by the thought of the littleness of the second temple compared with the first were greatly mistaken. The Lord told them there was no reason for this discouragement at all. This was the third thing. "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory, and how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" Well, these were some of the things that discouraged the Jews, and called for a word of encouragement from the Lord. "Yet," notwithstanding all these things, "now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts."

II.—Those to whom the encouragement was sent. Who were they? Some of them are mentioned by name, others are mentioned as "all the people of the land." Zerubbabel was governor of Judea, and it was a mercy from the Lord that when a heathen king granted them liberty to return to their own land they were

not to be governed by Sanballat, no, but by one of themselves. You see, the Lord has the hearts of kings and of peoples in his hand, and when he turns the captivity of His church in any age, He will show favour in various ways; and this was one of the favours which he gave to the Jews, that He set over them not a Sanballat nor a heathen governor, but Zerubbabel, one of themselves. Upon Zerubbabel lay the burden, at least outwardly, of the government of the cause of God's church. He was not a king but a governor under Darius himself and those that succeeded him. Upon Joshua, the high priest, lay the burden and the responsibility of the service of God. It says a great deal for the governor of the Jews and for the high priest that they are mentioned by name here. What are we to learn by this, that they are thus mentioned? That, as they got such responsible work, so they must have felt grieved more than others that the enemies had put a stop to the work of the Lord. This should be so. When the cause is opposed in any land all the children of God must feel it, but ministers of the gospel should feel it more. Paul says, "Brethren, pray for us." Speaking of his own troubles he says, "Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Now, I say it should be so, that the public servants of the church should bear the weight and the burden of God's cause more than others. I say, if you are a believer you feel wounded in heart when you hear that anything is done to discourage the work of the Lord, but I say also that the ministers of Christ must be more grieved than you. And it should be so. It should be so according to the responsibility of the calling in which they are: they must feel it more than others. I was thinking that these two represent the public ministers and governors of the church of Christ. They represent those who ought to bear more of the burden of the Lord than others. I was thinking these two were mentioned by name, just for the same reason that Christ mentioned the name of Peter when sending the message to tell He was risen from the dead. "Tell the disciples," said He. Well, Peter was a disciple. "Tell the disciples and Peter that I am risen." Why was Peter mentioned? Ah! Peter had greater need of hearing about the Saviour than the rest of the disciples. He was more cast down; he had denied Christ. He was grieved in heart, and it was not an ordinary message that would raise him up who was so much bowed down, and so, although the message was for him in common with all the disciples, there is a special message sent to himself. "And all the people of the land." Not only are Zerubbabel and Joshua mentioned, but also "all the people of the land." By "all the people of the land" here, we are to understand those mentioned in the first chapter and twelfth verse. After the prophet had given the message, and after they were called to consider their ways and the dealings of the Lord with them in providence, "Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel,

and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him, and the people did fear before the Lord." They took to heart the message of the Lord. There were other people in the land, such as the Samaritans, but by "all the people" is meant those who took an interest in the building of the temple, and whose spirits were stirred up to do what they could to advance the good work that they had begun. This message or word of comfort to them is also sent to all those who take to heart the word of the Lord, and who are stirred up from their indifference to do something that souls might be saved and that Christ might be glorified, that His kingdom might come, that sinners might be converted, and that the people of God might grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If your heart has been stirred up by the Spirit of God in this back-sliding age—so as to engage in the work of the Lord, to be fervent in spirit at the throne of grace, and doing what your hand finds to do that Christ might be glorified, that His kingdom should come, and that the testimony for the truth might be left to coming generations—this word of encouragement is sent to you as sure as it was sent to Zerubbabel and Joshua, and all the people of the land. It was not sent to any but those who needed it. "They that are whole need not a physician." The Lord never applies the balm to a whole skin, He never binds up a whole heart. He binds up the heart that is broken, and He never sends a word of comfort but in a time of need. There are threatenings in the Word of God, and there are promises, and there are encouragements—all these are dispensed by Him whose they are. "Strengthen the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees; say to them that are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong.'" This word of comfort is sent to you who feel discouraged at every opposition made to the work of the Lord, or to the souls of God's people whom you know, or to His cause in the world. Even in the most distant parts of the world, if you are a living stone in the building, if you are a living member in the mystical body of Christ, when one member suffers you sympathise with that member, you suffer with him; when one member rejoices you rejoice, and when one is honoured you feel happy with that member. Ah! my friends, God's people—members of Christ's mystical body—are not like a wooden leg in a man's body. You see, a wooden leg may appear to be a part of the body, but really it is not; it has no sympathy with the body. Those who are merely nominal Christians, nominally the people of God, they are just like a wooden leg which cannot sympathise with the body, which cannot feel although you were to pierce it with the sharpest instrument.

III. Well, the encouragement now; and what is the encouragement? I mentioned before that it is according to the need that the Lord speaks in comforting. It was to those who needed it

that Christ Jesus said—"Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions." Every part, then, of the encouragement is to meet every part of the discouragement. What is the first part? First, "Be strong, for I am with you." What does that mean? What is that intended to remove? O, it is this: there were many against them. Sanballat was against them, the people and their governor were against them, so God says—"Courage, for I am with you." They might then say with Paul, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Here it is—there are many against the Jews, trying to oppose them in the work of the Lord, but God comes forward now when they are found in the path of duty, and not when they are neglecting the work of God. Be not depressed: "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together." What are all people in the world, what are men and what are devils, what are all enemies whatever if God be for us? And God is true, God is for His people, He is with them, and He is with them especially when they are found in the path of duty doing His work. When they are neglecting that duty He rebukes them, as He sent His word to rebuke the Jews by the prophet Haggai: "Is it a time for you to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" Here is a word of rebuke; God does not deal always in the same way with His people. No, but He comforts them in a time of need, when they are faint and sorrowful, when their hearts are cast down. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" said the psalmist, "what should discourage thee?" It is when their soul is cast down within them, it is then the Lord will come forward, and He suits the promise to their very case. "If men are against you," He says, "I am with you." Now, my friends, every time the church, the work of the Lord, the temple of the Lord is being built up, there are men who are against those engaged in the work of the Lord. I do not mean to dwell upon this; I simply draw your attention to it in order that you may not be discouraged. When we, as a church, took a stand in defence of the truth of God—for the benefit not only of our own souls and the present generation, but also of future generations—men rose up against us, and they used the same means to weaken our hands and to discourage our hearts as the Samaritans of old did. If we wanted a house to worship God in, such as the public school, there were letters in the newspapers not to give it. Every effort was made to put a stop to the glorious work; to what may be called, on a small scale at least, the building up of the cause of God in Scotland. Ah, this work in which we are engaged is the building up of that cause, and it may be needful that I should mention what a great and godly man, who is still living, said about it—a man whom some of you may know. Before any made a stand against error in the way in which we did, he was looking with a sorrowful heart on the state of God's cause in Scotland. He was

seeing almost all the churches departing from the principles and doctrines of the church of God, and he was seeing that the judgment of God was coming fast after this declension. Then his heart was cast down. But when he heard that there was a stand made he took courage, and said "The judgment will not yet come, but mark this," he said, "and some of you may see it, this is the last call to Scotland, the last call to Scotland, and if Scotland will not hearken to the call of God then the judgment will not be delayed any longer, and some of you may see the judgment." We are encouraged, my friends, that there are some who have made a stand for the truth of God, whatever that may have cost them—even although it should have cost them what it cost others, the laying down of their lives. If lives are laid down for the cause of Christ, these lives will have a glorious resurrection. Ah! yes.

Well, my friends, this is the encouragement, then, that God speaks to your hearts who are interested in the cause of God. It is a suitable message to deliver to you, this last day of the feast, in the city of Glasgow—"Be strong, for I am with you." They had been rebuked, and this also led Him to say "Be strong." The rebuke of the Lord had weakened them, and it ought to have had that effect, and it is a bad sign on any heart that is not weakened when the Lord rebukes. The psalmist says that they "perish at the rebuke of thy countenance." "My flesh cleaves to my skin." And we may feel assured that there was great need for the encouragement, "Be strong," for it is said when God sent His word of rebuke to the people, for delaying the work of the Lord so long while attending to their own worldly matters, that they feared the Lord. He now says—"Be strong."

There was a third thing in the encouragement: and what was it? Well, it was something to meet the discouragement which they had from comparing the small effort they were now making with that which had been made in former days, from comparing the littleness of the house of God which they were endeavouring to build with the glorious temple of Solomon. "Is it not," God says—and He brings out what they think themselves—"in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" What is the meaning of this? You see, the temple of Solomon was made glorious outwardly with such as silver and gold, almost everything was covered with silver and gold. It was a beautiful sight to the natural eye to behold the temple of Solomon, on every side to which one could turn covered with silver and gold. But now the Jews could not make this temple so great and glorious, so beautiful with silver and gold, and they were discouraged. If they had silver and gold they would naturally make up the second temple as beautiful as the first. And what does God say? "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold." What does He mean by that? Well, what I once thought of it was that, as they needed silver and gold to build the temple, the Lord was encouraging them to look to Himself for these things; but I changed my mind, and I think I saw that this

was not the meaning at all, and that the meaning was—"I am as wealthy now as I was in the days of Solomon. The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains. Do you think I could not afford to give you as much silver and gold as I gave to Solomon? Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, but I withhold it on purpose, as I intend to make the second temple more glorious than the first." And so, He says, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: in this place shall I give peace."

Now, my friends, you see this is the way He took to encourage them. They were discouraged because they could not make the second temple so beautiful with silver and gold as the first. But God said as much as: "I am not at all become poor since the days of Solomon, but I withhold silver and gold which I gave liberally to Solomon from you on purpose, and my reason for withholding it is this, that I intend to make the second house more glorious with another gold, with the gold tried in the fire." "The glory of the latter house shall be greater." Jesus Christ, who is the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, was to come into the world and to assume human nature; He was to come into the world before the destruction of that second temple. We read, indeed, that there was a place in Solomon's temple where the presence and the glory of God were so much revealed that the ministers doing the service of God could not proceed with the weight of the glory of it. Even that, my friends, was only a manifestation of the glory of God, but here is God Himself, God manifest in the flesh, He who is the brightness of the Father's glory, He came to the temple. This was the way, then, He took to encourage them, in renewing the promise of Him who was promised early in the history of the world, Jesus Christ.

Now, my friends, the glory of any church is this—not silver and gold and wealth, but that Jesus Christ should come to that church. It was said at one time—"The glory is departed," and the glory is departed from any church where the Son of God is not, where His presence is not, where the Gospel in purity is not preached, where the doctrines concerning Jesus Christ and the salvation He wrought out are not held forth. That church has lost its glory. Oh! let us seek, my friends, to embellish and beautify our church, not with outward pomp and glory, but with Christ. Let us seek that Jesus Christ may be with us. Let us look to Him, let us cry to Him, and, when He does come, let us pray with the disciples who met Him on the way—"Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent." The presence of Christ is the glory of any soul, the glory of any church, the glory of any community, the glory of any kingdom. "And His glory shall fill the whole earth." There is another thing that is the glory of a church (I mentioned it incidentally already), the truth of God. "The glory of the latter house shall be greater," because Jesus Himself was to come there. Well, the glory of any

church is this, that the truth of God be in that church. That is the glory of a church. Oh! let us seek, then, that our church may be beautified. The Lord says to us—"Mine is the silver and mine is the gold," and, although we cannot show any such splendour as the temple of Solomon or the Free Church of old, we can, my friends, oh, we can be content if our church is beautified with the presence of Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and with His truth. I may mention in connection with this that the Free Church of old, like the old temple built by Solomon, was beautified outwardly with silver and gold. The Free Church grew very rich, and she was not the better of that. We, for our part, do not regret that Sir William Mackinnon did not leave us thousands of pounds to carry on the work of the Lord, though it seemed a loss that he was taken away so suddenly before he cast in his lot with us, which he promised to do had he lived. But I thought it was a providence, arranged by the wisdom of Him who is infinite in wisdom, that he did not leave us a single penny. Had he left us thousands of pounds, another disruption would have been necessary in a few years. Why? Because we would have many ministers following us, not for the sake of principle. We went forth and said, with the great Master to the man who would follow Him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." "Will you follow me now?" Ah! no. It was a blessing from Him whose cause we have at heart, it was a blessing from the Lord that not a penny was left us by that worthy man, or, as I said before, in the course of a few years we would require to have another disruption. Here is the way that the Lord deals with us. It is a time of trial, and we must follow the Lord simply because He is worthy of being followed. We must stand up for the truth's sake, not from any worldly motives nor for any worldly profit. The truth is a great treasure, and those who will not defend the truth for the truth's sake are not worth being named Christians at all. Oh! how miserable we would be, my friends, if we had not the truth, or if we had the truth of God mixed with errors, as almost all other churches have. Could we have true happiness? What is the value of anything unless we enjoy happiness in connection with the cause of God in the world, unless we acquit ourselves like those who have to render an account, and who wish to render that account with joy? We, my friends, profess to be the servants of the Lord, and what is the worth of a servant unless he is faithful to his master? If a man in this city of Glasgow had a large warehouse and employed servants, and if any of these servants allowed robbers and thieves to come in and steal his goods, was that servant faithful to his master? I say, No. And is a minister of Christ not to be more faithful than a servant in a warehouse? We must render an account, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" to render our account. If you seek happiness of soul, peace of

soul, in passing through this world, seek not only to be found in Christ but also to be faithful to Christ, and keep from turning to the right hand nor to the left. Oh! this is our duty, and when we do this we shall have to acknowledge (even if we could do all our duty) that we have not done but what was our duty. But instead of doing all our duty, how much is left undone! What shame and confusion of face belong to us! What thankfulness to God that it is not on anything we may try to do our salvation depends, but on what Christ did! His work is perfect, His work is the foundation upon which God's people build. Still, although our salvation does not depend upon our endeavours, if we are unfaithful to God, and if we miss an opportunity of doing good, that must make us uncomfortable on a dying bed. Ah! yes. Although you should get to heaven, there would never be again for ever an opportunity for you to do good to anyone in this world, to warn your friend or your foe, to warn any "to flee from the wrath to come." You could not come back again to the world to do anything for God. No.

IV. The last thing (I am keeping you too long) is this, the duty now enjoined. Let us take it to heart, let each of us carry it with us. The duty enjoined is—"Be strong and work." The work was the work of the Lord; they were building the temple. They were asked to work, to proceed with the work, and in the records of the Kings it was found that a decree was given and proclaimed by Cyrus that the work was to proceed. And so, my friends, the enemies were confounded, and the poor people of God were encouraged to proceed again with the work which had been so long delayed. Let us seek grace, that we may do whatever our hands find to do. If you can do nothing more, oh, pray for those who are trying to do public work for God. Encourage them in every way, and do whatever your hand finds to do. We are all going on to another world. There is no knowledge nor device in the grave, to which we are all hastening. Let us—not only those whose duty it is to proclaim in public the truth of God, but let us all—try to do everything we can to put down evil. There is much work for all true Christians in this age, and in this city, in various ways, where iniquity abounds, and where errors abound. Let us raise our voice against them. One may say—"What is the use; there is such power against us?" Did you not read the promise, "I am with you?" Let it not weaken your hands, nor keep you back from doing your duty, that there is such power against you. Do you your own duty, and God will be with you.

"And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Rev. i. 17, 18.

Popish Practices in an Edinburgh Episcopal Church.

THE following appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening News* of 18th August:—"The crusade in England against the Romanising practices of several of the clergymen of the Church of England has opened the eyes of thousands to the extent to which these prevail. In Scotland it has always been assumed that such things could not or would not happen. But the circular we published yesterday and a little inquiry has shown that in Scotland, and in Edinburgh, the non-conformity of the Church to its recognised standards is as wide and divergent as any against which Mr. Kensit has been uttering his protests. The Scottish Episcopal Church has always been very "high" so far as ritual is concerned, much higher, indeed, than the Church of England—and her members have claimed to be the true Church of Scotland. In some of the Churches in Edinburgh, so far as the ritual is concerned, no one, unless perhaps he was an ecclesiastical expert, could tell the difference between their services and those in a Roman Catholic Church. There are the processions, the incense burning, and the observance of rights peculiar to the Roman Church. Confession and priestly absolution are advocated and practised openly. There is, of course, this difference between the Episcopal Church in Scotland and the Church of England, that the latter is a State Church, whose creed is supposed, at any rate, to be under the control of the State, and whose clergy are paid by Parliament for teaching a distinct creed. But admitting all this, it cannot be denied that there is a wide gulf between the creed of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the practice of several of her clergy. Those of the clergy who indulge in those practices justify their action by the very causistical reasoning that, though the Church does not enjoin them, it does not inhibit the clergy from using them if they believe in their efficacy. The answer to this might be made in the language of a present Lord of Session, in reference to a case brought before his notice in connection with the administration of the Education Act, the defence being that the Act did not say specifically that such a thing was to be done. "It would be an idle thing," said he, "even if it were possible to detail everything in an Act of Parliament." What has to be looked to is the spirit of the creed, as well as the Act, and there can be little doubt that the practice as far as possible of assimilating their services and ritual to those of the Roman communion is in direct violation of the spirit of the creed. The circular published yesterday shows to what an extent these prevail in at least one Church, and this is certain, that this one Church does not stand alone.

In connection with the communication published in yesterday's issue regarding "Popish services" in St. Michael's Episcopal

Church, Hill Square, Edinburgh, an *Evening News* representative has had an interview with the Rev. Mr. J. F. Schofield, the rector, which has elicited some startling statements. Speaking more immediately to the communication, Mr. Schofield explained that it was not of the nature of a circular sent to the members of the congregation intimating the celebration of the Feast of Assumption, but was what he termed a "lesson" which he believed was in the hands of several Sunday School teachers in his congregation. It was purely a private document, and was never intended to be sent broadcast among the members. He, however, frankly admitted making an intimation from the pulpit to the effect that the Feast of the Assumption would be celebrated. Continuing, Mr. Schofield said he, however, homologated all the sentiments expressed in the "lesson." He ascribed very much importance to the doctrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and pointed out that although the Church did not require them to believe in the tradition that the holy mother also partook of a resurrection, and Enoch-like was taken up body and soul to heaven, yet, it was held as a pious belief by many Christians including himself.

There was nothing irregular, he thought, in doing honour to the merits of the Virgin by observing the Feast, and certainly nothing that could call for a reprimand from the Bishop. It had been customary to celebrate the Assumption at St. Michael's for at least a quarter of a century, and he knew for a fact that it was also kept in other Churches in the diocese. Interrogated as to the present crusade against ritualistic practices in the Church of England, Mr. Schofield thought those who took part misapprehended the lines along which the clergy engaged in the forward movement were working. Personally, he believed in all the so-called "Popish" practices, because he maintained that all the tenets practised by the Roman Church were really accepted by the Anglican Church, and that if there was any difference at all, it lay in the manner in which they were set forth. Such practices had been carried out in his own Church for a number of years.

He believed, for instance, in confession and priestly absolution, and in this connection he mentioned that he had heard about a thousand confessions at his house within a short period. He explained that the Church allowed much latitude in such matters, and although it did not enjoin such practices as were at present being taken exception to, it did not inhibit the clergy from the performance of them if they believed in their efficacy. He declared that he for one saw no reason why there should not be a reunion between the Anglican and Romish Churches, provided that the question of the Papal claims could be got rid of. The Pope, he thought, was the great stumbling block in the way. Mr. Schofield frankly acknowledged that he neither belonged to the Protestant nor to the Roman Catholic persuasion, but was simply a Catholic in the widest acceptance of that term."

The *News* had an interesting criticism of the above which we subjoin :—

“We published yesterday a communication showing that in one Episcopal Church in Edinburgh, Popish practices are pretty extensively adopted. One of our representatives called upon the rector of St. Michael’s to hear what he had to say about his ritualistic masquerading. The reverend gentleman seemed rather proud than otherwise of the publicity given to his performances. Not only did he admit that such practices as were indicated were carried on, but he frankly stated that the only obstacle in his way of joining Rome was the claim to Papal infallibility. How will Bishop Dowden view the situation? From the remarks of the rector of St. Michael’s, it would appear that the Bishop leaves the Churches considerable latitude in matters of Doctrine and Ritual. While he does not sanction them, the Bishop seems to tolerate whatever the rectors think makes for congregational edification. If the practices indicated in the interview which we publish to-day were confined to St. Michael’s, we should dismiss the subject as unworthy of notice, beyond a curt reference to clerical eccentricities. But from various sources comes information which compels us to believe that Scotland, like England, is suffering from a revival of Sacerdotalism, with all its ritualistic tomfoolery and priestly despotism. To what is this revival due? How comes it that in Scotland educated people are to be found who give countenance to doctrines and practices which belong to the Dark Ages? It might have been supposed that the spirit of Protestantism with its suspicion of priestly arrogance and dislike of credulity would save us from a revival of the worst features of the Roman Catholic religion? How are we to explain the fact that confession, absolution, hair shirts, and all the rest of the superstitious features of Rome are now popular among the so-called educated religious people of Edinburgh and other parts of Scotland? The reaction is largely due to the fact that our national prosperity has given birth to a large and growing class in the community, principally ladies, whose incomes are derived from dividends, and who are detached from all pressing duties in actual life. With them, feeling nurtured by idleness becomes increasingly strong till it blends with mysticism in religion. The clergy, quite alive to this, and knowing their inability to deal effectively on the lines of reason with men who are unsettled by the Higher Criticism, have pandered to the feminine type of religion on the lines of Sacerdotalism. Weak men who have lost their intellectual moorings, and sentimental women afflicted with ennui, fall an easy prey to such mystics as Dr. Whyte, who unwittingly prepare their pupils for the Sacerdotalism associated with the name of the late Dr. Macleod of Govan. High Churchism in Scotland, as in England, gravitates Romewards. Of course the people who have to earn their bread, and who come into daily contact with the realities of life, are in no danger from irrational practices and irrational

dogmas. Their healthy, instinctive horror of Romanism, fed by their love of mental freedom, will keep the people from falling into the trap of mysticism. But the subject has a distinctively ecclesiastical as well as a distinctively personal side. Why is Scotland free from the ecclesiastical turmoil which is raging in England? For one reason, because Scotland crushed the attempt of the Stuarts to substitute Episcopacy for Presbyterianism as the national religion. It is customary for Scotsmen of a superior turn of mind to sneer at the ecclesiastical squabbles of their countrymen in days gone by. Nevertheless it remains true that underneath the ecclesiastical battle, and unknown to the combatants, there was going on a war to the knife between two totally antagonistic principles, liberty as incarnated in Presbyterianism, and despotism as represented by Episcopacy. Our Covenanting forefathers saw that Episcopacy was Romanism in disguise. How well the people grasped the situation is seen in their interruptions with the cry "Popery" of the reading of the new liturgy in St. Giles Cathedral, on Sabbath, the 23rd July, 1637. Two centuries have rolled by since that historic scene. In the interval the upper classes of Scotland, ashamed of Presbyterianism, have gone over to Episcopacy, and Scottish Episcopalians have worked hard to show that Episcopacy is Christianity in its purest form. Where do we now stand? It has taken the Scottish aristocracy two hundred years to discover what our Covenanting forefathers discovered in 1637, that in Episcopacy were hidden the deadly germs of Romanism."

Brief Notes of Sermons.

BY THE LATE REV. DR. JOHN KENNEDY, DINGWALL.

IX.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."—
MATT. xxv. 10.

I. The coming of the bridegroom.

II. They who were ready. They had a right to enter, a sufficient supply of oil, and a trimmed and burning lamp.

III. They went in with Him. O! what good company!

IV. The door was shut.

I. The coming of the bridegroom. It is Christ that is here meant, for He and He alone stands in this relation to His Church. Of Him it is said, "And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." The coming of the Bridegroom here spoken of takes place at death: (1) Because then it is that the marriage between Christ and the Church is consummated. They were betrothed before; but He marries her when He comes to claim her as His bride in order to

bring her home. (2) Because it is then the Church's blessedness is made perfect. It is then the feast is to be enjoyed which shall be spread in the palace of the king. How great shall be the joy of the Bridegroom! Think of this as the end of His eternal love, as the result of His great work in the fulness of time, and as the close and climax of the work of grace. Think of all from which He separates her then. Think of all to which He brings her then. What must be the joy of His infinite love in coming to bring to His loved one to be for ever with Himself, and what must be the joy of her for whom He comes?

We stand here between two great facts, the coming of Christ to earth, His work and death, the great fact of the past which is matter of history, and Christ's second coming, when He shall come again the second time without sin unto salvation, the great fact of the future which is matter of faith and hope and prophecy. It is plain that the date of Christ's coming here spoken of is at death. It is then, as we have said, that the marriage of the Church is consummated. Then must He acknowledge His bride, not before His enemies, not before the assembled world, but in the court of heaven, in the presence of the Father, and in full view of all the angels. He brings home His bride to the palace of the king, and surely with gladness great shall she be brought into it, and there shall she abide. This bringing home is to be by death.

We are to expect that the beginning of Christ's work for His Church shall be followed up with what shall be in consistency with that glorious antecedent. And is death a fitting climax to such a work. Yes. How? Because Christ shall do nothing inconsistent. What He does to-day shall be quite consistent with what He did yesterday. He loved His Church, and the great commendation of that love He gave in His coming and taking the place of kinsman, and doing the work of surety. He endured death for His people, and took the sting out of it. He triumphed over it, proving Himself the Prince of Peace, when He rose victorious from the grave. When I think of death, I shrink from it. Why must I pass through that dark, gloomy way? Think of all that the soul passes through in the wilderness; often it finds a place where there is no water, and sometimes no food at hand; it passes through a vale of tears, and fiery serpents have to be met with, and foes more deadly than they, and this dark river at the end. It is not like the Jordan over which Israel passed. Jordan was severed, and through it they passed. But it is I who must be severed when I come to this river. My spirit and body must part; my body returns to dust, and my spirit naked passes into the presence of God. To find relief from this feeling of shrinking from death, I like just to go to Calvary. And what do I see there? I see Jesus Christ die. He died for sin under the curse, under the full expression of the wrath of God. In holy human nature He had to undergo

the parting of soul and body. His body went down to the grave. But He triumphed over death for his people, and they have to meet death without the sting, and with the blessing of God. He as the forerunner has gone in through death. Why should I shrink from following Him? There I feel ashamed of my dread of death. Death is a fitting close and climax to a life of faith. From first to last His people's life is a life of faith. That life of faith is glorifying to God and good for them. If it were not so, it would not have been. When first He came to bring me to Himself, He betrothed me. He came when I wished not for Him. I have to thank God as much for the prayers His love refused as for the prayers He answered. The prayers of my days of ignorance, if they had been answered, where would I have been now? He came and touched me, and His touch seemed rough at first. I felt as if He grasped me only to shake me over the fire, a foretaste of the hell awaiting me. Once I feared it might be so. But He quickened me, and brought me into the household of God, and God became my father. He put His Spirit in me, and I became a member of His body, and that Spirit dwelt in me, preparing and sanctifying for the Father's house. It is fitting that death be the close and climax of a life of faith. This death stealing over my body till I can move none of its members, the chill of insensibility coming over my spirit, oh, if in the midst of all this, I catch one glimpse of the Lamb of God in the midst of the throne, His presence shall sustain me even then, and I can say in the face of death, "I will trust in Him." I have tried to say, "If it is Thy will thus to bring me home, and if it is to Thy honour, let it be so. If Thou wentest through death, let me follow." The Bridegroom went through death and He has left a stingless death for His bride to go through, and it is the passage to glory. Whatever I may have said here, when I get to the other side of death, I shall never say, "Why didst thou not bring me some other way?" An infant one moment in heaven is more enlightened than anyone can be here. Death is a final thing. It is the end of hoping and believing. Then the soul goes in where the enjoyment and feasting begin that shall have no end, and where vision takes the place of faith. Then shall they go in with the Lamb, His presence shall go with them, and they shall be escorted by angels to their place in the Father's house.

II. They who were ready. What does readiness to go in to the marriage imply? (1) A right to go in. Everyone has not a right to go in. How can I obtain a right? Only in Christ. I must be so united to Him as to be one with Him. Then His righteousness is mine, and I am covered with His righteousness till I become righteousness in Him. One with Him, so that His Spirit dwells in me. How can I be united to Christ? By the working of the quickening Spirit. Born not of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God, born again. By faith I am united to Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." In Christ there

is a right, a title to the inheritance. The title is kept. It may be said to the soul, "O you are only an heir." "But," the soul replies, "my title is good." It is kept by God, it is in heaven where no thief can reach it, and no moth nor rust is in the atmosphere of heaven. The heir is also kept for the inheritance, kept by the power of God. No fear then but the inheritance and the heir shall meet. Then shall the song be, "Not unto me, but unto Thy name be praise." "Grace, grace, unto it." (2) Preparation for heaven. What is it? Conformity to Christ. Complete sanctification—soul, body, and spirit sanctified. They must have oil in their vessels, grace in their souls. Their lamps must be trimmed and burning. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slept. When He came they looked at their lamps, and the wise found oil in their vessels. How can I know that I have grace in my soul? By a Spirit-sealed evidence to my soul. I look at my vessel, and oh, it is empty, I say. The vessel, however, is deep, so deep that no eye can see to the bottom of it but God's. But he who has grace in his soul, if he sees no grace in it, goes crying for grace to the store where it can be found. He looks from his own emptiness to the fulness that is in Jesus Christ. His stock of grace is in the Head. (3) The lamp must be trimmed. The oil wont do in the vessel; it must be put into the lamp or no light will be there to show the way, and no light to see the Bridegroom when He comes. And the lamp must be burning. Grace must be in exercise. As poor sinners we must be coming to the fulness of grace. We must be trusting Christ, trusting Him for carrying us through, trusting our souls, our all to Him, believing that He is able to save us to the uttermost. We must trust Him in life and at death.

III. "And they went in with him to the marriage." I must come out before I go in. O yes, this spirit must leave the tabernacle of flesh where it has always been. I have been here always, says the soul in reference to the body, but I must come out a naked spirit. In thinking of that I had almost forgot the words that come after, "with Him." I must die, but what is this death, this parting of soul and body? This spirit must put off this body that has covered it, but it puts also off the body that burdens and pollutes it. This death separates the soul from sin for ever. With Him I go in. He has promised to be with me till then. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And oh, then, when parting from sin, I will surely not part with Thee. Thou wilt go with me on the journey from death to the Father's house. Thou wilt bring me into the presence of the king. O then, I may trust Thee to cover me in the strangeness of my first experience of heaven with the embrace of Thy love, and Thou wilt introduce me. If Thou art with me till then I may be content to go with Thee, there to be for ever with Thee. In to the marriage, in with the King, as a king's daughter, and the king's spouse, the bridegroom, Christ, shall introduce His spouse to the

Father. I might feel abashed to enter that glory, but going in with Him as a bride, His glory and His love will keep me from being abashed. They went in with Him to the marriage feast, a feast that shall never have an end. God tells me it will never end. To everlasting life Christ's people go. They go to a feast of full enjoyment, eternal rest, unending glory and bliss.

IV. "And the door was shut." When the foolish went to buy, they knew where to go. They went to them that sold. They called unto me, says Christ. They went to the right quarter, but not at the right time. Too late. When death comes, it shuts the door. It may come to us this night. We had no warrant to say it will not. Some of you may say, "It is not likely to come soon to us." It is most likely to come just when you are saying so. Hear the word, "At such a time as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." When the wicked says, "Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh." When the door is shut, it shuts in all who were ready. It shuts them in to an eternity of glory, an exceeding weight of glory. It shuts out all who are not ready to an eternity of woe. O that (if I may so speak) the noise of the shutting of the door rang loud in the ears of the young! "And the door was shut." O my dear fellow-sinners, may God apply this truth to your souls. Amen.

X.

"But one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."—LUKE x. 42.

I. We have here a concise statement of an important truth.

II. We have the description of one who was made wise to choose the "good part."

I. "One thing is needful." This is not a thing that becomes alone by being separated from other things, but is a thing that has been always alone. It was, and must remain distinct and solitary. How many there are who have taken one out of a multitude of things, which they have placed in a position of isolation, and made it their "one thing." They have done so, not because its greatness makes their chosen thing solitary, but because it is the trifle with which they elect to be engrossed.* I have seen a child building a toy castle with bricks; and the castle is almost built; just one little brick is needed to finish the building. If the brick is not found, the child cries and makes all about him uncomfortable. To him it is the one thing needful at the time. But do the parents think so? No; because they are wiser. I have seen one ill with fever calling loud for something that it would be death for him to get. To him it appears the one thing needful. Those around him know what he needs is health, and the means to

* This and the two preceding sentences are taken out of the published sermon on this text in order to fill a blank.—Ed.

restore health. A drunkard comes up to one, begging for money, and tries all his ingenuity to move your heart so as to move your hand to give him money. And what does he wish the money for? To buy drink that will ruin him body and soul. Sinner, still careless and Christless, you lead no better life. You have no more respectable aim in life than the poor drunkard. You are leading a fool's life, and if unchecked, will have a fool's end.

The sphere of the thing spoken of in the text is the sphere of the needful. We shall never enter that sphere unless taught by the Spirit of God. When the law comes, when we find ourselves lost sinners with hell yawning right before us, then we shall feel there is but "one thing" needful for us, and that "one thing" is salvation. "What shall we do to be saved?" shall be our cry.

II. The portion or part spoken of. It is a good, and enduring portion. What is it? It is salvation. It is a provision, God's provision for sinners, and that embodied in Jesus Christ. We are not to think of this provision only as deep in the heart of God, or as a provision of love hidden in the resources of God, but also as revealed in the glorious gospel, and brought nigh in Christ as He is there revealed. Of this portion it is said that it is good. It is so because it is the gift of God. We know that it is of God, and therefore it must be good. There is none good but God, and every good and perfect gift is from God. It is good because it meets our whole case as sinners. What we need is salvation, salvation from all sin, and His gift is salvation from all sin. There was a time in my life's history, and I daresay in the life's history of some of you present, when, in looking over the past of our lives, we were saying "This and this cannot be forgiven," and the only word that could describe us was "Lost, lost." But if the light of Sinai were cast over the whole extent of our being, piercing into the darkest depths within us and reaching to the outskirts of our sin, still in this provision, in this portion, there is sufficient to meet our whole case. This portion is an enduring portion, once you have it, it can never be taken from you. Your own sin cannot put it from you, and no enemy can take it from you. God saves me from my own folly. My portion is in heaven. God is too wise to give it into my hands, He retains it in His own hand. My life is hid with Christ in God. It is in heaven where no thief can steal, no moth corrupt. The world cannot get its theftuous hand upon it; sin cannot enter to pollute it; the great enemy cannot take it away. The enemy can mar your enjoyment of it here, but what of that? The world can persecute the children of God, but in doing so, they only make the children depend more for their joy on communion and fellowship with God. They may slay the children, but what will the upshot of that be? Only to separate them from all that prevents their full enjoyment of the provision in the Father's house. Death will not deprive them of their portion. Death is not to them a punishment of sin; it is a messenger from the Father's house. I like to think of

death as Christ's coming again. "I will come again and receive you to myself." Death is Christ's coming to bring His people home to be for ever with Himself. The great enemy cannot take away the portion, but he will avenge himself on them by being to them the tempter. But his temptation will result in keeping them more dependent on God for grace all through to the end, and then they will go where no temptations shall ever assail them.

This portion, good and enduring, was chosen by Mary. The Lord made her wise to choose this portion. At one time she was true to the meaning of her name—"rebellious," but in a day of power she was made willing, and now she is in her own place at the feet of Jesus listening to His words. Where else would she be? For there at the feet of Jesus hearing His word her soul grows in grace and in the knowledge of God. Some Christians are chiefly taken up with outside work, forgetting closet work. Others more retiring are content to carry messages to a throne of grace. They are pleaders seeking blessings for the workers in the vineyard. It would be well for the Church to have the workers and the pleaders. It would be well for the soul to have the spirit of a pleader, and the will to work.

I have three questions to ask, and then without waiting to press them, I have done. (1) Are you here to-day who do not believe the statement here made by Christ that "one thing is needful?" There is no doubt about it in heaven. The minds of all in hell must assent to that statement, though their hearts rebel against the truth. There are no sceptics on this subject but on earth. How awful it is to see a sinner standing on the brink of hell with Christ as God's provision standing near him, and the sinner despising the provision of God's grace and dishonouring God's great name! (2) (This question forgotten by the writer.) (3) Are there some here to-day who can say without a lie before God, "Give me thy provision in Christ, and do with me as thou pleasest; I am content with thy salvation?" Amidst the stoppages of banks and the crashings of mercantile houses, it is well to know that there is a sure portion. They are a blessed people who have the good enduring portion of God's provision in Christ.

Notes from Dr. John Owen.

DR. OWEN, comparing the sufferings of faith narrated in Heb. xi. 35-38 with the triumphs of faith in the immediately preceding verses, says: There is as much glory unto a spiritual eye in the catalogue of the effects of faith that follows as in that which went before. The church is no less beautiful and glorious, when encompassed and seemingly overwhelmed with all the evils and dreadful miseries here recounted, than when it is in the greatest peace and prosperity. To look, indeed, only on the outside of them gives a terrible undesirable prospect. But to see faith and

love to God working effectually under them all, to see comforts retained, yea consolations abounding, holiness promoted, God glorified, the world condemned, the souls of men profited, and at length triumphant over all, this is beautiful and glorious.

To do the greatest things and to suffer the hardest is all one to faith. It is equally ready for both, as God shall call, and equally effectual in both. These things unto the flesh differ next to heaven and hell: they are both alike to faith when duty calls.

“OTHERS WERE TORTURED.”—And this is the height of what the old murderer could rise and attain to. He began with a sudden death by violence and blood. But when he had got advantages he was not contented therewith. He would have the servants of the living God to die by all sorts of tortures. This was his hell, the hell of his making. But he could never put the displeasure of God into it, nor make of it any continuance. Divine wrath, and perpetuity under it, are his own portion. But that which is most marvellous herein is that he should get amongst men such as should execute his infernal rage and malice. There was never any greater instance of the degeneracy of human nature to the image and likeness of the devil than this, that so many of them have been found, and that in high places of power—emperors, kings, judges, and priests—who were not satisfied to take away the lives of the true worshippers of God by the sword, or by other ways in which they slew the worst of malefactors, but invented all kinds of hellish tortures whereby to destroy them. For although the crafts of Satan were open and evident herein, who designed by them ways to get time and advantage for his temptations to draw them off from the profession of the faith which he could not have had in a speedy execution; yet it is astonishing that the nature of man should be capable of so much villany and inhumanity. But this also God hath seen good to permit in that patience whereby he endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath that are fitted for destruction. And He doth it for many blessed ends of his own glory and the eternal salvation of His church, not here to be insisted upon.

“They were tortured.”—This is the utmost that the devil and the world can reach to, all the hell he hath to threaten his enemies withal. But when he hath done his utmost, it falls only on the body, it cannot reach the soul; it is but of a short continuance, and gives assurance of an entrance into a blessed eternity. It can shut out no divine consolation from the minds of them that suffer; a little precious faith will carry believers victoriously through the worst of all.

THE things which are commanded or forbidden of God are not to be esteemed by the matter of them, or what they are in themselves, but by the authority of Him that commands or forbids them. And this is the same in the least as well as the

greatest things in religion. The authority of God may be despised in small things as well as in great. And, therefore, God doth ordinarily choose out arbitrary institutions to be the trial and touchstone of the faith of the church. So the martyrs here in England died on the account of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And if we begin at any time to suppose that to save our lives we may comply with some lesser things—such as bowing in the house of Rimmon—that God hath forbidden, both faith and profession are lost. We know not what command, what ordinance, what institution, what prohibition God will single out to be the means and subject of our trial, as unto sufferings. If we are not equally ready to suffer for everyone, we shall suffer for none at all. (See James ii. 10).

The late George Müller.

IT is now nearly six months since Mr. George Müller, Bristol, the eminent philanthropist, passed away, but it may not be too late to give here a brief account of his life and labours. He was born in the town of Kroppenstedt, Prussia, on 27th September, 1805. In early youth he exemplified in a marked degree the truth that all are born in sin, and up to the age of twenty lived a very loose and careless life. His profligacy brought as its reward on one occasion over three weeks in gaol. Strange to say that during this period of life he was pursuing his studies with the view to becoming a clergyman, but so utterly ignorant was he of the requirements of that important position that among his 200 books he possessed no Bible. The turning point, however, in his career came in November, 1825. A student friend took him one Saturday evening to a little prayer meeting in a private house, and what he saw and heard there proved the beginning of a new life to George Müller. He now began to read the Scriptures, pray often, and to stand on the side of Christ. The public means of grace to which he had access at this time were very few, and sometimes he walked ten or fifteen miles to hear the truth preached. He came to London on 29th March, 1829, and for a short time studied as a missionary probationer in connection with the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. He began now to evince his love for that principle of absolute dependence on the Lord for temporal supplies, which he acted upon through life. He offered "to serve the Society without salary, if they would allow him to labour in regard to time and place as the Lord might direct him," but the Society were unable to accede to his offer, and so his connection with them came to an end. At this juncture he entered upon ministerial work at Ebenezer Chapel, Teignmouth, and here he spent two and a half years. He came to Bristol in 1832. In 1834 he inaugurated a Scriptural Knowledge Institution for home and abroad. In

regard to this we give the following interesting quotation :—“The objects were : (1) To establish Day, Sabbath, and Adult Schools in which instruction was given in Scriptural principles : (2) To circulate the Holy Scriptures, especially among the poorest of the poor : (3) To aid missionary operations in all lands : (4) To circulate religious books, pamphlets, and tracts. It was resolved never to seek “the patronage of the world,” to look for support from God alone by prayer and faith, and not to run into debt. Two days after the institution was founded, one at least of the founders was almost penniless, for he was compelled to write—“To-day we have only one shilling left !”

But the work went on, and in 1897, in the last annual statement he was privileged to give, Mr. Müller could report that he had received since the work was commenced the noble sum of £1,424,646 ! With this, 121,683 persons had been taught in the schools supplied by the institution ; 281,652 Bibles, 1,448,662 New Testaments, 21,343 copies of the Book of Psalms, and 222,196 other portions of the Word of God, in many different languages, had been circulated ; a considerable number of missionary and mission schools had been assisted, £259,776 having been spent in this direction ; 111,489,067 Scripture Books, Tracts, &c., had been circulated ; and 9,844 orphans had been fed, clothed, and educated.

But the last item anticipates. Not long after the establishment of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution Mr. Müller was seized with an intense longing to extend the work by doing something for destitute orphans. He was naturally well acquainted with the large orphan house at Halle, built in dependence upon God by A. H. Franke. At this time the alternative in England for poor children bereaved of their parents lay for the most part between the poorhouse and the gaol, and the desire became rooted in Mr. Müller's kindly heart that he might, while caring for the bodies of these helpless ones, present to the world an object lesson showing “even in the nineteenth century what can be accomplished by prayer and faith.” It was a noble aspiration ! “I judge myself bound,” he says, “to be the servant of the Church of Christ in the particular point in which I obtained mercy, namely, in being able to take God by His Word and to rely upon it. This seemed to me best done by the establishing and carrying on of an orphan house. It needed to be something which could be seen even by the natural eye. Now, if I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith obtained, *without asking any individual*, the means of establishing and carrying on an orphan house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted of the reality of the things of God. This, then, was the primary reason for establishing the orphan houses. I certainly did from my heart desire to be used by God to benefit the bodies of poor children

bereaved of both parents, and seek, in other respects, with the help of God, to do them good for this life. I also particularly longed to be used by God in getting the dear orphans trained up in the fear of God; but still the first and primary object of the institution was, and still is, that God might be magnified by the fact that the orphans under my care were, and are provided with all they need only by prayer and faith, without anyone being asked by me or my fellow-labourers, whereby it might be seen that *God is faithful still and hears prayer still.*"

Bills were issued announcing a public meeting to be held on 9th December, 1835. At this important little gathering, the only speaker was Mr. Müller, and no collection or appeal was made. Four days previous to the meeting, Mr. Müller had been much struck, in reading his Bible, by these words, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."—(Ps. lxxxi. 10.) He at once took the promise literally, knelt down and asked the Lord for premises, for the sum of £1,000, and for suitable persons to take care of the children, all of which requests were at length granted. The first donation towards the proposed orphan house was the sum of one shilling from a poor missionary. The second contribution was also a shilling, and the first legacy, 6s. 6½d., came from a little boy!

On 17th December the sum of £100 was given by a poor seamstress, weak in bodily health, who had come into possession of the money through the death of a relative. As her average earnings did not exceed 3s. 6d. per week, Mr. Müller hesitated to accept the gift, but the poor woman insisted with this noble reply, "The Lord Jesus has given His last drop of blood for me, and shall I not give Him this £100?" What answer could Mr. Müller make to this? He could only thank God for using this poor woman, in so considerable a measure, for helping at its very commencement the work he had set about solely in dependence upon Him."

Mr. Müller was enabled to build from time to time five orphan houses, the last being opened on 6th January, 1870. "The five houses had cost £115,000, and were capable of accommodating 2,050 children, together with the necessarily large staff of helpers. Not a penny had been asked from any man—not a single letter, circular, or advertisement had been issued appealing for help." "An afternoon at the orphan houses is esteemed a privilege and pleasure by many visitors at Bristol. Each house has its visiting day, and no alterations or exceptions can be made in its arrangements. No. 1 (fitted up for the accommodation of 140 girls and 80 boys above eight years of age, and 80 boys under eight) is open to visitors on Wednesday afternoons. No. 2 (200 infant girls and 200 older girls) on Tuesday afternoons. No. 3 (450 older girls) on Thursday afternoons. No. 4 (210 boys of eight years of age and upwards, 203 infant boys, and 37 older girls to do household work) on Friday afternoons. And No. 5 (210 infant

and 240 older girls) on Saturday afternoons." "The conditions of entry to the homes are of the broadest. The loss of both parents by death, and genuine need, are the only qualifications necessary. No recommendation is required, and the question of sect is never raised. Sometimes orphans are received when only a few months old, and remain in the institution for 15, 16, or even 17 years. The average term of residence, however, is about 10 years. The girls are trained for service, though not a few of them rise to higher positions by reason of the good education they are given, and the boys are generally apprenticed to a useful trade of their own choice."

These quotations, as well as the other facts here narrated, are taken from a booklet of 15 large pages (price one penny) written by Mr. Frederick G. Warne. The writer also gives many instances of remarkable answers to prayer which Mr. Müller received. Oftentimes he was at his last penny when help arrived. "He was a great lover of the Bible, which he read through four times every year. He systematically read from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation, and had done so between one and two hundred times." The whole narrative of Mr. Müller's life is of an instructive and stimulating character, and should prove a spiritual incentive to all who read it. He was a remarkable witness to the truth—"Ask and it shall be given you." He died on 10th March, 1898, at the advanced age of upwards of 92 years. His end was sudden. His attendant entered the bedroom in the morning and found him lying on the floor, dead. The above writer says—"The summons to the Master's presence had come! It was a beautiful end to a beautiful life. No lingering hours of pain, but a sudden call to the glory of the Master's presence." At a meeting not long before he died, he declared that his only hope for eternity was that of a hell-deserving sinner resting upon the sovereign grace of God in Christ Jesus. With all his good works, he was little in his own eyes, and based not his salvation upon any works of righteousness he had done. He was willing to be a debtor to free and sovereign grace for time and eternity. His funeral at Bristol elicited the profoundest and most widespread interest, and was the most remarkable in the city within present memory. "He being dead, yet speaketh." We cannot refrain from noticing here the value of Mr. Müller's personal property, as stated in his will. It amounted to the humble sum of £160 9s. 4d., of which £60 3s. 4d. was money. He was the personal recipient yearly of thousands of pounds, yet he surrendered well-nigh all on behalf of the great work in which he was engaged. A life of faith, prayer, and self-denial such as his is a testimony to the truth and power of Christianity that might well convince the blindest infidel in the world. We have only given but a few facts of his life. Our readers can procure the booklet (post free) from which the most of the above information is taken by sending 1½d. to W. F. Mack & Co., 52 Park Row, Bristol, or The Book Society, 28 Paternoster Row, London.

Clu an Fhìrean.

BY REV. D. MACDONALD, SHIELDAIG.

MATT. vii. 16.

MO ghràdh-s' an comunn uasal ud
 Nach aicheadh mo luaidh-sa,
 Ach a leanas e tre chruaidhchasan,
 'Toirt buaidh 'n an gluasad còmhnard.

Coimhididh iad aith'ntean-san,
 Le h-urram diadhaidh, sgàthachail,
 'S bidh eagal Dia 'n am pàilliuhan
 Gach là le cràbhadh sònruicht'.

Thug spiorad naomh nan gràsan ud
 Tuigs' a's eòlas slàinteil dhoibh
 Air òirdhearcas an t-Slanuighir
 A ghin an gràdh gun ghò annt'.

Shoillsich Spiorad beannuichte
 Dhé o nèamh le ghathan iad,
 A' dearbhadh annt' ni's soilleire
 Gu seul' na naomhachd ghlòrmhor.

Dh'fhuadaich buaidh nam feartan ud
 Gach dorchadas a's aineolas,
 A's ghin e siol nam beannachd
 'N an anaman'-san mar phòraibh.

Dh'éirich grian na fireantachd
 Le slàint' orra gu firinneach,
 Ga'n athnuadhachadh o iomhaidh.
 Gu iomhaidh Dhé le boichead.

'S na pòran cùbhraidh, torach ud
 A dh'fhàs fo bhlàth tre fheartan-san,
 Chionn gu'n robh freumh an anam
 Air a' charraig ud a chòmhnuidh.

'S i fireantachd Emanuel
 A chòmhdachd lomnochd 'n anaman-san,
 'S thug saorsa phriseil dhachaidh thuc'
 Tre chreideamh Dhé tha bèd annt'.

An àit' aoibhinn thuit an lion-san,
 Ag òl á buadhan Dhia a mach,
 Dheth na sòlasan ionmhiannaichte
 Chuir am miann fo rian a sheòlaidh.

Tha naomhachd caithebeath' aca
 Co-shìnte ri an cleachdainean,
 'S tha stòdachd naomh' a's breithneachadh
 Ri aithneachadh 'n an còmhradh.

Dh'aithnich an luchd-ceusaidh orra
Gu'm bu Ghaleléich iad
Air son nach robh mi-ghnethealachd,
Na euceartan 'g an treòrach'.

Cha'n ioghnadh leam ged d'aithnicheadh
An saoghal gneathan ceart annta,
'S gur toradh siol neo mhearachdach
O fhlaithneas a thug beo iad.

O'n doimhne 's tric a' gearan iad
Air cridhe truailidh, ceannairceach,
A' miannachadh dol dhachaidh
Far am faigh an anam sòlas.

'S tric sna cuantan tuathach iad,
A' snàmh nan tonnan luath-lunnach,
'S muir bàite 's gàir nan uamhasan
'G an slugadh suas gun tràcair.

'S na cuantan mòra farsuing sin
Bidh creidimh beò 'g an neartachadh
Gur h-e Dia bheir dhachaidh iad,
'S a chaisgeas a' muir mòr dhoibh.

Seann nàdur truailidh, ceannairceach,
A bheir na cuantan dhachaidh orr',
'Sa shluigeas sios a dh'aindeoin iad
Mar neach gun neart fo dhòruinn.

Re oidh'chean gruamach, bagarrach,
Is tùrsach 'feitheamh na fàireadh iad,
Is cùirte, brùite am faireachadh,
A's ceartas 'g agradh 'chòrach.

Ged thig bàs a's codal orra,
Dùisgear iad gu faireachail
Le anail bhlàth o fhlaithneas
A' neartachadh an dòchais.

Leighsear an cùl sleamhnaichean,
A's tearnar iad mar 's annsa leo—
Sgriosar gach namhaid cheannspreidheach
A bha gu teann an tòir orra.

Giullainidh iad smachdachadh
An Ti tha nis 'na Athair dhoibh,
Le umhlachd strìochdail, mhacanta,
Mar dh'fhòghlum iad o'n òige.

Eiridh iad 's na h-iarmailtean
Mar iolair air a sgiathan,
Le làn neart o Chriosda
Os ceann am miannan feolmhor.

Ruithidh iad gu caithreamach
 Tre shaors' o ghnùis 'g am beathachadh,
 'Toirt cruinneachd beo mar aran dhoibh,
 'G an neartachadh gu còmhrag.

Saigdearan eolach, sgairteil iad,
 Fo bhrataich Rìgh nam flaitheanais,
 A' cogadh ris na deamhainean,
 Toirt glòir a mach mar oighreachd.

An Example of Integrity.

The Christian Budget, a new religious paper, gave in its issue of 5th August the following interesting narrative which explains itself:—

"The beautiful tea-service shown in our illustration has a curious history. It belonged to Mr. John Croumbie, brother-in-law of John Brown, of Haddington, the author of 'The Self-Interpreting Bible,' and was presented to him in the following remarkable circumstances:—

Mr. Croumbie was an ironmonger in Market Street, Haddington, and sold gunpowder. His store was a cellar below the shop. One summer evening, as Croumbie sat at his shop window, over his ledger, an apprentice went below stairs with a candle in hand, and, in ignorance of the gunpowder, placed the candle on the barrel.

A spark from the candle did its work; the lad was killed, the flooring and window above were blown up, and John Croumbie was shot into the air and thrown up the street the length of the Old Tron, where he was let down safe and sound, but for the fall! The Tron, the public weighing-machine, is just half-way between his window and the Cross—a flight of some one and thirty yards! The good man was doubtless projected by, and likewise carried within the wind of the explosion, the terrible fragments going with him and around him, instead of dashing against him, as they might have done but for the providence of God.

The influence of this solemn event on John Croumbie's sombre and susceptible mind was deep and permanent, and as long as he lived he regularly observed its anniversary. He shut himself up in his bedchamber the whole day, and spent the time in prayer and thanksgiving. His property was insured, but when the insurance company offered him compensation for his loss he peremptorily declined to take anything, because he judged himself guilty of a breach of duty in having handed over the care of a cellar containing gunpowder to an inexperienced youth, instead of attending to it himself. The company acknowledged this unheard-of delicacy of conscience by a presentation of the 'tea-service' depicted above.

The inscription is as follows:—'Presented by the Sun Fire Office, London, to Mr. John Croumbie, Haddington, in testimony of the just sense they entertain of his integrity. Edinburgh, 25th July, 1789.'

Notes and Comments.

The Contents of this Column, except where otherwise indicated, are contributed by Mr. John M'Neilage, Glasgow.

Mr. John Kensit.—In last issue we stated that Mr. John Kensit, London, served seven days in gaol for his protest at a ritualistic service. The statement was based on reports in Scottish newspapers. We now understand we have made a slight mistake. The actual facts are that Mr. Kensit was fined, with the alternative of seven days' imprisonment, and that he refused to pay the fine, but that several friends paid it so as to prevent him undergoing a painful experience. Of course, by his refusal Mr. Kensit showed his deliberate willingness to suffer for the cause he had espoused, and therefore the moral value of his action was practically the same. Perhaps his friends would have done much better if they had allowed Mr. Kensit to obtain the high honour of being the first to suffer "bonds and imprisonment" for the cause of Christ and truth in these latter degenerate times.

—J. S. S.

Spain and Protestantism.—It is stated in *The Christian* of 18th August that there are to-day in Spain 56 Protestant pastors, 35 evangelists, and 116 places of public worship. The number of regular communicants is 3,442, and regular attendants reach 9,194. There are four or more Protestant periodicals. It appears from this that Spain is not wholly given over to Popery, and it is to be hoped that the cause of truth, by the blessing of God, may yet have prosperity in that land of idolatry. That its recent severe losses, in war with America, may be graciously over-ruled for that end should be the prayer of all who desire that Satan's kingdom be destroyed and the kingdom of Christ advanced.—J. S. S.

How the Queen and Royal Family spend the Sabbath.—The following note is taken from the *Graphic* of 6th August:—"The Queen left Osborne in the *Alberta* on Sunday afternoon to pay a visit to the Prince of Wales on board the *Osborne*. The Prince and Princess of Wales—with whom were Princess Victoria of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of Sparta, and Sir William MacCormac—awaited Her Majesty's arrival on the deck. The Princess of Wales photographed the *Alberta* as she came alongside." This note is attached to a large picture of the Royal party, which must have been sketched on the Lord's day. Truly, we may weep for the dishonour done to God and His laws, by high and low, in this professedly Christian country.—J. S. S.

Death of Dr. John Macleod, of Govan.—This noted minister of the Established Church passed away on 6th August, aged 58 years. The press writers say he was a coming man and that he would in due time have come to the Moderator's chair.

Men of one idea very often come to the front, and in this case the master passion was one which agrees with the spirit of the age. Dr. Macleod was, in fact, one of the chief ritualists of the time, and the father, we believe, of the Scottish Church Society. Twenty-three years ago he was presented to the parish of Govan by the Senate of Glasgow University, and his long incumbency there has been characterised by feats of church building and developments in worship of a kind very much at variance with the letter and spirit of the standards of the Scottish Church. His former sphere was the Border Parish of Duns. In our boyhood we remember that "Macleod of Duns" was a name associated with all the newest and boldest departures from Presbyterian form. Public opinion, however, has very much matured (or degenerated) in these matters, and what were innovations and follies 25 years ago, are now regarded as things devout, decorous, and necessary. The *Glasgow Herald* characterised the deceased as "a Churchman of an old type now passing away." Dr. Macleod's claim to the merit of ecclesiastical conservatism rests mainly on his treatment of the Kilmun case. In that affair he certainly took up an orthodox attitude. He was the leader in the process of deposing Mr. Robinson. We pointed out, however, at the time, that the defeat thus inflicted on the rationalistic cause could not be viewed with unmixed satisfaction. It was the case of one poison expelling another—superstition versus unbelief. Ritualism and rationalism may be sufficiently antagonistic in theory and opposite in practice, but they exhibit a wonderful unanimity when there is a piece of snuffing out of the evangelical man or evangelical cause to be done.

Montrose going Wrong.—Edinburgh having led the way, Montrose, though a small place in comparison, now follows suit, and even outstrips the metropolis. Montrose has now its Sabbath Brass Band playing under the authority of the Town Council. Three out of fifteen ministers of the town have protested against this iniquity, but the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* notes with satisfaction that this meddling proceeding of the three has only strengthened the sinews of the enterprise. On Sabbath, 14th August, 2000 listeners attended the performance of the town musicians instead of 600 on the previous Sabbath. Montrose, no doubt, is a shrewd business place. It would still vote for the maintenance of the eighth commandment as a useful business regulation. We suppose the sixth and seventh of the Decalogue also commend themselves as needful for the well-being of society, but the fourth commandment, it seems, is reckoned irksome, antiquated, and unnecessary. The truth, however, is that the wisdom of God has joined all the ten commandments together, and the attempt to separate what He has joined will be found to end in disaster and misery to Montrose, or to any other city, big or little. The harvest may take a generation or two to ripen, but a

seed time of Sabbath breaking will infallibly bring a reaping time of plots and outrages against life, honour, and property.

The Fate of the Advertising Swindler.—In Germany they have now a healthy way of dealing with the nuisance of lying trade advertisements. A law has been passed penalising those dishonest tricks of trade. "The result of marking boots 'manufacturers' prices' or hats 'cost price,' when a small profit was actually made, was a fine of £10 and the publication of the sentence in the newspapers. Some shopkeepers had announced the sale of goods at 'unheard-of prices,' and 'without profit,' and 'below cost price.' They were sentenced to sell at these prices until their stocks were exhausted. False announcements at sales have given rise to a number of prosecutions. 'Sale—retiring from business,' resulted in a fine of £15. 'Sale on account of removal,' and 'Sale after stock-taking,' when not in accordance with facts, also led to fines. A Hamburg firm advertised an 'infallible grease eraser.' This was an exaggeration for which the luckless inventor paid heavily. On the instigation of nine other firms he was requested in court to remove grease spots specially prepared for him by an expert appointed by the court. The experiment failed, and the inventor was fined £5 and costs."

The New Invasion of Britain.—In the year 55 B.C., Cæsar with his legions invaded this island and left marks on the land not yet effaced. A new Roman invasion now falls to be chronicled, but a less beneficial one. We refer to the inglorious regiment of organ-grinders and ice cream sellers which has landed on our shores. This apparently is all that now remains for the descendants of proud Cæsar and his legions. Squeezed out of Italy by the gripe of the tax-gatherer and the priest, they seek a piece of bread in lands where their fathers exacted tribute. To the organ grinding artist we have no particular objection. He doesn't, in Scotland at least, ply his calling on the Sabbath; but the ice cream merchant is a regular nuisance. His success is almost entirely built on desecration of the Lord's-day. In the thoroughfares of all our cities the flaring ice cream booth stands open seven days in the week, and the proprietor, with his sallow outlandish face, may be seen within, retailing ginger beer and sweetmeats to the idle dawdling youth who float about the streets, and want something to kill the time. But specially on the Sabbath, when the ennui and heart weariness of this God-forgetting crowd are more pronounced, does this unlovely foreigner find his opportunity. The demand for his compounds is then brisk and his drawings swell up. Fattening thus on the wages of iniquity, he does not regret that he left the sunny south for the raw and rainy shores of Britain. But let us heave a sigh over the humiliation of our country. "Your land, strangers devour it in your presence." A Napoleonic invasion to waste the land by fire and sword was a thing greatly dreaded once upon a time. A regiment

of beggarly Italians waging successful war upon the sanctity of the Scottish Sabbath is, if we knew it, a thing no less fearful, and yet it is calmly allowed to go on. That a pack of foreigners whom superstition and Sabbath-breaking have made poor, should be allowed to squat down in our midst, and introduce the same vices which have brought their own nation to decay, is an evident proof that our strength and wisdom are departing. Press writers and shallow patriots are wont to crack up the power and resources of the British empire, but truly, in regard to moral strength, which is the basis of all other, we think the British empire has about as much vigour as a stranded whale. We have many wholesome laws against Sabbath-breaking and other vices, but our governing authorities, drugged with a delusive liberalism, refuse to put them in force. They have ceased taking pains about the higher morals of the people, and are intent only on what makes for their diversion and bodily comfort; hence this calm toleration of the Sabbath-breaking foreigner, and other sins of omission and commission which will yield a sad harvest some day.

Dr. Whyte and Romanism.—In an article of the *Edinburgh Evening News* on Popish practices in Edinburgh, which appears elsewhere, the writer says that “weak men who have lost their intellectual moorings, and sentimental women afflicted with ennui, fall an easy prey to such mystics as Dr. Whyte, who unwittingly prepare their pupils for the sacerdotalism associated with the name of the late Dr. Macleod of Govan. High Churchism in Scotland, as in England, gravitates Romewards.” The whole tendency of Dr. Whyte’s lectures on such personages as Santa Teresa and Father John is to break down the bulwarks of Protestantism, and the statements quoted confirm what has been recently stated by Mr. Primmer that several ladies from Dr. Whyte’s congregation, Free St. George’s, Edinburgh, have become members of the Romish Church.—J. s. s.

Dr. Dods and the Bible.—This well-known professor has been again giving vent to his unsound views. He delivered, in the Oddfellows’ Hall, Edinburgh, on 17th August, a lecture on “The Bible and other Sacred Books” to the members of the British Chautauqua—a gathering of professors, ministers, students, and others from several parts of the world. Dr. Dods maintained that the Bible was “set altogether apart from all other sacred books,” such as those of the Egyptian, Chinese, and Mahomedan religions, but at the same time estimated the latter at a value far beyond their worth, in fact, swept away the line of separation between uninspired writings and the inspired Word of God. He said—“It was not safe to say that our scriptures alone were inspired. Inspiration was a word in regard to which many tricks were played. To say that they were inspired was quite meaningless, unless they first of all came to an understanding of what was meant by inspiration, which was extremely difficult to do. In the

sacred books he had been reviewing, they found many misconceptions of God and of the way of becoming one with Him. Still, there was much in them which had lifted men's thoughts to righteousness, and much which had given men faith in the unseen and hope in death. It was *a priori* probable that the Father of men would care for all His children on earth, and impart to them such knowledge of Himself as they were capable of receiving. Those sacred books proved that God had not left Himself without a witness, but had given revelations of Himself to men. . . .

Then came the question—If God had thus revealed Himself even in any degree to the heathen, was the distinction between their sacred books and our own obliterated? By no means. They were tentative, fragmentary, unfinished. In the Bible we had a revelation which was authoritative, complete, finished." Here we notice that the blind gropings of heathen philosophers are described as divine revelations, and the radical distinction which subsists between the Bible and all other books is, in spite of Dr. Dods' denial, obliterated. 'There is a mighty difference between the searchings of natural, unenlightened men into the things of religion, and the revelations of God Himself in regard to these things. The former is all the heathen ever attained to. Dr. Dods apparently believes in the erroneous idea of the universal fatherhood of God; all men are His children. He affirms it probable that "the Father of men would impart to them such knowledge of Himself as they were capable of receiving." We cannot make any sense whatever of this. What does he mean by "capable of receiving?" All are by nature possessed of reasonable, though depraved, souls, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, and as far as this is concerned all are equally capable of receiving the full knowledge of God. Dr. Dods seems to believe in some preparatory experience, fitting men for the knowledge of God, but his theology, we doubt, is rather disjointed. It is likely that the evolution theory is hidden in his forms of expression, and that he imagines semi-civilised people are in a less capable condition for the reception of the knowledge of God than civilised. Viewed in their lost, natural estate, the most intelligent and the most ignorant of the races of mankind are on the same level. Each and all require the same Gospel and the same Spirit for their enlightenment and salvation. We are not to waste time at present pursuing Dr. Dods into the bog of misleading and poisonous theology in which he has been long floundering, but conclude by quoting the commission Christ gave to His disciples, the contents of which irrefutably prove that no heathen can be saved without the full knowledge of God, as exhibited in the Gospel:—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—(Mark xvi. 15, 16.)—J. S. S.

Spurgeon's Sermons.—It is stated that 100,000,000 copies of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons have been already issued.

The Parishioner's Surprise.—An Englishman who lately visited the public dancing saloon at Ostend, Belgium, writes to the London papers that he was astounded to see among the revellers the curate of his own parish church at home. But why, we may ask, was the good man thus astonished? Had he been at all conversant with his Bible, he would have recollected the words of the prophet, "like priest like people," and this would have shed light on the whole situation.

Death of Dr. Moody Stuart.—Since our last issue, this aged minister of the Free Church has passed away, at the ripe age of 90 years. His long pastorate of Free St. Luke's, Edinburgh, was characterised by a refined but faithful handling of divine truth. He rendered good service in the days of the Robertson Smith controversy, by his writings in defence of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the unity of Isaiah. His exposition of the Song of Solomon shews good skill in experimental divinity. We regret that Dr. Moody Stuart silently sat under the last and crowning excesses of the Free Church leaders, and that he has left no public intimation that he disapproved of the Declaratory Act. He shares this blame along with others of similar repute.

The End of the War.—The Spanish-American War came to an end at the beginning of last month (August). The Peace Commissioners are now negotiating, but it is not likely Spain will be able to save any part of her colonial dominions. The right-thinking, civilised part of mankind are not sorry for this.

Meeting of Northern Presbytery.—At a meeting of this Presbytery held at Portree on 15th August, Mr. Alexander Stewart, student, was licensed to preach the gospel.

Correction.—The word "believes" should read "belies" at line 19 of page 150 in last issue.

Note.—We regret that, owing to our ministers at present being so much occupied with communion services, there is not the usual amount of Gaelic in this issue.—J. S. S.

Obituary Notice.

IT is with sorrow we announce the death of Mr. Alexander Macdonald, catechist, Dingwall. He died on Saturday, the 6th August, at the age of 78 years. He officiated as catechist in the congregation of Dingwall for the last thirty years. In 1893 he stood by the original constitution of the Free Church of Scotland, cast in his lot with the Free Presbyterian Church, and continued to officiate in Dingwall as formerly. He was a man that feared God above many, and his end was one of triumph through faith in Jesus Christ. We deeply sympathise with Mrs. Macdonald and daughter in their bereavement. We intend to have a fuller notice in next issue.

N. C.