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The Assemblies.

THE annual General Assemblies of the Established and Free Churches met again on the 18th May, and their proceedings were watched with the usual interest by the country at large.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

The retiring Moderator, Dr. Leishman, made reference to the losses by death that the Church had sustained during the past year. One of them was Professor Mitchell of St. Andrews, an ex-Moderator. Professor Mitchell was a profound historian, and was the only eminent man in the Church, as far as we are aware, who stood true to the principles of the Reformation. His removal is no ordinary loss. Dr. Leishman moved that the Rev. Dr. John Pagan, Bothwell, be called to the chair. Dr. Pagan was then summoned from the side-room, and duly installed in the Moderator's Chair amid loud applause.

On Friday, the 19th, before the meeting for business, a communion service was held in St. Giles' Cathedral. Immediately after the benediction was pronounced, the Rev. Jacob Primmer, rising at the back of the Church, and speaking in a loud voice, said :—"I, Jacob Primmer, an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, and in obedience to my ordination vow, protest against this service as contrary to the constitution of this country and the laws and usages of our National Church. So help me God." It is reported that no sooner had Mr. Primmer begun his protest than a murmur of disapproval came from all parts of the Church, and only those in the immediate vicinity of the speaker heard the terms of his protest. The congregation, however, was in the course of dispersing, and the incident terminated. Immediately after the Assembly met, Dr. Story, who is principal clerk, called the attention of the house to Mr. Primmer's protest, which he described as "a very painful occurrence," "a noisy and excessively disrespectful protest," and "an outrage against the decencies of public worship." He concluded by moving that "Mr. Primmer

be summoned to the bar of the Assembly on Monday next at twelve noon to answer for his conduct." The motion was adopted with loud cries of "agreed."

Rev. Dr. John Paton, Dumfries, gave in the report of the Committee on Aids to Devotion. Attention was directed to the remarkable success of the booklet entitled "Prayers for Soldiers," 21,366 copies of which had been sold during the year. This extraordinary sale was due to the fact that the authorities at the War Office had sanctioned the issue of the book at public cost to all Presbyterian soldiers. The Committee was of opinion that the General Assembly should transmit to the Secretary of State for War a minute of thanks for his action in providing prayer-books for their Presbyterian soldiers. The report was adopted. This speaks for itself. The destructive leaven of ritualism is being disseminated at home and abroad by the very Church that ought to be its greatest enemy.

Rev. James Williamson, Edinburgh, submitted the report of the Committee on Indian Missions. In the course of the discussion, Dr. M'Clymont, Aberdeen, spoke of his recent visit to India. He said that many Presbyterians there had turned their backs upon the Church of their fathers. He was told by a Brigadier-General that the foes of the Church of Scotland in India were largely those of her own house. That was very much to be lamented, but he did not think these gentlemen were altogether to blame. They must make a certain allowance for the natural gravitation to the large and influential English congregations which, worshipping in grand cathedrals or beautiful churches, contrasted very strongly with the mean edifices and the inconvenient hours at which the Presbyterian services were held. Dr. M'Clymont here apologises for his unfaithful brethren who are wending their way to Episcopacy. The apology need not be wondered at, for many of the leading ministers of his church are preparing the way by their ritualistic teachings and practices for the return of the people to the fell sway of Romanism.

On Monday, the 22nd, the Rev. Jacob Primmer appeared at the bar at noon in answer to a citation for disrespectful conduct at the celebration of the Communion in St. Giles' Cathedral on Friday. Rev. Dr. Cameron Lees, St. Giles', said he wished to speak to a point of order. They had been told that Mr. Primmer interrupted a service conducted by the General Assembly. That was presumptively a very heinous offence. He had, however, since learned from the reports of that most unfortunate occurrence that the service of the Assembly was concluded—(hear, hear)—and he thought that if they had been aware that such was the case they would have hesitated to take the strong step of summoning Mr. Primmer to the bar. The Assembly like other Courts of the land, could deal summarily with anything like contempt of court; but with regard to any offence or alleged offence, committed outwith the Assembly, that would require to be dealt with either

by the civil or the ecclesiastical court going through the regular form of process. If they regarded the matter in that light, it became a very serious question. Their liberties were in a manner at stake, for every minister could demand that he should be dealt with, according to the form of process, by the presbytery to which he belonged. Therefore, before proceeding any further with the case, he desired to obtain information upon the point as to whether the service of the General Assembly was concluded or not. When the Moderator pronounced the blessing in that house they had little to do with what might be done after it, and when the blessing was pronounced in the Church where the Assembly met, he did not think they had a right to notice anything that was done thereafter. Principal Story admitted that the benediction was pronounced, but held that the service was not over until the subsequent private devotions of the congregation had ceased. Rev. James Bain, Duthil, said they were thoroughly irregular in moving on their present lines. Dr. Lees moved, that finding Mr. Primmer had been cited there under a misapprehension, the Assembly take no further action in the matter. (Applause.) Rev. George T. Jamieson, Portobello, seconded. He thought that Mr. Primmer waited till very near the close of the private prayers of members. (No, no.) Mr. J. A. S. Millar, W.S., said that the house ought to know that Mr. Primmer was only repeating what he did at the same service last year. The Procurator moved that Mr. Primmer be informed of the allegation made against him, and inquire what he had to say. For Dr. Lees' motion, there were 169; for the Procurator's amendment, 278. The Moderator then asked Mr. Primmer what answer he had to give.

Mr. Primmer in his reply, asked if the Assembly ordered a liturgy to be used at the Communion. He did not intend to interrupt the service, and he never did so. The benediction had been pronounced, and in that liturgy, which he had in print, it was said that the service would be closed with the benediction. (Applause and laughter.) He had remained standing for perhaps two minutes afterwards. The one who interrupted was not present in the General Assembly. There was a harmonium in St. Giles'. The order was disturbed by it beginning to play, and then he thought it time to make his protest, seeing that the service was all over. It was the organ that was to blame if there was any noise. The service was closed, and how could there be any interruption when the thing was over? The next thing he found in the minute was that he was there to answer for his conduct. He counted it a privilege to stand there on behalf of the constitution and laws and usages of the Church of Scotland. When he was ordained the question was put to him:—"And will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain, and defend the same and the purity of worship as presently practised in this National Church and asserted in the Act of Assembly, 1707, entitled an Act against innovations in the

worship of God?" and, further, "and that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of the Church against error and schism, notwithstanding or whatever trouble or persecution may arise, and that you shall follow no divisive courses from the present established worship and discipline and government of this Church? He would have been a coward if he had not done his duty on that occasion. Let him quote a high authority in regard to the worship of Scotland. Dr. David Laing said, "I maintain, first, that no forms approaching to liturgical service were ever adopted or practised by the Church of Scotland, not even during the reign of Charles II., when Episcopacy for nearly thirty years was in the ascendant; and, second, that anything resembling instrumental music used in public worship until a very recent period was altogether unknown." He had now to quote from the Act of the Treaty of Union, and the document he quoted from was *The Scottish Church*—Principal Story could tell them who the editor of that periodical was—which laid down that Her Majesty established and confirmed the true Protestant religion, and the worship, discipline, and government of the Church to continue without any alteration to the people of the land in all succeeding generations. Quoting from Wilson's Index to the Acts of Assembly of 1858, he mentioned "a member of the Church was solemnly warned against the rash adoption of changes in the order and form of public worship, and presbyteries are enjoined, when such innovations are reported to them, to inquire into the extent and reasons assigned for such innovations;" and, in the following year, "the General Assembly declare it to be an innovation upon and contrary to the laws and usages of the Church in the celebration of public worship for a minister to read prayers from a book, either in manuscript or printed, and the minister be enjoined to conform, in offering up prayers, to the ordinary practice of the Church." He was doing his duty in protesting, in the name of God and as an ordained minister of that Church, that the use of this liturgy—it was read from beginning to end, because he went over it page after page, and he had written down the names of those who read it—had no sanction from the General Assembly. The General Assembly could not—he defied them to declare that this was legal, and that this be used in any church under the constitution of this Protestant Church. Every member had sworn that they would be true to their Protestantism, but here they had a liturgy that was not Protestant at all. In the liturgy there were things that were Popish and not Protestant. They had not gone over to the Church of Rome, and the language that was used at the Communion—or so-called Communion—was illegal. He had broken no law. He had conformed to his ordination vow, and others ought to have done just what he did. In any case, this was not the court he should have been summoned before, and he knew it would not have been the court if he had broken the law. He always tried to keep the law. When he was denouncing the

lawless, he tried to be law-abiding himself. He had been unjustly cited there, and he thought Dr. Story when he made the assertion in that house regarding his conduct ought to have spent a night dreaming over it before coming there. (Laughter and cries of "Order.") He said nothing more, but was prepared to answer questions.

As Mr. Primmer had neither apology to offer nor regret to express for his conduct, Dr. Scott moved, "That the conduct of Mr. Primmer in the house of God on the occasion referred to was unbecoming an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, and reprehensible, and that the General Assembly resolve that he be warned and admonished by the moderator." It was not in its judicial but in its paternal capacity that he asked the Assembly to agree to that resolution. Dr. Gillespie seconded the motion. Dr. Lees said he was sorry he could not agree with the motion of Dr. Scott, although he was in perfect accord with a very great deal of what he had said. He thought the Assembly were not in a position to pronounce any legal decision in the matter. He considered also that Mr. Primmer should be dealt with in kindly manner. He moved that the Assembly proceed no further. Rev. C. C. Macdonald, Aberdeen, seconded. He thought it would be extremely imprudent and inexpedient in the Supreme Court to do anything more than Dr. Lees had proposed. Dr. Scott's motion was carried by a large majority. The moderator then solemnly admonished Mr. Primmer of the impropriety of his conduct, and warned him against the repetition of it. In reply to the admonition, Mr. Primmer said, "I accept it as a great honour."

At the evening sederunt Mr. Primmer again appeared. He presented a petition regarding "Prelatic and Popish Innovations." It set forth that he spoke in the name of fifty-seven open-air Protestant conventicles held in Scotland last year, and attended by about 250,000 persons. He regretted to observe that the practice was on the increase of "reading prayers from a book, either in manuscript or printed;" of "keeping and retaining images," which the church of Scotland declared to be idolatry; of erecting chancels, chancel-screens, and chancel-rails, apses, &c.; marble, stone, and wooden altars ascended by steps, vases with flowers, candlesticks with lit candles, crosses, and crucifixes, &c., which rested on altars; of mass vessels—such as chalices, patens, corporals, veils, cruets, &c.; of the Popish superstitious consecration of the same; of mass vestments—such as stoles with crosses, cassocks, girdles, imitation copes, &c.; of unveiling the elements and elevating the same, using wafers and communicating at the altar-rails; of choirs wearing scarlet cassocks and short white surplices; of turning to the east, bowing and genuflecting; of teaching the real objective presence in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; of proclaiming baptismal regeneration, sacerdotalism, and sacramentarianism; of openly praying for the dead, of pronouncing absolution of sins, of musical entertainments and

sensuous displays, of further Popish and Rationalistic teaching, such as Mariolatry, stations of the cross, holy water, sign of the cross, &c., and that the Scriptures are not inspired, &c.; of the annual observance of Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and other superstitious days condemned by the Word of God and the Church Standards; tampering with the young in the Sabbath school by using service books, and such like. Mr. Primmer further regretted that for the last thirty-two years a large number of ministers, with a sprinkling of elders, had connected themselves with a "private" and unconstitutional "Church Service Society," which aimed at revolutionising the teaching and the worship of the Church of Scotland. In 1892 a more extreme Romanising High Church Society—"The Scottish Church Society"—was formed after the pattern of "The English Church Union," which seeks the same Popish end. Mr. Primmer also regretted that the "Scottish Hymnal" was saturated with Popish error and superstition, and that at the Blantyre Mission, Africa, High Churchism was rampant. He asked the Assembly to take such steps for declaring and enforcing the existing laws and usages of the Church of Scotland, and for preserving the uniformity and purity of worship in a manner conducive to peace and edification, and in accordance with ecclesiastical civil law.

The Procurator said that as Mr. Primmer was not a member of the house, he had no right to be heard on the petition, and therefore he moved that the petition be allowed to lie on the table. Dr. Gillespie seconded the motion, which was adopted. Mr. Primmer protested that he was unfairly treated, and left the bar.

The Rev. James Bain, Duthil, appeared in support of an overture from the Presbytery of Abernethy, anent the forms of doctrine and worship. The overture stated that, whereas it was matter of painful notoriety that certain forms of doctrine and worship, which were contrary to the doctrine and worship of the Church of Scotland as by law established, were now being openly taught and practised within her bounds, and all to the great prejudice of the Church and spiritual welfare of the people, it was humbly overtured that the General Assembly should declare and enact that all ministers and professors of divinity who were subject to the government and discipline of the Church should in their teaching and conduct of worship conform to, maintain, and uphold the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church of Scotland as by law established. He said that many of those in the Highlands were in a transition position, and he believed that, if only the Assembly would issue a pastoral letter indicating that the people might rest assured that they would have preserved for them the doctrine and worship of the Church of their fathers as established by law, they would have, as they were told the other day, doves come flying to their windows. He held that no true friend of the Church could say that the overture was either unnecessary or uncalled for. The call for it was loud and long, and throughout

the whole of the United Kingdom. Wherever the Protestant religion was known the cry was here that ritualism was doing its cruel work, and unless that evil was restricted and restrained ere long, it might safely be said of all the Protestant Churches that there was no health, no soundness in them, not even in that body which still claimed to be the Free Church. Baptismal regeneration was offensive to God, and should not be followed in the Church of Scotland. Praying for the dead was neither more nor less than purgatory. (A voice, "Ridiculous.") It might be ridiculous, but he hoped they would indulge him in his folly. The administration of the Lord's Supper at the bedside of the sick and dying looked like extreme unction. ("Oh, oh.") Ritualism was one of those deadly diseases which never rested satisfied till it had leavened the lump, and usually finished off by branding its victims as religious fanatics and fools. (A voice, "Hear, hear.") If a man did not keep to his vows, and continued in the Church, he was in the position of a Jesuit; and that, in plain language, was the pitiful position which Ritualists, not only in the Church of Scotland, but in the Free Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and all other Churches now occupied. He moved on the lines of the overture. The Rev. Hugh Wilson, Bellshill, seconded.

The Procurator moved the dismissal of the overture, in respect that there was no necessity for taking the steps suggested. The Rev. Mr. Jamieson, Portobello, in seconding, said he hoped it would not be thought that they were indifferent to the spread of ritualism, but, supposing this overture were carried, it would not make the slightest difference. Mr. Bain said that if they did not pass the overture, they would grievously vex and pain many of the truest and best friends of the Church. In a thin house, the Procurator's motion was adopted, Mr. Bain's only having 3 votes.

On Wednesday, the 24th, Rev. G. D. Macnaughtan, Ardoch, appeared in support of an overture from the Presbtery of Auchterarder, requesting the Assembly to amend the present formula that binds the ministers of the Church to the Confession of Faith. He did not see why there should not be in the Assembly those who were able to make their relationship towards the Confession of Faith adequate to the circumstances of this new time in which they lived. He moved that the Assembly receive the overture, and appoint a committee to consider the powers which the Church possesses of modifying the terms of the ministers' formula of adherence to the Confession of Faith, and to report to the next General Assembly. Rev. Dr. Cameron Lees seconded. Rev. Dr. Mair moved that the overture be dismissed. Mr. C. N. Johnston, elder, Edinburgh, seconded. Principal Story said it was impossible for any man who had intercourse with the world at large to deny that in their Church the existence of the Confession of Faith had become a burden heavier than many of them could bear. (Applause.) The belief of the Church must ripen and expand, and they felt more and more the impossibility of

being bound down by fetters forged by their forefathers, however wise and good these forefathers were. He admitted it was impossible to dispense with a bond of creed, of formula, or of belief, but that form of belief must be as undogmatic as it possibly could be made, and the bond of adherence to it as light as possible. He thought this matter was a fair matter of inquiry. Rev. Dr. Gloag also supported Mr. Macnaughtan's motion. The Free Church had altered the form of subscription to the Confession, and he thought that they had given them an example which they would do well to follow. After some further discussion a division was then taken, with the result that there voted—for Mr. Macnaughtan's motion, 111; for Dr. Mair's amendment, 58.

At the evening sitting, Mr. Derby, Edinburgh (elder), gave in the report of the Psalmody and Hymns Committee. The report stated, among other things, that it was understood that up to the present time the United Presbyterian Church had probably bought more copies of the new Hymnary than any other Church, because it was well known that their hymnal was rather out of date, and they were very anxious to have a new one. Rev. Dr. Mair seconded the adoption of the deliverance.

On Thursday, the 25th, Rev. Dr. Russel, Dunoon, submitted the report of the Highlands and Islands Committee. They asked authority to publish a Gaelic Hymnal containing 200 hymns. He spoke with confidence and hopefulness of the prospects of the Church in the Highlands. The usual discussion ensued. Rev. Dr. Blair, in reply, assured the Assembly that there was no desire to impose a Gaelic Hymnal on the Church. The last General Assembly sanctioned an inquiry as to whether such a hymnal was desired, and the majority of Gaelic-speaking Presbyteries had replied in the affirmative. The report was then adopted. Lord Balfour of Burleigh presented the report of the Committee on Church Interests. In course of his speech he made reference to a recent meeting of the Disestablishment Council. There was a speech, he said, by Dr. Rainy. He did not know whether they all read Dr. Rainy's speeches with the attention he did. He read them sometimes two or three times over, and the difficulty he had was in finding out what exactly it was that he was driving at. (Laughter.) They always read to him as the speeches of a man who was endeavouring to convince somebody else of something of which he was hardly more than half convinced himself. That did not detract from the oratory, but it detracted from the convincing effects of the arguments used. Of one thing he (Lord Balfour) was perfectly certain, that if Dr. Rainy had chosen to take up the profession, he would have made a most admirable professor of the science of casuistry, and he greatly regretted that he had not had the opportunity of turning his attention to that object. (Laughter.)

On Friday, the 26th, Rev. Dr. Theodore Marshall submitted the report of the Committee on the work of the Church in India and Ceylon. Special reference was made to the treatment of

Presbyterian soldiers in India, in regard to buildings for public worship. The Government had made provision in this respect for Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, but none for Presbyterians. Presbyterians were solely at the disposal of the Bishop of the Episcopal Church for the use of any Church, and if he refused to grant the same, they had nothing but theatres or other unsuitable places to worship in. It was a very curious thing that these Episcopal churches were given to Protestants. The section of the Church of England who were trying to keep them out of these churches were never tired of telling them that they were not Protestants. If they were not Protestants they had no right to enter these churches at all. The deliverance was adopted. Several vigorous speeches were made to the effect that such a state of things was an insult to the Church of Scotland and to the Scottish nation, and that the Government be requested to take immediate steps to provide churches for Presbyterian soldiers.

We have now given a summary of events in this Assembly up to 26th May that may be of interest to our readers. If there is anything of interest in the remaining days we shall notice it in next issue. The whole current of things is manifestly downwards. Mr. Primmer made a brave stand against ritualistic innovations, but he was only put down as a fanatic. There is a rising tide in favour of a Declaratory Act by which the formula will be modified, and it is very likely this will yet be carried if a mighty change for the better does not come.

FREE CHURCH.

Rev. Dr. Whyte, the retiring moderator, preached from 2 Cor. xiii. 14. His subject was "the communion of the Holy Ghost." A reporter states: The opening services which he conducted, no less than his retiring sermon, were distinctly Pentecostal in complexion, which may or may not have been due to the circumstance that Sabbath next is Pentecost Sunday, as celebrated by Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The reporter's surmise is in all probability correct. People have come to associate Dr. Whyte's name with those of Newman and Teresa, devotees of the Romish apostacy. The new moderator is Rev. Dr. James Stewart of Lovedale. His opening address was an appeal for increased interest in mission work. He necessarily touched on many subjects in connection with this main topic. He spoke of conversion as the result of "the action of God's Spirit moving the human will without destroying its liberty." Now, without any attempt to make a man an offender for a word, we would say that the Spirit not merely moves the will, He renews it. "Renewing the will" is an essential element in conversion. The Arminian thinks the persuasion of the will is all that is necessary; the sound theologian emphasises the need of renewal. Dr. Stewart takes to all appearance a very favourable view of the Free Church, and makes no allusion to its serious declensions. His speech, while able and eloquent, does

not exhibit any features of value for the cause of Christ and truth in this time of backsliding.

On Monday, 22nd May, Rev. Dr. Stalker, Glasgow, presented the report of the College Committee. The number of regular students entering for the first year at Edinburgh was 11, at Glasgow 9, at Aberdeen 6. The total of regular students in Edinburgh was 66, in Glasgow 74, in Aberdeen 31. To these have to be added the following honorary or irregular students: 46 in Edinburgh, 10 in Glasgow, and 1 in Aberdeen. Dr. Stalker, in the course of his speech, endeavoured to explain the remarkable fewness of the students entering their divinity halls. One wondered, he said, how far the difficulties of belief might be operating. He admitted that current views of science and of the Bible, might have the influence of drawing young men to other employments. He expressed the need there was for a widespread revival of religion. He tried, however, to direct attention from the erroneous teaching of their professors to the instructions of pastors and parents in their spheres, as requiring to be of the right kind. This is all very well, but any person of understanding knows that unless the Church loves the truth so much as to purge out heretical professors from her halls, there is little hope of the rising generation in pulpit or pew. Professors Davidson, Bruce, Dods, Smith, and others, are responsible for the dissemination of error among people as well as students, error of the most destructive and soul-ruining kind. Until Dr. Stalker gets back to sound truth himself, and carries these professors along with him, he need not expect anything but spiritual death and irreligion throughout the whole Church.

On Tuesday, the Assembly received the corresponding members from the English Presbyterian Church, two of which, Rev. Dr. Moinet, and Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., delivered addresses. Mr. Smith's address, which dealt with the ritualistic controversy, we give elsewhere. At the evening sitting, Principal Rainy gave in the report of the Committee in Highlands and Islands. Favourable allusion was made to the recent work in their quarter of Dr. Whyte, Mr. Mackay, late of Cromarty, and Mr. John Macneill. Mr. Archibald Macneilage, elder, Glasgow, seconded the adoption of the report and deliverance, a rather surprising and humiliating occurrence. We fear Mr. Macneilage's constitutional orthodoxy is an unreliable quantity. The Assembly was then addressed by the Revs. John Mackay, evangelist, Alexander Connell, Regent Square, London, Murdoch Macaskill, Dingwall, and finally by Mr. John Macneill, to apply to whom the title Reverend seems quite out of place. Mr. Macneill's speech was the feature of the evening. He indulged in a tirade against the singing, the religious, and general habits of the Highlands, until at last Mr. Macneilage arose and declared that if Mr. Macneill was going to make use of the platform of the Assembly to insult the religion which was dear to many of them, he was not going to sit in the house. Revs.

John Mackay, Glenurquhart, Murdoch Mackenzie, Inverness, M. D. Macalister, Edinburgh, followed, and successively condemned Mr. Macneill for imposition on the Assembly, gross misrepresentation, and the burlesquing of divine things. Mr. Macaskill tried to smooth over the affair, but exposed his own downgrade in connection with it. He said he was one of those that received Mr. Macneill, and that he had spent a fortnight with him with very great pleasure, but he acknowledged that the line Mr. Macneill had taken that night was most unfortunate. Mr. Macneill in defence, said that Mr. Macaskill heard, without dissent, every word he had preached, and he had preached it all over the north. After some further confused discussion, Principal Rainy rose and entreated Mr. Macneill to close his speech without further touching upon a matter that had given pain to brethren in the house. Mr. Macneill concluded with a few remarks. Dr. Whyte then gave some account of his time in the Highlands, after which the report was adopted.

On Wednesday, at 10 a.m., before proceeding to the regular business, the Assembly held a thanksgiving service in connection with the 80th birthday of the Queen. Dr. W. R. Taylor, Glasgow, offered a prayer, and Principal Rainy delivered a speech, both containing rather fulsome eulogies of Her Majesty. With all due respect, the Queen has not been a faithful upholder of those precious principles of the Protestant religion that she is sworn to defend, and her general influence in religion has not been favourable to the pure truth of God. The meeting was closed by singing the National Anthem, a composition which ought to form no part of a religious service.

On Thursday, the 25th, the Union question was taken up. Principal Rainy rose amid loud applause at eleven o'clock, the most of the Assembly upstanding, to submit the report of the Committee and move the deliverance on the subject. The substance of the deliverance was that the Assembly record their thankfulness for the gratifying amount of harmony that had prevailed in the negotiations, and for the encouragement afforded to complete the Union now in view. That the Assembly approve of the plan of Union, and resolve to send down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act an overture for approving of said plan. That the Assembly reappoint the Committee and direct them to complete the arrangements for Presbyteries and Synods in the United Church; to adjust finally, with such advice as they may see fit the terms of the Uniting Act; and generally, to watch over the whole subject, with a view to next Assembly being in a position to ask the final judgment of the Church. They recommend to Presbyteries and also to Kirk-Sessions to use all prudent means during the coming year for interesting the members of the Church in the matter, and calling out their sympathy and their prayers. Principal Rainy delivered a long speech in support of the deliverance. He said that they were not to be lightly stopped or

hindered in their purpose, far less frightened. He expected that the brethren who opposed Union would to the end disapprove and protest. But what he felt was that they were trusting to a policy of clinging to phrases. They had now come to a position in which it was essential that they should, all of them, make up their minds what they were to do, what course things were to take. The battle had been manfully, honourably fought. Now, for their side, they were going on to Union. (Loud applause.) As to the property, he said he had no fear of losing it, and he had no intention of throwing that property away as long as he could conserve it. He wished to say frankly that he did regard their position now as a position full of hope, full of promise, and reasonably secure. The Union Committee would be charged to inquire into the question of property, but the Church would deceive itself if it supposed that next year the Committee would come to it with some absolute guarantee about the safety of its property, because they would not. They would never get more than variety of opinions. There would be diversity of opinion, and the true way to conjure this spectre was not to be afraid of it. (Loud applause.) Lord Overtoun seconded the deliverance.

Rev. James D. McCulloch, Glasgow, submitted the following amendment, "The General Assembly thank the Committee for their report, but in respect that the Committee's proposals do not answer the distinctive principles of this Church, and are also incomplete, therefore the Assembly decline to send down the proposed overture to Presbyteries, and generally disapprove of the Committee's report." In the course of his speech he said that the Church might do without the State, but he did not see that the State could do without the Church, and if they had no reason for keeping this truth before the people of the land and the Government of the country, then the good of the Government itself ought to impel them to uphold it on Scriptural and patriotic grounds. Dr. Rainy had said there was nothing omitted of what they were expected to maintain. They knew that in the distinctive principles of the United Presbyterian Church there was a statement to the effect that to maintain that the magistrate should take, or ought to take, of the resources of the nation for the support of the Church of Christ, would be to place Cæsar on the throne of Christ. He did not blame the brethren who had taken that view, but he took it that it was as nearly diametrically opposed to the view always held in the Free Church as it could very well be. They were told that both Churches were to bring their principles into the United Church. Well, if the Free Church gave a positive statement, and the United Presbyterian Church a negative one, what would be the result as regarded the testimony of that Church? Would not the one statement cancel the other? They were told that every man would be allowed to hold his opinions and state his convictions in the United Church, but that was what one could do anywhere. That was not what they contended for ;

it was not for individual liberty in the Church. They contended for the Church's own testimony to be maintained in regard to this matter. His (Mr. M'Culloch's) impression was that if the Union was accomplished on this basis, they should never hear a motion tabled in the Assembly in the direction of what in the Free Church was called the principle of Establishment. (Applause.) He wished to say a word more on the "Questions." These had been to him a source of great difficulty. It was said that there was no change that would affect the doctrine of the Church. He had his difficulty with regard to the question in which he was asked, "Do you own and believe the doctrine of this Church contained in the Confession of Faith?" and so on. The question used to be, "Do you own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith?" It seemed to him that this was putting the doctrine of the Church in the place of the doctrine of the Confession of Faith. There had been indications that the Church was to take to herself a free hand to alter her constitution, and, no doubt, her testimony, in respect to doctrine when she saw it right to do so. He would by no means yield to any one in maintaining that the Church was free in this matter to be guided by the Word of God, but he was not willing to admit that the Church had not attained to some certainty as to what was the mind of God upon important doctrines of Scripture, as set forth in His Word; and he (Mr. M'Culloch) did not admit that the Church could expect the same confidence on the part of her people when she was presented to them as one whose doctrinal standards might be altered by a majority in any Assembly. (Hear, hear.) Before it was the doctrine of the Confession of Faith that was adopted by the Church; now it was the doctrine of the Church as set forth in the Confession of Faith, which did not necessarily mean that the whole doctrine of the Confession was embraced.

Rev. Murdoch Mackenzie, Inverness, seconded the amendment, in what we can only term a very weak speech. Among other things he said: What could he say to a man who went through the whole country enlightening the people on the danger that was at stake if union would be consummated in 1873, and now was in for the Union? He never invaded any man's congregation outside his own as a unionist or an anti-unionist. He never, in connection with this question, went outside of his own pulpit; and even his own congregation bore testimony that he never took this question into the pulpit. He discussed it in the Presbytery, and there gave expression to his conviction. He referred to Principal Rainy's meeting at Inverness. He maintained that by having come down there, they had provoked their people and their ministers, who were always loyal to the Free Church. The weightiest names in the Free Church—men whom they respected and revered—were brought down to Inverness, and men with whom he had been in cordial co-operation all his days came to his own door. For what purpose? To destroy any influence he

had in the town. He must say he felt the invasion very much, and no action would have been taken on his side but for the other side taking the initiative. It would be more advisable to cultivate brotherly love. If this matter were sent down to Presbyteries, the inevitable result would be the alienation of the people. Sheriff Jameson, elder, Edinburgh, who formerly took the constitutional side, supported Principal Rainy's motion. His speech was a very unworthy one, and suitable to the lips of "Mr. Worldly Wiseman." Mr. Hay Thorburn, Mr. Taylor, Inverness, Mr. W. R. Brown, elders, spoke. Rev. Murdoch Macaskill, defended the U.P. Church, on the matter of national religion, and in rather high-strung language denounced Mr. Galbraith, Lochalsh, for some of his statements at Inverness. Mr. Macaskill sat down amid a somewhat animated scene. Other speakers followed.

The last was Mr. Archibald Macneilage. He prefaced his speech with a safeguard, to the effect, that he did not understand that anyone of those who could not accept this report was to be of necessity compelled to take further action, or extreme action after the issue, whatever that issue might be. (Hear, hear.) It appeared to him that the duty they had before them that day was to vote approval or non-approval of this committee's report, and the deliverance which the learned Principal had put upon the paper. Well, he did not approve of the report for two reasons. He did not approve of the new preamble and questions, and he did not approve of sending down these questions to Presbyteries piecemeal. It was not fair to the Church, and it was not fair to those opposed to union, to ask them to approve of one-half of the proposals of union affecting the constitution of the new Church while they were in total ignorance of what were to be the terms of the uniting Act which was the essential thing. (Applause on the left.) Were there no other reason he should deem it to be his duty to oppose this deliverance and object entirely to this piecemeal legislation on a question upon which it had been clearly shown during the past twelve months that opinion was not united. It had been urged by the learned Principal and the learned Sheriff—it was very hard for a humble layman to contend with so many learned men—that the preamble and questions that were now placed before the house made no change on the preamble and questions of the formula which they had signed. When they said that, did the learned Principal and the learned Sheriff give them credit for having even average intelligence? Did they give them credit even for being able to read the English language? They had a new preamble which included new Declaratory Acts, with which they had had nothing whatever to do. They had included in the preamble the United Presbyterian Declaratory Act of 1879, as well as the Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892, and the basis of union between the Secession and the Relief in 1847, and they said that all probationers and all others who wanted to enter the ministry of the Church were entitled to take advantage of any of

these Acts. He heard Dr. Ross Taylor say in the Presbytery of Glasgow that they need not take advantage of any of these Acts if they so preferred it. But that was not the whole thing. A minister who did not want either of these Acts, but wanted the Westminster Confession of Faith, subject to the old Declaratory Act of 1647, and the Free Church Declaratory Act of 1846, might be called upon to ordain a minister and to administer this preamble. That was to say, he was to administer to a man, questions that in his heart he did not approve of. No minister with a tender conscience could do it, because these modifications were modifications of the Calvinistic system which were involved in both the United Presbyterian and Free Church Declaratory Acts. (Applause.) Therefore, to tell them that there was no change, was a kind of insult to the ordinary intelligence of men. (No, no.) It was alleged in justification of this action that the Declaratory Acts of the Free Church and of the United Presbyterian Church were the same. Well, he was not a theologian; but he boldly affirmed that these Acts were not the same. There was one difference he might point out, and that was that the United Presbyterian Declaratory Act was written in Queen's English and good grammar, whereas the Free Church Declaratory Act was not. (Laughter and oh, oh.) But that was a subsidiary thing. (Renewed laughter.) The United Presbyterian Act, openly and avowedly, on the great question of the extent of the Atonement, was framed differently from the Free Church Declaratory Act; and while they might argue that the Free Church Declaratory Act made no modification on the Calvinistic doctrine of the extent of the Atonement, he respectfully submitted that they could not make that statement in regard to the corresponding clause of the U.P. Church Act on this transcendent doctrine. (Applause on the left.) They were told also that they had not altered the questions. He really did not understand what members mean when they told him that. The old questions bound them to the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith; the new questions bound them to own and obey the doctrines of this Church as set forth in the Confession of Faith. Mr. Macaskill, whose position he quite understood, and who he did not think one whit less of now than he did before, thought that he had saved the situation by getting a question inserted regarding Arminianism, Socinianism, and all the rest, but he had really saved nothing at all by it. What a man believed in regard to these things was not to be tested by the Westminster Confession, which was a distinct entity, not even by the system of evangelical truth as that was set forth in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, but by something which was entirely indefinite, "the said doctrine of this church." These two categories were not co-extensive; they were totally different things, and to say that no change had been made was unfair to their intelligence and to the Church. (Cries of "Time.") In regard

to the question of Establishment they were also told that there was no change, and that they would be permitted to do the same in regard to it in the new Church as in the old. Speaking in the United Presbyterian Synod on the subject of Normal Colleges, Mr. Benjamin Martin pointed out that it would be very awkward for United Presbyterians to raise that question in the united Church; and it would be the same with those of them who held by the Establishment principle to raise it in the united Church, knowing what the opinion of the United Presbyterians upon it was. ("Time, time.") This question, it appeared to him had been argued that day from what he wished to call the ecclesiastical-political standpoint. ("No, no.") There was a type of religious life and of spiritual character peculiar to the Free Church of Scotland—it was a type represented by such men as Rabbi Duncan—with which, so far as he had read the history of the United Presbyterian Church, that Church had little sympathy. ("Oh, oh.") They were continually told that the United Presbyterians were the sons of the Erskines. A great One had said, "If ye be Abram's children, ye will do the works of Abram." He was not going to subscribe to the belief that the United Presbyterians of to-day were the sons of the Erskines. He would believe it if he could find one United Presbyterian minister or one United Presbyterian sermon of whom and of which it could be said as was said of Ebenezer Erskine—If you have never heard Ebenezer Erskine, you have never heard the gospel preached in its majesty. ("Oh, oh," and some applause on the left.)

Principal Rainy, in reply to the discussion, said that the expression "the doctrine of this Church" in the new formula, simply meant the doctrine of this Church set forth in the Confession of Faith, subject to the qualifications expressed in the preamble. The recent Declaratory Acts of both Churches ran upon the same lines, and were very much tantamount to one another. On the subject of Church and State, he thoroughly maintained, thoroughly acknowledged that on the Disruption day, by the necessity of the case, every man in the Free Church was an Establishment man, but it was the right of the Church to make a change whenever it was so persuaded.

The vote was taken with the following result:—For Dr. Rainy's motion, 565, and for Mr. M'Culloch's, 38. Last year Dr. Rainy had 485 votes, and against there were 41, so that this year there is a gain of 80 for union and a decrease of 3 in the vote against it. Rev. J. D. M'Culloch and others tendered a dissent.

Such then was the union discussion. The Constitutionalists are getting weaker year by year. Eventually the flag will be wholly in the hands of the enemy.

On Friday, the 26th, reports were given in on Romanism and Ritualism, and Sabbath Observance. Principal Rainy moved a deliverance on Church and State:—"That the Assembly approve of the report and record their thanks to the Committee, and

especially to the Convener. The Assembly in accordance with the finding of many previous Assemblies afresh declare that the present alliance of Church and State in Scotland ought to come to an end in the interest of public justice, and ecclesiastical freedom, and of the unity, welfare, and efficiency of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland." Mr. J. C. Lorimer, elder, seconded. Rev. D. M. Macalister, moved the disapproval of the report. Mr. Robert Macintosh, elder, seconded. The report was carried by a large majority, only seventeen voting for the amendment. Disestablishment is, therefore, to be a leading principle in the United Church.

These are our notes on the business of the Assembly up to the date specified. They afford a dismal view of the prospects of this body. There is great enthusiasm on the side of that which is evil, but what shall be the end of it? Nothing but disaster for the interests of true religion in our country.

A Sermon.

BY THE REV. D. MACFARLANE, RAASAY.

(Taken by a Hearer.)

"Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it."—LUKE xiii. 18, 19.

HERE we have one of the parables spoken by the Saviour while He was in the world, and the parable is about the kingdom of God. He asks the question, "Unto what is it like?" Some of the Jews who did not understand the nature of the kingdom would have given a different answer from that which Christ Himself gave. They would have said it was like something very great. "No," Christ says, "but like something very small, a grain of mustard seed." And we shall endeavour to say something on two points:—I. The kingdom of God; and II. What is it like?

I. What are we to understand by the kingdom of God? It was a kingdom which was to be set up, and was set up, in New Testament times. The kingdom of God was in the world early in the history of the human race, but it was now to take a new form. The kingdom under the Old Testament dispensation and the kingdom under the New are the same in substance, but not in form; and by the kingdom of God here we are to understand not the kingdom or cause of God in the world as it existed under the old economy, but as it was to be set up now by Jesus Christ Himself and His Apostles. And the change was to be so great that it appeared, to the Jews especially, as a great revolution. It was so great that the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews,

calls it a world, "the world which was to come."—(Hebrews ii. 5). There was a great change to be made—not a change in the nature or substance of the kingdom, but a change in the outward form of it; and this was like as if the existing world was to be destroyed altogether, and a new world created, for the Apostle speaks of it as "a world to come," and he does not mean by the "world to come" the world of eternity, but he means by it the kingdom of God under the New Testament dispensation. Of this kingdom Christ Himself is the King, and His people the subjects, His Word the law. It is not necessary for us to say more in the way of explaining what Christ meant by the kingdom of God; it is just His cause as we have it now in New Testament times. "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new."—(2 Cor. v. 17.) "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."—(Heb. viii. 8.) And by the new covenant is meant just what we have here, the New Testament dispensation, or the kingdom of Christ.

II. What is the kingdom of God like? Christ tells us it is like a grain of mustard seed. It is on this comparison we intend to dwell this evening, and at the outset we may consider the grain of mustard seed. We find in the comparison that Christ does not liken His kingdom to a lifeless thing. A grain of mustard seed, although a small thing—a very small thing, has life, and so has the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not a lifeless thing; there is life in it. The Head of the kingdom Himself, though He died, yet He rose again, and He ever liveth to make intercession for His people; and the true members, the true subjects, are living souls quickened by the grace of God. There are no dead members in the mystical body of Christ, no dead subjects in His kingdom. They are all living subjects, and the Word, which is the law of the kingdom, is a living Word, a quickening Word. "The word of God is quick and powerful," and therefore it is able, as a means in the hands of the Spirit, to quicken the dead. But again, not only is that to which Christ compares His kingdom a living thing, but it is a seed, and a seed can be sown; and we were thinking that to understand the comparison of the grain of mustard seed, and in speaking of the kingdom of God as a grain of mustard seed, we must take along with us the Word of truth, for apart from the Word of God, there could not be the kingdom of God. We find that, wherever the kingdom of God may be, at the beginning of it there was the Word of God. The Apostle Paul speaks of faith—"Now," says he, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." So that, in our thoughts and in our speech of the kingdom of God as a grain of mustard seed, we must take along with us the Word of God. In another parable He tells us that the seed is the Word of God. (Luke viii. 11.) Now, the kingdom of God is not only like a grain of mustard seed in that it is small, but it is also like a grain of mustard seed in that it is living; and however low the cause of God may become in

the world (and at times it is very low indeed), still there is always the seed kept, always the seed. You see, the farmer does not send all his grain to the mill to be turned into meal for food ; no, he takes good care to keep part for seed. And if he has but the seed, he will say to any person who wishes to be supplied with grain that he cannot part with the seed. And no matter how high a price may be offered, the farmer's answer will always be, "I cannot part with the seed for any amount of gold," and although many should come pleading that they and their families were starving, the answer would be, "More will starve next year if I give you the seed." And so the Lord threatened to send a famine on the earth—not scarcity of bread, such as is necessary for the support of natural life, but a want of the Word of God ; and this is the sense in which Jesus Christ speaks of the grain of mustard seed.

We find that, from the first time the kingdom of God was set up on earth, however low the cause may have been at times, there has always been the seed. And where there is the good seed of the Word, there is always hope that the "kingdom will come." We are highly privileged then, my friends. Let us not despair of the coming of the kingdom in our midst, for the Lord has taken good care to preserve the seed, and the granary in which that seed is stored up is the Word of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. It is indeed a marvellous thing that it has been preserved for us, and a blessing for which we ought to thank the Lord on a public thanksgiving day, that we have the whole truth preserved in the midst of all the attacks which have been made upon the Bible, that we have not only the seed but the granary also. We have the Bible, my friends, and the Bible has been used as a means by God to bring into His kingdom many a soul without the instrumentality of ministers or any man whatever. If you have the blessed Bible, though you should not have either minister or elder, the Lord may bless it to your soul, for He has blessed it to many. If you have the Word of God, if you have the seed of the kingdom, the Spirit of the Lord may sow it in your soul, and make you a new creature in Christ Jesus, make you a true child of God, a true subject of the kingdom. Then the seed, in order that the kingdom of God might come, was to be sown ; and before we proceed further, we may observe that the seed is an incorruptible seed. The farmer is not sure that every grain which he sows shall grow. Why ? Because some of the seed may have been corrupted. But every grain of the seed of the kingdom, as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is incorruptible seed ; it never rots in the ground. "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." It is so incorruptible that if souls in one generation cannot get spiritual good from it, it is incorruptible until the next generation. So it has been in the past. It was not at all because the Word of God was of none effect in itself, but because of the unbelief of sinners, that it had

not the effect of bringing them to God through Christ. That is not the opinion of many now-a-days. They find fault with the seed instead of finding fault with themselves. They throw away the incorruptible seed, and substitute a seed of their own making, which can never have the effect of bringing one soul to Christ, of bringing one subject into the kingdom of God. There is no doubt, we think, that Christ had this in view when comparing His kingdom to a grain of mustard seed. It was by this incorruptible seed that sinners in the past were regenerated, as the Apostle Peter says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—(1 Peter i. 23.) O! then, let us prize this seed, let us prize the Word of God, let us seek that it may be blessed to our own souls; and let the sowers of this good seed of the kingdom be encouraged by the thought that it is incorruptible, and that if hearers are not benefited it is their own fault and not the fault of the Word of God.

But the seed is sown. The Word of God must be preached in order that His kingdom may come; that sinners may be converted; that believers, the flock of God, may be fed; and that they may be made to grow up unto Him who is the Head. And so Christ commanded those whom He sent forth, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—(Mark xvi. 15.) Sow this good seed of the kingdom. "For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope."—(1 Cor. ix. 10.) It is God's prerogative to make the seed take root and grow, but it is the duty of ministers to preach the Word, to sow the seed. When Timothy was setting forth as a sower of the good seed, the Apostle charged him to "Preach the word" (2 Tim. iv. 2), to carry along with him the seed, and not to sow any other than the seed of the Word. Then, as this seed must be sown, there must be sowers, and Christ Himself is the great Sower. In His state of humiliation, in the days of His flesh, not only was He engaged in working out everlasting redemption for sinners, but He was also preaching the kingdom of God wherever He went; in the synagogue, in the temple, in the towns and villages, in the open air, by the seaside, He went about sowing the good seed of the kingdom. He thus set an example before all preachers of the gospel. He Himself was engaged in this good work, and He commanded those whom He sent forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom, to engage in the same good work. Oh, my friends, it is a glorious work to be engaged in sowing the seed of the kingdom, preaching Christ and Him crucified, and not only that, but in declaring the whole counsel of God, to preach both law and gospel, for we find the seed in the commands and threatenings of the law as well as in the invitations and promises of the gospel; and none proclaimed both more largely than the great Master Himself.

Now, where was the seed cast or sown? Not only in a garden,

but in *his* garden. The man who sowed the grain of mustard seed did not go to the garden or field of his neighbour—that would not be just—but he sowed it in a garden that belonged to himself. And “a garden” signifies two things:—(1) It signifies the individual soul, and (2) It signifies the Church. When God comes with His word to an immortal soul He has a right to do so.

The soul was created by God Himself, and no one may say, “You must not sow a grain of mustard seed in this garden,” for God made us and not we ourselves, and He has a right to deal with us as He pleases—and He has not dealt with us, my friends, as He has with some others of His creatures. Angels sinned and He dealt with them according to His justice without showing them the least mercy, and He had the right to do so; but he has dealt in a different way with sinners of mankind. He provided a Saviour who took upon Him not the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham. He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He assumed our nature and came as the Good Shepherd to save the lost sheep of mankind. He saw us all running on to perdition and ran after some of our race, redeeming them before they reached the place of eternal woe. Every sinner is the creature of God, and He has a right to come unto us in His sovereign mercy. He has the right to come to us not only to bring us to an account for our transgressions, but also to set before us the riches of His grace in the glorious gospel.

He has the right to come to you and me to show us what we are by nature, and by His Spirit through the Word to till the ground of our natural hearts, to take away the stony heart and to give us an heart of flesh; to prepare the soil for receiving the seed, that it may take root and spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life. This is true of the individual sinner: and let us remember, my friends, that God has come to each and all of us; that He cries in our ears and has long cried in our ears. “Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man.”—(Prov. viii. 4.) And I was thinking that, if we had an ear to hear and a heart to understand, the first thing we would hear on entering this world would be the voice of God calling upon us to repent. So then, as the individual soul is His garden He separates it from the world, as a man who makes a garden separates it from the rest of his lands. And not only has God the right to come to the individual, but also to the family and to society, and He has made the Church, the visible Church in this world, His own garden. We have it spoken of under the emblem of a garden both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament Scriptures, Christ says regarding His true Church:—“I am come into my garden.”—(Prov. v. i.) Ah! He has not only made a garden of His own people by preparing their hearts, making them new creatures, calling them effectually from a state of nature and from the midst of others who are still lying in their sins and under the wrath of God, but He has separated a Church also. Here there is a great

difference between the Church of God even as the visible Church, and the world. There are times when people are so blind that they make no distinction between the Church and the world, but there is a vast difference. In this generation it appears that many, of whom better things might have been expected, make no difference between the garden of the Lord, His visible Church, and the world. There is an attempt now made to effect a mixture of Churches in this world. We do not speak of nominal professors just now, but of the true garden, the true Church. But such a mixture cannot be. The true Church of God is characterised by the means of grace which He has set up, and those means are the Word, the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and prayer. He has given us His own oracles. Paul asks the question, "What advantage hath the Jew over the Gentile?" and answers, the Jews have many advantages, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. "It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden." This is the garden then, and the Word of God is the seed that is sown in it by the instrumentality of men, and made to take root and grow by the Spirit of God in the individual soul. This work has begun in our midst long ago, my friends, and is still going on. The Word of God is still being preached to us (whatever errors some, yea many, are preaching in our day), still the Word of God is being preached unto us in its purity and in its fulness. And it is not for past generations we shall render an account, but for ourselves as a generation, and as individuals. But, again, we see that this seed grows: and there is another fact:—If any seed you sow in the ground lacks two things it cannot grow, that is, if it has no life, and if it takes no root. You see, however small a plant may be at first, if it has life and takes root, it may become a great tree. Very often you may see pieces of wood, such as are used in fences, fixed in the ground, and you find as you pass along from day to day and from year to year that there is no growth, and you wonder why, but you have only to examine them and you find they have neither life nor root. The seed of the kingdom must be accompanied by the regenerating power of the Spirit if it is to take root in the soul. Many bear the name of Christian who are not Christians indeed. Christ tells us that that which a man has in this respect shall be taken from him at the day of judgment if he is not found in Him. The professor who is not a Christian indeed shall be stripped of the name at death, and nothing will do for us, my friends, nothing will stand for us but to be Christians indeed; to be found in Christ not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but clothed upon with His righteousness; and Christ found in us the hope of glory. Well then, the seed, being living seed, though small, took root by the blessing of God, by the Spirit of God. Oh! my friend, if you are a Christian, the Word of God, the seed of the kingdom, was sown in your heart, the Spirit of God having prepared the

soil, and it grew, for the kingdom of God is a growing kingdom—for the Word is the only seed that will grow. And if there is any growth, however small, it is a sign that the seed has taken effect, has taken root in the soul, that there is grace in the soul; and a Christian is not only a Christian in name, to remain like a grain of mustard seed, but he is to grow. The apostle Peter, exhorting and warning believers against the errors which threatened to take them out of the right way, put this remedy before them, "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."—(2 Peter iii. 18.) This grain grew, my friends, it grew up to a great tree. Christ compared his kingdom, as we have already said, to a very small thing, a grain of mustard seed. "The least of all seeds," as He tells us in Matt. xiii. 32, but a small thing in which there was life, which was sown, took root and grew. There may be a great profession without grace, but the grace of God in the soul, small even as a grain of mustard seed, is infinitely more valuable than a great profession that may be made by a graceless soul. But Christ does not say that the kingdom of God is a small thing. There is nothing in the world so great as the kingdom of God. The world thinks it is the least thing in the world. Ah! it is the greatest thing in the world. Some one compared the Church of God to a building that was being erected in the world, and he compared the world in which the building was being erected to the scaffolding set up during the process of building, but there are many who would compare the world to the building and the cause of God merely to the scaffolding. But it is not so. It is because of the kingdom of God that this world is kept in existence, and when the copestone is put upon this building, the world shall be reduced to nothing. "The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. xxxiv. 4), when the last of the redeemed is ready for the kingdom above.

Let us now consider the comparison. The kingdom of God is compared to a very small thing, not that the kingdom itself is small—it is the greatest and the most glorious thing in the world in every aspect of it, whether we consider the Founder of it, the kingdom itself, or the subjects of the kingdom, the blessings of it, or the means of promoting the kingdom. Still it is likened to a very small thing, and Christ means by this that it is small at the beginning. Let us consider how this is so, and let us begin at the beginning. Well, we see the first revelation of the kingdom was a small one. We may go back to the beginning of the Old Testament, although this parable chiefly refers to the Church under the New Testament dispensation. We have now got the whole Bible, the complete revelation of God's purpose of salvation. There is nothing to be added to it, and nothing to be taken from it. (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) What was the beginning of that precious Book? It was just like a grain of mustard seed. The first appearance of the kingdom of God was not in many promises, as we have now in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,

but in one. There are many promises in the Bible, and I suppose none of you have ever counted them, even although you may have an interest, a saving interest, in them, but they all are only a development of what was contained in germ in the first promise. There are many large trees in the world, and when you look at some of them you wonder what was their beginning. Well, they were once enclosed in germ as a seed within very small compass. And, in like manner, the promises which we have now, and for which we ought to be thankful, have grown and developed from the first promise. The first promise was a very rich one. What was in it? Christ was in it, though the revelation was like a grain of mustard seed; the King of glory was in it, not only in His divine person, but also in His human nature. It was said in that promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent shall bruise his heel."—(Gen. iii. 15.) The grain of mustard seed was precious as it appeared in that promise from heaven. It was a promise of a Deliverer, promise of a Saviour, promise of Him who was to lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men, even for them that were rebellious. (Psalm lxxviii. 18.) What was further in the promise? Not only was Christ in it as the second Adam and as the Head of the covenant, but the children of the covenant were in it also. What more? The whole revelation which God has given us, and which we now have in the Bible, was in that first promise. It was the grain of seed cast into a garden which belonged to the Lord Himself, *i.e.*, the Church, in the garden of Eden. Here, then, is an instance of the smallness of the origin of the kingdom; not that it was small in itself, for Christ being in the promise it could not be said that He was small, for He is the Lord of Glory, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.

Now let us come to the New Testament Church, of which the parable speaks. We have seen that Christ was promised, and we may say that, in a sense, the glorious Founder of the kingdom was the offspring of David; though as to His Divinity He was the root of David, yet as to His humanity He was the offspring of David. Then we see how the Lord brought about the fulfilment of the promise that Christ was to come from the royal family, how he brought about that the kingdom of God would be as a grain of mustard seed. It was not when the royal family of David was in its glory that Christ sprang from it. No. We have it in the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that "a rod was to come out of the stem of Jesse and a branch out of his roots." The tree of the royal family was cut down, and it seemed improbable that any good thing could grow on that tree; but the kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed; and a branch grew out of that stem, a glorious branch. Job tells us that when a man dies he fleeth as a shadow and continueth not; but that there is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Oh! my friends, in this

case the kingdom of God was like a grain of mustard seed. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a representative of the royal family, which was then as a tree cut down; and when the branch grew out of this stem, the angels were sent down from heaven to announce the glorious event. "We bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 10, 11).

Then let us go forward to consider the persons employed by Christ, when He laid the foundation of that kingdom in His own blood, to advance the kingdom, to sow the grain of mustard seed, that it might grow up a large tree. Where is it we find the messengers to go out to preach the Gospel? Where is it we get the sowers to sow the good seed? They cannot be found in the palaces of kings; they cannot be found among those of high rank in this world. Why? Because the kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed—a little thing; and remember He spoke this parable before He said, "Go ye into all the world." He would teach the sowers to understand that they are not to be discouraged when they go forth on such a great and glorious mission. Where, then, do we find them? He himself went along the sea of Galilee, and found there men of low degree, but of honest occupation. He called fishermen; He called them effectually by His spirit into a saving union with himself, and He called them also to be chosen vessels to bear His name. "I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew iv. 19). You see, then, when the Lord has work to do and when He calls labourers to do that work, He makes choice of what instruments He pleases. You see when a king was wanted in Israel, the family of David was called, and the most likely were brought forward first; but it was said, "not this one" and "not that one," until David the stripling appeared, when it was said—This is the man that is to be anointed king over Israel; for God has chosen the weak of the world to confound the mighty (1 Cor. i. 27). Well, the kingdom of God with regard to messengers of the Gospel is like a grain of mustard seed, not only as to their numbers, but as to the low condition from which the Lord takes them. Let us consider further, before we leave this point, who they were the Lord employed to sow the seed at the time of the Reformation, the seed that grew up to be a great tree. You find a Wycliffe in England, a Huss in Bohemia, a Luther in Germany, a Zwingli in Switzerland, a Calvin in Geneva, and a Knox in Scotland. The question might be asked—What are these among all the inhabitants of Europe? The answer is—"The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed." Some of these might have been despised as to their rank in society by some who professed to be Christians. I have heard that a certain minister—and it is not in retaliation I refer to it at all—spoke of some who are employed in connection with our Church as of no consequence to the cause

of Christ at all ; but the Lord Jesus Christ knew better where to find His sowers. He found the first Apostles among the fishermen of Galilee ; He chose the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. This is our answer to that charge, my friends, and may the Lord grant us the language of the blessed John the Baptist—"He must increase, but I must decrease."

Now let us consider the grain of mustard seed as to the success of the Gospel. And, under the ministry of Christ Himself, what were His followers as to number ? They were just a few, but those few were to be the beginning of the kingdom in winning souls to Christ. There is one thing to be observed and remembered about the success of the Gospel. It is this—the Founder of the kingdom converted those who were to be employed in preaching the Gospel after He had left the world. Some may be surprised that the thousands were not converted under the ministry of Christ that were converted on the day of Pentecost. Ah ! the kingdom of God must be like a grain of mustard seed. Christ had power to do that, but He said, as it were—"I will convert those that shall go forth with the precious seed, and I will leave the conversion of hundreds and thousands to their instrumentality." I have often thought that at any time, when the cause of God is low and there is some revival, it is a hopeful sign if there are even a few raised up by the Spirit of God, not only to be members of His kingdom, but also to be chosen vessels to bear precious seed. The cause of the Gospel was growing, so that, in the days of the Apostles, there were three thousand souls converted on the one day of Pentecost. And what was this great success of which we have record in the Book of Acts ? It was like the great tree to which I have already referred, which was at one time enclosed in such a small thing as a grain of mustard seed. It had a small beginning, and although the parable refers specially to the kingdom of God in the Church, we may say this with regard to the kingdom of God set up in the soul—When the believer, through the word of the Spirit conforming him to the image of the Son, comes up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus, and when the crown of glory is put upon him—and we cannot conceive what weight of glory shall be granted the individual soul in the other world—all the unspeakable glory, which will then be bestowed upon him, has sprung from the small grain of mustard seed which was implanted in the soul.

This country was in great darkness prior to the Reformation. There is great need of another. The Bible was a sealed book. The door of the granary was never opened ; no one was seen going forth bearing the precious seed of the word. It would be infinitely better to see sowers carrying the precious seed, weeping as they went along, than to have the door of the granary locked and no seed taken out. Such was the state of matters for at least a thousand years. If any had the Bible, he had either to

part with it or part with his life. The Bible is God's word. That could not be of God which made people burn because of reading God's word. But Wycliffe got the key from heaven; he unlocked the door of the granary, and he unlocked it especially when he translated the Bible into English. Then the seed was scattered broadcast, and the Bible was given to the multitudes. The Spirit of God was sent down from heaven, for God blessed His own word, the incorruptible, the living seed. Go to Germany and you find Luther unlocking the door there by translating the Bible into that language, and the Germans could see and read the word of God for themselves. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me." And so you find from a small beginning, Germany is a sample of the success of the Gospel. So were Switzerland and other countries, and Scotland also. My friends, when we look back upon the commencement of the kingdom of God in Scotland, we have an illustration of this parable with regard to the success of the Gospel. Before we leave this, I would say—Let us not despair as a Church: we have the word of God, and notwithstanding the apparent smallness of our success, it comes up to the comparison that Jesus gave of His kingdom. Let us not cast away our hope, let us look forward and remember that the kingdom has met with many reverses and oppositions in the past, but that it is a growing kingdom. It grew to be a great tree. I have not time to enlarge, but let me say that Christ, in giving out this parable, had the kingdom of God in view till the end of time; and when you consider what some of you heard to-day in the other language (Hab. ii. 14)—"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"—you will find in these words the fulfilment of the parable in the latter days.

Let me notice in the last place very briefly the benefits which this tree affords to many. "The fowls of the air came and lodged in the branches of it." As the time is up, I shall just mention a few but very important things. By the fowls of the air I understand men. In the the 60th chapter of Isaiah verse 8, the question is asked, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?" The following verse tells that the Gentiles are to come in, the gates of the church are to be open to them, and the sons and daughters of the Gentiles are to be brought into the kingdom of God. You see how the Gospel gathers men when preached in its purity. Now-a-days, when ministers grow lax in their manner of preaching the counsel of God, and their congregations decrease, they hold meetings and consultations to devise means of gathering the people. But they cannot. If they had kept to preaching the Word in faithfulness they would have gathered the people of Scotland, and they would have kept the faith. "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek."

—(Isa. xi. 10.) “In the last days the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.”—(Isa. ii. 2.) The tree that grew in eastern countries from the mustard seed was much larger than that which grows in other countries; but the thing that is taken to signify the kingdom of God never comes up to the reality, as there is no tree that shall grow so large and spread so widely as the kingdom of Christ. But the fowls of the air shall come to this tree; they shall come by faith to believe in Christ; they shall be gathered into the church although they are not yet true believers in Christ Jesus. There is hope for sinners so long as they are connected with the true church of God and so long as they are in the world, for Christ calls upon the ends of the earth unto look to Him. I have no time to say more, but now come to the gathering. The gathering began long ago. Christ Himself gathered a few of His disciples, the apostles gathered more; the gospel shall yet have much more success in the world than it has had. There is another thing which Christ sets forth here. His people do not come merely to visit as some people go to see wonderful sights, returning home the following day. When “the fowls of the air” come to the tree they say with Peter, “It is good for us to be here.” Here God has made the joy of Zion.

“One thing I of the Lord desired,
And will seek to obtain;
That all days of my life I may
Within God’s house remain.”

That was their wish; they were to be lodged there. My friends, when true believers come to the tree they make their dwelling there, not for a year or two merely, but they continue under the branches of it as long as they are in this world, and when they leave this world they shall sit down under the shadow of the Great King Himself. “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”—(Cant. ii. 3.) There are such things as migratory birds in the world, birds which come when the season is warm, but when the cold comes on they fly away, and so do those who are not truly united to Christ. They like to be called Christians, they come for a time, but when persecution and troubles meet them they part company with the people of God. God is taking away many Christians just now, taking them to glory, but I know a man in Christ, whom I suppose to be 98 years of age; and from the accounts I have of him he appears to have been converted when very young. He was brought in his youth under the shelter of this tree, and he is still there; he is not like Demas, that migratory bird, who came for a time and then when it suited himself he left. There is another thing which I think it well to observe; fowls of the air make nests in the tree, as if they said, “We make a lodging not only for ourselves, but for our offspring.” That is the disposition of the children of God. What are we as a Church?

Outwardly, at least, we are under the shadow of the great tree. How so? Our fathers made the nest for us; and this is true of the kingdom of God from the beginning, most remarkably true. At the time of the Reformation a nest was made as a man builds a house which is not to be taken down, and for this house we may say the stones were taken from the Word of God. We have manifest tokens of the interest of our fathers in the Confession of Faith. They said, "We mean to make a nest not only for ourselves but also for our offspring, for generations yet to come." Now, there are some bad birds, birds of prey, that, when they come to the nest of a poor harmless bird, break the eggs, and then destroy the nest. There are some bad boys who do the same thing. I have seen them do it, and may have done it myself in youth. My friends, the work of men in this generation is like that of those bad birds and bad boys. They seek to destroy the nest which our forefathers built under the shadow of the great tree. The cry to-day is, "Let us destroy the nest and we are sure the next generation will not be found in it." What we say now is—"Let us preserve the nest both for ourselves and for the coming generations." But there are some other things in the parable, and I will only mention them. There are spiritual blessings in it that we have no tongue nor words to express; those who are in the tree will see the salvation of their souls; they that are found in Christ will be found in His kingdom; they that have found the cross will find the crown. In leaving this subject, let me speak of another benefit; not only are there spiritual blessings to be found under the branches of this tree, but there are also many temporal blessings. What was the state of Europe before the dawn of Christianity? What was the state of Scotland, and especially of the Highlands of Scotland? Might was considered to be right, and the strongest robbers took away the life and property of the weak. But some may say that the civil law would protect life and property to-day although there was no gospel. Ah! but the gospel was the cause of bringing in law and order into all civilised countries; the protection which the civil law affords us we must ascribe to the glorious gospel of the kingdom. And there is one thing which I would like to mention on this point before I close. When the reformer Calvin was in Geneva translating the Bible and preaching the blessed Word of God, there were some who plotted against his life, and on one occasion they went to him. Calvin entered in amongst them, bold as a lion, and he addressed them thus:—"If it is my life you desire to take away, I am willing to suffer death for the sake of Christ's gospel; or if you wish to banish me from your country, I am willing to go for the sake of Christ and the gospel, but if you desire to save Geneva without the gospel you can try." When these men recollected the terrible state of society in Geneva, neither law nor order, before the gospel came to it, the enemies were turned to be friends, and Geneva was not deprived of the glorious influence of John Calvin.

Mr. Samuel Smith on Ritualism.

MR. SMITH said :—" In England they were in the midst of the hottest religious controversies that had been known for two hundred years. The Anglican Church was rent in twain at the present time by the most vehement controversies, which went down to the very roots of religion—controversies beside which the controversies that divided them in Scotland seem almost paltry. These controversies went down to those principles which they thought had been settled at the Reformation, but which were now called in question as if the Reformation had never occurred. More than one-half of the Anglican clergy had advanced three-fourths of the road towards Rome. Thousands of the Anglican churches were teaching practically the doctrines of the Mass and the Confessional—perhaps not always calling them by that name, but teaching the substance of these doctrines; teaching all those sacerdotal pretensions which the Church of Rome had taught for a thousand years; above all, teaching the miraculous powers of the priesthood. That was the teaching now in at least one-half of the Anglican churches. It had been going on for sixty years in silence and secrecy, unsuspected by the people. They felt that this was a question in which Scotland was not uninterested. A great proportion of the Scottish youth who went up to England gradually filtered into Ritualistic churches. This process was peculiarly true of the higher-class schools for girls in England. He could mention instances in which girls of Scottish Presbyterian parents ended after a few years by entering Roman convents; and he knew also of young men brought up in Presbyterian homes who, after going into England, ended by becoming priests of Rome. That was happening every day, and the people of Scotland seemed to have been quite unaware of it. Wherever they went in England they found this movement; it was spread all over the country. It had got hold of the Press to a very large extent; it had got hold of the hospitals and of seminaries. He should be very sorry to describe these sacerdotalists as in the main conscious deceivers. Very far from it. The movement represented a religious revival of a kind. Many of these men were intensely earnest. It represented, as he had said, a kind of religious revival; but it had taken this form and type, that it seemed to them utterly opposed to the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. They could not but condemn it; they could not but dread it, all the more that it was oftentimes associated with great sincerity, great self-denial, and great earnestness. That was the situation they had in England just now; they were engaged in a controversy that would last their lifetime. It was, in fact, a conflict between the great fundamental truth of salvation by faith in Christ, and salvation by sacraments and priesthoods. That was a question that must be fought out to the death; it could

not be compromised at all ; and they felt that there was no part of the United Kingdom so capable of offering help in this great controversy as Scotland. They needed the help of Scotland, and he could not help saying, as a member of Parliament, that this question would come more and more on to the floor of Parliament. That was unavoidable. The Anglican Church was the Established Church. There was no power that could deal with it except Parliament. The laity of the Church had no power ; there was no self-government in that Church : it had no representative body ; and it was quite clear to him and everyone who understood the matter, that this would become more and more a Parliamentary question. In many ways this was not desirable, but it was perfectly unavoidable ; and he hoped Scotland would send them up thoroughly sound Protestants to the next Parliament, and not only sound Protestants, but God-fearing men. It was rather disappointing to find at present how many of the Scottish representatives seemed absolutely indifferent to this question. They never referred to it, or voted upon it. Scotland must take care to put this right at the next election, because they would require all the Protestant forces of the country combined. There would be a great addition to them in England. In Wales the Protestant element was entirely preponderating, and they would have them from the North of Ireland. They would have issues of the greatest importance to deal with—of more importance than anything since the time of the Long Parliament. Looked at from a religious point of view, the roots of this movement struck much deeper, and if they were to combat this growth of Romish superstition, it must be by the development of a purer pattern of Christianity than the English people had hitherto seen. What they wanted over the country was a revival of the religion of Jesus Christ ; and he had no fear that, if this was realised, the truth would in the long run prevail."

The above speech was delivered in the Free Assembly. Mr. Smith began his speech with some undeserved complimentary remarks to the Free Church, which we omit. He does not seem fully to realise the greatness of the controversies in Scotland. The foundations of the faith are being sapped here as well as in England. The only difference is that the English people seem to be more alive to the dangers to which they are exposed than do the bulk of the Scottish people.

The Sabbath Breakers Defeated.

WE are glad to state that the impious newspaper projects reported in our last issue have come to nothing. First the *Daily Mail* and then the *Daily Telegraph* intimated the stoppage of their Sabbath issues. The wealthy proprietors of these London newspapers have found the force of public opinion too mighty for them. Let them therefore be as honest as Julian, the apostate, and say in their hour of defeat, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean."

The late George Sinclair, Halkirk.

THE county of Caithness enjoyed a rich share of the spiritual blessing which the Lord vouchsafed to Scotland during the earlier half of this century. There was raised up under the preaching of faithful ministers of the gospel, and the instructions of godly laymen, a noble company of men and women who were living epistles of Christ known and read of all men. Time, however, has done its work, and the greater number of these Christians have now passed away. Of the few who remained to this present, some have recently fallen asleep. It was with much regret that we recorded in last issue the death of Mr. George Sinclair, the Cottage, Halkirk, which took place there on the 19th April. A brief sketch of this worthy man and respected elder of the Church may be welcome to our readers. Mr. Sinclair had reached the ripe age of nearly 82 years. He was the last surviving member of an esteemed family to which belonged James Sinclair, corn merchant, Wick, and William Sinclair, rope manufacturer, Pulteneytown, two men who were well-known and highly respected in the north. A sketch of William Sinclair, who died in 1884, and a valuable diary of his, appeared in the first volume of this magazine. The parents of this family were known as pious persons, and remarkable to relate to the praise of the grace of God, all their children, consisting of seven sons and two daughters gave evidence in their life of a saving change. Some of them besides those named, such as Alexander and Janet (the late Mrs. Ross), were eminent examples of piety. It appears that George was brought to the knowledge of Christ at about the age of 22 years. He walked, on one occasion, along with his brother Daniel from Wick to Reay, a distance of 30 miles, to a communion presided over by the Rev. Finlay Cook. On the way home, as the result of the experience they both had passed through, they went together on their knees somewhere about Quarrycrook, Halkirk, and there vowed to devote themselves to Christ. George, in after years, recollected saying then that if he had the strength of a lion, he would devote it to Christ. The work begun in his soul at this time was manifestly carried on during the remainder of his life.

Shortly after this he entered a sphere of labour which may have seemed not very congenial to the advance of spiritual life, namely, Her Majesty's Naval Service. Here he continued a few years, but owing to the unsatisfactory state of his health he required to leave it. Afterwards he occupied responsible positions in the Coast-guard, both in Scotland and England, but retired from this service many years ago. He returned to his native county, dwelt for a time in Brickigoe, near Wick, and then went with his family to the village of Halkirk, whence he has now passed away. His removal is a loss not only to his relatives but to the community of

which he was a bright ornament. Mr. Sinclair's personal worth and christian character commanded universal affection and regard. Natural gifts and more than ordinary spiritual attainments combined to make him a man among men. Of keen intellect, wide information, genial manner and striking conversational powers, he was the life of any social circle in which he moved. His chief delight was in the company of the Lord's people, and anyone who had the privilege of listening to him on gospel themes could not but be struck with the originality and point of his remarks. He had also a flow of excellent notes and anecdotes that ever kept his conversation fresh and interesting. Though sometimes downcast and low in his experience, he was for most part enabled to keep a cheerful front to the world. He did not like to be idle in his Master's service, and was ready to seize any fit opportunity to speak a suitable word for Christ. The young he kept a watchful eye upon, and not a few of them will have to give an account at the last day for the words of counsel they heard from his lips.

Mr. Sinclair was for a number of years an elder in the Free Church congregation, Halkirk, but shortly after the Free Presbyterian Church was formed, in 1893, he left the Free Church, and became an office-bearer in our Halkirk congregation. He was a lover of the old paths, and when he saw that the present Free Church had ceased to uphold her original principles he withdrew from her communion, and joined the body which he regarded as the true Church of 1843. He greatly lamented the current tendency of religious teachers in the Churches to treat lightly the infallible inspiration of the Bible, and had very able and convincing ways of his own of defending that inspiration. For example, he pointed out that God had stamped His own name upon every verse of the first chapter of Genesis as a standing witness against critics, who would relegate this chapter to the region of the mythical. Mr. Sinclair was a highly valued elder in Halkirk, and his death coming so soon—not a month after that of another worthy man, William Macbeath—is an occasion of special sorrow to the friends of truth in that quarter. His public exercises were very acceptable to the people of God. He had considerable gifts of utterance. In prayer he was fresh and fervent. Seldom did he engage but there seemed something of the dew of heaven resting upon his branch. At the Friday fellowship meetings he was a welcome speaker. He did not follow any other man's line of thought, but was always able to make an original contribution to the day's exercises. Never, indeed, did we hear him speak with greater power and unction than on the last occasion he spoke at one of these meetings. This was in July, 1898. The odour of the ointment filled the house. There were two things which generally characterised his addresses and gave them much of their winning character. He laid special emphasis upon the free offer of the Gospel, and also presented in rich fulness the encouragements of the Word to the very chief of sinners to return unto God by Jesus

Christ. About 18 years ago, the writer remembers for the first time to hear Mr. Sinclair speak at a prayer meeting in Pulteneytown Free Church during a communion season. The impression remains to this day. There were several worthy men who spoke, but none of them addressed themselves with such affectionate warmth to the young and unconverted hearers as he did. He warned them of the danger of perishing in their sins, and tenderly and powerfully entreated them to turn and live. The gracious invitations of Christ he pressed upon their attention. His whole address was fitted to be a means in the hand of the Holy Ghost to draw poor sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ. There is reason to believe that he was instrumental in his lifetime of spiritual and saving good to some who came in contact with him. One of his characteristics was also his thoughtfulness for the poor. He gave to no collection with greater heartiness than a collection for the poor, and would do without many things in order to supply the wants of the needy. In his illness many whom he had supplied in need came to ask for him with tears of sympathy. Even the regardless and profane were compelled to confess that there must be something in the religion he exemplified. He would often give the village boys a sixpence for market fare, and at the same time a word of advice or a passage of Scripture. He was very anxious to get recruits, as he would call them, for Christ's army. To young men of piety he was a Barnabas who took them by the hand, and encouraged them to come out on Christ's side.

Mr. Sinclair's health was for many years in a precarious condition. He was often up and down in this respect, but his general constitution was good; and the end did not come without a long protracted struggle. His death-bed presented an admirable though trying scene. Enduring much pain he was enabled by God's grace to bear himself with great resignation. His hope and confidence were fixed on the Lord. His meditation was on the Word of the Lord day and night. He longed for the advance of the gospel, and the conversion of sinners. On one occasion he exclaimed, "Tell every one that has a soul, that there is a Christ." When feeling wearied of troubles in soul and body, and realising his nearness to eternity he often repeated these words of the psalmist in the 31st Psalm:—

"And sith thou art my strength, therefore
Pull me out of the net,
Which they in subtilty for me
So privily have set.

Into thine hands I do commit
My sp'rit: for thou art he,
O thou, Jehovah, God of truth,
That hast redeemed me."

At last he longed to be away, and would cry out "Come quickly," while he turned away from any comfort but such as he

got from the Word of God. Towards the end he was free from all pain. He continued conscious to the very close, and gently entered into the haven of eternal rest.

His remains were buried in the New Cemetery, Wick, on Saturday, 22nd April. The funeral was conveyed by a number of the people of Halkirk to the outskirts of the village, and was then met at Wick by a representative gathering of the inhabitants there. Much sympathy is felt with Mrs. Sinclair, family, and friends in their great bereavement. The loss is shared by the whole Church of Christ. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Focal earail mun Aonadh.

THA sinn toilichte gu bheil gluasad am measg beagan anns a Ghaelteachd an aghaidh an aonaidh mhi-scriobturail a tha gu bhi air a dheanamh eadair an Eaglais Shaor agus an Eaglais Chleireil Thoilail. Ach tha e na aobhar bròin do chuid gum bheil na daoine 'tha air cèann a ghluasaid sinn a cumail a mach ris an t-sluagh nach eil ni air bith do dh' eadardhealachadh eadar an seasamh a tha aca a nis, agus an seasamh a bha aig an Eaglais Shaoir aig am an dealachaidh. Thubhairt aon dhiubh fein, air ùrlar an Ard-sheanaidh a bhliadhna an deigh dhuinne dealachadh riu,—“Cha n-eil sluagh na Gaelteachd cho maol 's nach cur iad eadar-dhealachadh eadar an Eaglais Shaor ann an 1843 agus Eaglais an Achd-mhineachaidh aig 1893.” Thubhairt am fear ceudna aig an Ard-sheanadh a dhainmich sinn—“Cha n-eil feum air bith a bhi 'g innseadh dhuine nach eil an t-Achd-mìneachaidh a leagail uallach sam bith air an dream a tha na aghaidh, ach gur ann air son uallach a thabhairt bhar na muinntir nach urrainn Leabhair Aidmheil a Chreidimh a ghabhail mar a ta e bha an t-achd so air a dheanamh. Bho na chuala sinn air a phuinc so tha e soilleir dhuinn gum bheil creud agus cleachdadh cùirtean na h-eaglais air an riaghladh leis an achd so.” Tha e air aithris anns na paipearain gun dubhairt am fear ceudna ann an Inbhir-nis an là roimhe, “gum bheil na h-uile nì achda-san mar a bha iad aig an Eaglais Shaoir aig am an dealachaidh.” Feumaidh gun do dhì-chuinich e na briathran a chleachd e air ùrlar an Ard-sheanaidh agus a tha air an ainmeachadh cheana, cho dluth air am brìgh agus a b-urrainn sin an tabhairt air ais a dh' ionnsuidh ar cuimhne. Tha e na nì uamhasach cudthromach a bhi mealladh sluaigh le bhi tabhairt orra a chreidsinn gum bheil iad air bonn fallain a thaobh an creud nuair a tha iad a reir firinn air bonn làn de mhearachdan agus de bhreugan. Tha e fìor gun do chuir iadsan a bha seasamh dileas anns an Eaglais Shaoir an aghaidh “Laoidhean” agus an aghaidh “Innealan-ciuil,” agus do bhrìgh nach robh iad, aig an am sin, air an deanamh na 'n pairt de lagh na h-eaglais, le iad a bhi air an cuir throimh an “Achd-cur-dion”

(*Barrier Act*) sios a dh' iunnsuidh nan cleirean, agus a ris air an deanamh nan lagh leis a mhorphairt de 'n Ard-Sheanadh, cha robh aobhar aca-san air an còr a dheanamh na an lamhan a ghlanadh le cur an aghaidh sin agus diultadh e bhi ceangailte orra fein no orra-san a bha gun leantuinn, anns an Ard-Sheanadh. Faodaidh e bhith gum bu choir do'n Dr. Kennedy, agus do na daoine urramach a bha seasamh còraichean Chriosd comhla ris, diultadh fhulang anns an Eaglais Shaoir gum biodh laoidhean no innealan ciuil air an cleachdadh ann an combhthional air bith anns an eaglais; oir bha na nithean sin an aghaidh Leabhar Aidmheil a Chreidimh agus nam briseadh follaiseach air na bòidean a ghabh iad uile orra fein. Cha 'n 'eil a chùis mar sin a nis; oir tha na h-uile ni ùr a thug iad a steach do'n eaglais air an daingnachadh air amhaich na h-uile neach anns an Eaglais Shaoir, cha ne Leabhar Aidmheil a Chreidimh a tha na chreud aca, ach na teagasgan a tha air an cumail a mach anns an achd mhallaichte sin. Cha 'n urrainn iad duine sam bith a chuir a mach as an Eaglais Shaoir a nise air son e bhi teagasg nach eil taghadh ann, no nach do thuit an cinne-daona ann an Adhamh, no nach eil feum aig duine bhi air athghionmhuinn leis an Spiorad Naomh, no nach eil anns a Bhiobul ach leabhar làn do mhearachdan, agus do nithean mi-bheusach. So an seasamh a tha aig an Eaglais Shaoir bho 'n a chaidh an t-Achminachaidh a dheanamh na lagh innte. An ann mar sin a bha an eaglais aig am an dealachaidh? Am fuilgeadh i sinn aig a toiseachadh? Mar tilg iad a mach an t-Achd-minachaidh, agus na h-uile ni sgriosail eile thugadh a steach do'n eaglais, agus a tha an t-achd sin, mar shlabhruidh larruinn, a ceangal air am muineal, cha 'n urrainn iad an eaglais a ghlanadh; agus ma ni iad so, ciod an t-eadar dhealachadh a bhios eadar an seasamh agus an seasamh a rinn sinne?—N. C.

AN t-ÀONADH.

THA an gluasad airson aonaidh a' dol air aghart agus is e gle bheag de na Cleiribh a tha 'cur 'na aghaidh. Riamh o' na rinn iad atharrachadh air steidh na h-Eaglais Shaoir leis an Achd Mhineachaidh 1892 cha robh fìor-bhacadh ann an rathad an aonaidh agus 'se ar mor bheachd gur e sin aon de na h-aobharan araidh a thug air mor-chuid na h-Eaglais a leithid do dh' atharrachadh a dheanamh. A chum agus nach biodh eadar-dhealachadh beachd eadar an da Eaglais. Tha a nis mu fhichead bliadhna o na rinn seanadh nan Cleireach aonaichte a leithid ceudna do lagh ach cha do dh' fhosgail iad an dorus buileach cho farsuinn airson nan ceisdean Fosgailte. Mum biodh aonadh cordail ann dh' fheumadh an da bhuidhinn tighinn chun an aon seasamh agus a chum 's gu'm biodh so mar so rinneadh an t-Ach Mineachaidh a dh' aobharaich ar dealachadh-ne 'na lagh anns an Eaglais Shaoir. Bha an rathad a nis reidh airson aonaidh.

Tha da ni araidh a reir ar barail-ne a tha 'dearbhadh gu soilleir gur e so aon do na nithibh gu h-araidh a dh' aobharaich an steidh ur a bhi air a gabhail aig an am sin. 'S e a cheud ni so. Air chul an t-Achd sin a bhi air a dheanamh 'na lagh dh' ath-nuadh-aicheadh an gluasad air son aonaidh a luidh mu lar airson fichead bliadhna roimhe. 'S an ni eile so. Ann am bonn steidh an aonaidh a thatar a 'deanamh tha an da Achd Mineachaidh air an ainmeachadh agus bithidh e nis soilleir gu bheil aite aig an Reachd Mhineachaidh agus nach eil e 'na litir mhairbh. Gu ruige so bha 'a chothrom aig cinn iuil an luchd lean mhuinn a dhalladh o nach robh iomradh air a dheanamh anns na ceisdean a dh' fheumas luchd-dreuchd freagairt air an Reachd sin idir. Air a shon sin ma ta cha 'ne litir mharbh a bha anns an Reachd. Fada uaith 'se a bh' ann litir mharbhtach. Ach an deigh so cha'n ann os iosal o bhios an lagh so ag oibreachadh ach bithidh fios aig coimh thionalaibh aig suideachadh luchd-dreuchd nach eil an cinn-iuil a nis ceangailte idir ri steidh na h-Eaglais mar a bha iad gu ruige 1892.

Leis an inntinn a tha riaghladh am measg a chuid a's mo do luchd-dreuchd nan Eaglaisean an diugh cha mhor nach 'eil srian fhuasgailte air a toirt do na h-uile seors' teagaisg a tha dol mu'n cuairt. Dh' fheudadh so a bhi mar so agus a mhuinntir a dheanadh e a bhi 'nan luchd brisidh lagha ach cha'n ann mar so a tha a' chuis. Ann an aite sin tha an fhirinn a' tuis-leachadh air an t-sraid agus cha'n urrainn ionracas dol a stigh. Neorthaing mur 'eil saorsa ann ach cha n'e saorsa air son na firinn ach air son na breige. 'Nuair is e so an inntinn leis am bheil muinntir ag aonadh cha ruig sinn a leas a bhi an duil gur e aonadh buannachdail a bhios ann. 'Se ni luachmhor a tha ann an aonadh am measg bhraithrean ach is olc an ni aonadh gun aonachd inntinn agus air cho luachmhor 's a bheil aonadh o'n taobh a muigh 'se is ro luachmhoire an fhirinn agus an fhianuis a bhi air an cumail fior-ghlan.

Leis mar a thionndaidh cuisean o'n dh' fhag sinn an comunn anns an robh sinn tha sinn a' creidsinn gu bheil ar seasamh fhein air fhireanachadh mar ni a bha 'toirt ceartais do'n fhirinn do'n fhianuis agus do'n linn a thig 'nar deigh.

GUS

GEARRLOCH, *Mai* 16, 1899.

AN FHEAR ULLAICHE,

Ged nach 'eil mi gle chinnteach am beil e freagrach dhomhsa taing a thairgse do luchd ullaiche agus treoraiche an leabhraim so, bu mhiann leum a dheanamh anns a chanain ghaidhealach. Agus tha mi gle chinnteach gu bheil moran inntinnean

learn airson a leithid so do beabhran urramach, solasach, nach 'eil ach da sgillin, agus gu h-raidh air son a Gaelig anns a cheud aireamh de'n cheathramh pairt se sin searmoin shoilleir an Urr. Nial Cameron.

Agus a rithist shirinn an taing ceudna a nochdadh do fhear ceangail suas an leabhrair so, *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, air a phris riaghailteach tasdan agus ochd sgillin. Fhuair mi fein tri deis mar so iongantach maith air a phris. Thaobh an ni so tha e ro iomchuidh gu'm biodh na th'air a chuir sios anns na h-uile h-earrainn de'n leabhran so air a chumail air chuimhne agus air a sgaioleadh.—FEARLEABHAIDH, Gearrloch.

Notes and Comments.

Obituary Notice.—We regret to record this month the death of Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie, Gairloch, a pious young man of much promise. Deep sympathy is felt with his parents and friends in their sore bereavement. We hope to have a more extended notice in an early issue.

Corrections.—In some copies of last issue, page 1, line 22, "their" should read "these, and page 3, "prophet" should read "prospect." The words "and 19th" should have been omitted on page 23.

The Sabbath.—Principal Story in a recent sermon in Edinburgh, speaks favourably of the "Continental Sunday," and declares it would be no breach of the Divine law to open a museum or a reading-room on the Lord's day. Here is a leader of the people who causes them to err, and will have much to account for at the day of judgment.

The New Hymnary in Thurso.—In this far northern town there is a congregation which was presided over by the late eminent Dr. Taylor for the long period of over 60 years. Dr. Taylor died a few years ago, and two ministers have followed in rapid succession. The present is Rev. Alexander Soutar, late of Springburn, Glasgow. Mr. Soutar has, with the consent of the session, introduced the new hymnary into public worship. He gave a short address in connection with its introduction from Isaiah xlii. 10—"Sing unto the Lord a new song." On these words he based an argument for uninspired hymns. Mr. Soutar forgets that we have the new song in the Book of Psalms. The 96th and 98th Psalms begin with these words of Isaiah. Besides, the Spirit-given words of the Psalms, penned thousands of years ago, are a new song from time to time in the experience of the people of God. The words of the angels, Mary, and Zacharias, are largely couched in the language of the Book of Psalms. The chief rule to go by is the precept and example of Christ and the

Apostles, and we have not the least warrant to sing any other than the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs of the Book of Psalms referred to by the Apostle in Col. iii. 16, and declared by him to be "the word of Christ." "Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" is the ancient title of the Book of Psalms in the Septuagint version. It is only the shallowest ignorance that would deduce an argument from this passage on behalf of uninspired hymns. The early Church sang the Psalms alone, and what was abundantly sufficient for Christ, His Apostles, and primitive believers, may well satisfy us to-day. Besides, the new hymnary is full of poisonous rubbish, the work of Romanists, Ritualists, and other deniers of the truth as it is in Jesus, while some sound hymns have been excluded.

Three Meetings at Inverness.—Inverness during the past month has had its due share of meetings and speeches. On 2nd May there was a meeting held under the auspices of the Laymen's League to protest against Disestablishment and the impending Union of the Free and U.P. Churches. On the 4th of the month an ambitious effort was made by the unionist section of the Free Church to shew their position and strength in the Highlands. A conference, followed by a public meeting in the evening was held by Principal Rainy, Dr. Whyte, and Mr. Macaskill. Cheap terms had been obtained from the railway companies, and there was, therefore, an imposing array of laymen from all the places near and remote. The list of names and places almost reads like a roll of worthies extracted from the "Days of the Fathers," but oh! how fallen, how changed! On the 17th, a counter meeting, preceded by a conference, was held by the constitutional party in the Free North Church (Rev. Murdo Mackenzie's). Ex-Bailie Munro was called to the chair, and the speakers were Revs. Messrs. Mackenzie, Galbraith, M'Culloch, Beaton, Bannatyne, M'Allister, &c. There was also a private conference of constitutionalists held at Achnashean. We have no space to comment on these demonstrations.

Literary Notices.

LAWLESSNESS IN THE NATIONAL CHURCH: By the Right Hon. Sir William Vernon Harcourt, M.P. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Edinburgh: R. W. Hunter, George IV. Bridge.

This is a reprint from the *Times* of Sir William Vernon Harcourt's nineteen letters on Ritualism in the English Church. The letters are able, eloquent, and convincing. Anyone who desires to know the exact state of the case against Ritualism should not fail to purchase them. The publishers have got them up in neat pamphlet form, and excellent type, while the price is reasonable, one shilling nett.

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, TIMES, AND WRITINGS OF THOMAS BOSTON OF ETTRICK: Written by himself. Glasgow: John Macneilage, 65 Great Western Road. Edinburgh: Norman Macleod. London: W. Wileman, 27 Bouverie Street.

Mr. Macneilage has just issued a new edition of the Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Boston of Ettrick. The last edition of this famous and interesting book appeared in 1852 as part of a set of Mr. Boston's complete works. These works are not now easy to be had, and many may be glad to procure the Memoirs who would not be able to purchase the set though it was within their reach. The Memoirs are an ideal autobiography. They contain all the mental ups and downs and vicissitudes in life of a devout man and an able minister of the New Testament. They also supply vivid glimpses of the ecclesiastical and spiritual state of the Church of Scotland in the age in which the writer lived. The book is attractive to a variety of readers. As a piece of literature, it is admired by the man of letters. As the record of events in an honourable and useful life, it is interesting to the student of history. And, above all, as a narrative of the spiritual experiences of a deeply-exercised and richly-endowed minister of Christ's gospel, it is valuable to all who need counsel and help in the way to Zion. The book would make an excellent gift to any young person about to enter upon the serious duties of life. This edition has an excellent steel engraving of the author, and is prefaced by a publisher's note and biographical introduction, which add to its value. The print is good, and the binding neat, while the price, 4s., is very reasonable for a volume of over 500 large pages of excellent matter. We hope as many of our readers as possible will encourage the efforts of the publisher to disseminate sound literature.

PSALMODY. By the Rev. R. J. George, D.D., Alleghany, Pa. Belfast: R. Aickin & Co., Ltd. Glasgow: J. Macneilage.

This is an excellent pamphlet by a Reformed Presbyterian professor in America in defence of the exclusive use of the Psalms in worship. The case in favour of the Psalms and against uninspired hymns is stated with great point and power. A more useful treatise on the subject within so brief a compass we have not yet met with, and we would like to see it circulated in thousands throughout the country. The price is only one halfpenny, and if the leading men in our congregations would see to its general circulation, they would do a good service to the cause of pure Scriptural worship, and might be the means of counteracting to no small extent the current popularity of uninspired and erroneous hymns.