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“Thou hast given a Banner.”

THE Scripture motto that is prefixed to this Magazine is a verse from the sixtieth Psalm, “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.” The Psalmist wrote these words during a time of conflict and warfare. In previous verses he acknowledges the Lord’s hand in the sad dispensations whereby this people were scattered abroad, and made to taste hard things, yea, to drink the wine of astonishment. David’s hope, however, is that the Lord has given a banner to them that fear Him, a banner to be displayed because of the truth, and a banner that, with the Lord’s blessing, will lead them on to victory. And victory was indeed given to Israel at this time, for David was enabled to put to flight the combined forces of the Syrians and the Edomites. The encouragement of the Church in all ages, and especially in troublous times, when the enemy cometh in like a flood, is the standard which the Spirit of the Lord lifts up against him. The Lord has given a banner to His people, and it is theirs to stand by it to the last. Let all the hosts of hell marshal their forces, they will not conquer; the Lord’s remnant will unfurl the banner of truth, and carry it forward sooner or later to final victory.

What is the character of those to whom this banner is given? It is “them that fear thee”; they are fearers of the Lord. He is great and greatly to be feared, and they who know Him, fear Him. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, and it is a peculiar mark of all those who are savingly taught of God, and are led into the mystery of His being and character, that they have a holy fear of God in their souls. This fear is characteristic of believers under the New Testament as well as the Old. It is recorded of the Churches in Acts ix. 31, that they, “walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” The apostle exhorts believers to perfect “holiness in the fear of God.”—(2 Cor. vii. 1.) And they are also commanded to serve Him “with reverence and godly fear.”—(Heb. xii. 28.) It is clear, therefore, that there is no true spiritual Christianity where this gracious, reverential, filial fear of God is absent. The fuller revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ

does not extinguish this fear, but strengthens it. The more we know of the glory of God, the more we will be filled with godly fear, as surely as with the comfort of the Holy Ghost. It is to them who now fear His name that He gives a banner because of the truth. They are the army of which He is the glorious "leader and commander."

"Thou hast given a banner." What is the banner? It is the Church's distinctive testimony in the world. Satan has his banner, but it is of a different colour from that of the Church. It is not white with the love and holiness of God, nor red with the blood of Christ, but black with the smoke of hell. It is a banner that has the stripes of sin and death upon it. Happy are they who can discern its true complexion, and refuse to follow it. We are all under it by nature; we are carried about by the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience. But it pleases God to open the eyes of some to realise what a vile master they are under, and what a fearful warfare they are engaged in—warfare against God and all that is good—and they are so changed in heart that they renounce the service of Satan and enlist under Christ, the glorious Captain of salvation. Upon Christ's banner are inscribed the words, "The whole counsel of God." No other words than these are sufficient to express the Church's testimony. Many are, in our time, adopting a less testimony than God provides; they are throwing aside many important truths, and are busy getting together large regiments of professing Christians under banners that Christ will disown both in time and eternity.

It is our humble conviction that "the whole counsel of God" is set forth in the historic standards of the Church of Scotland. That conviction is pressed home upon us by direct study of the Scriptures, and by the record of history. The Lord, at the time of the Reformation in Scotland, made a clean sweep of the Popish paraphernalia that obscured and deformed the whole order and system of the Church; He arrayed it in His own divinely-wrought garments, and armed it with all those spiritual weapons, that whole armour of God, by whose instrumentality alone the Church could resist and overcome all the armies of hell. We are not to affirm of the standards of the Church that absolute infallibility which can only be declared of the Word of God itself, but they are infallible in the measure in which they agree with that Word; and we unhesitatingly affirm that that measure is so great that, with all the boasted light of the nineteenth century, we cannot discern wherein any lack of agreement occurs. The Holy Spirit of God raised up in past times a large number of noble men and women whose Christ-like character and lives have been, and are, a powerful and abiding testimony to the scriptural purity of the truths they professed. The religion so common at present, which looks with proud contempt upon the doctrine of our Reformers, is such a shallow, flimsy affair that it has the condemnation of the

views with which it is associated written in unmistakable characters on its breast. The Lord has given us this banner, and it is our highest duty and privilege to maintain it unsullied and untorn amid the conflicting forces of this unstable and unbridled age.

The banner has been given "that it may be displayed." It is not to be hid in a corner; it is to be exhibited before the whole world. Many deal with their banner testimony as some people do with the Bible. They fold it up in a napkin or deposit it in a drawer, from which safe hiding-places it seldom makes its appearance. They are ashamed of the testimony of Christ; they can endure no reproof for His sake. The smile of a perishing world is more precious in their eyes than the favour of the eternal God. But they to whom this banner is given, not in mere profession, but in spiritual possession, cannot but hold it forth so as to be seen in all its beautiful proportions. It is to be displayed in the family circle, in the market places and thoroughfares, in councils and parliaments, and especially in the professing Church. Unfaithfulness in this matter is a prominent feature of our time. The true banner is hid altogether, or there is a blend made of banners good and bad, or still further, a wholly false banner unfurled. It is verily not easy for souls who are not under the real guidance of the Holy Ghost to be faithful in such days as these. The enemy has come in like a mighty flood. Happy are they who are enabled by grace to hold fast in integrity the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

The reason why the banner is to be displayed is "because of the truth." God is the author of truth; the devil is the father of lies. The Lord will have his truth set before the world, let it be accepted or rejected. If it is accepted it will prove, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the savour of life; but if it is rejected it will prove the savour of death. In the one case, the grace of God will be glorified; in the other, the justice of God. It is, however, by the display of the truth that it is made the instrument of eternal good to men. A hidden Bible, a hidden gospel, a hidden testimony, are of no value whatever. "Faith cometh by hearing." It is by the proclamation of the Word that unbelievers are convinced and converted, and believers revived and comforted. Moreover, the banner is to be displayed because of the truth, that is, because of the truthfulness or faithfulness of God. The Lord will be true to all His promises; He will not fail in the least jot or tittle. His faithfulness will shine forth in proportion as we respect His commands, and show forth His testimony. But on the other hand, when professors of Christ trample under foot the banner of truth, they make mockery of God's Word and promises, and bring reproach upon His name. It is they who truly fear the Lord that are jealous for the honour of His character, the authority of His Word, and the purity of His truth. They will have no other banner but His, and when they get it they will endeavour, in the strength of grace, to display it before all men, that God may be glorified, and His enemies made His willing and loving subjects.

Notes of a Sermon

BY THE REV. JOHN MACLEOD, M.A., ULLAPOOL.

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 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled."—MATT. v. 6.  
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CHRIST is a king. He has a kingdom ; He is not a king without a kingdom ; nor is it a kingdom without a king. His kingdom has its own laws, and the subjects of this kingdom have a certain character. The character of His subjects the Lord brings before us in these verses. He tells us who are blessed ; He tells us who are happy, and as His kingdom is not of this world, the class that by Him are called happy or blessed is not that class which this world would pronounce happy. There is an inward antagonism between the spirit of this world and the spirit that animates Christ's true and loyal subjects. They partake of the spirit of their Lord and Master, and measure things by the gauge and standard of His Word. His Word reveals His mind, and they are of one mind with Him. The world has its own standard. It strives as far as in it lies to throw off the yoke of dependence upon God, and measuring things by its standard, it does not consider those blessed whom the Lord pronounces blessed, while it pronounces blessed those that He pronounces accursed.

As in these verses the Lord describes the character of those who are blessed who belong to His kingdom—in these chapters He announces the spiritual character of the laws of His kingdom. He tells us that it takes to do with the inward thoughts and hidden motions of the heart. He tells us that fruitbearing is a necessary result of being under the influence of His law, and that it is not sufficient for us to be mere hearers of His Word without being doers of it. His law is righteous and His subjects are righteous, and being righteous they love righteousness. This is one of their distinguishing features, and under this description He brings them before us in these words—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled."

In considering these words, let us look at :—

I.—The character of those referred to.

II.—What is said about them.

III.—Why in particular this is said.

I. Those, about whom the Lord here speaks, are said to hunger and to thirst after righteousness. Now this at once tells us with regard to them that they are alive to righteousness and alive to God. Natural hunger and natural thirst are never present, where natural life is absent, and spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst are equally inseparable from and dependent on spiritual life. The dead never eat, and the dead never drink, but this is true equally

of the spiritually dead. Spiritual food they never eat, and spiritual food they never drink. Did they but hunger and thirst after righteousness, they should give infallible evidence of being alive to God? And equally so, those that are alive to God, invariably bear this character, and have this true of them each one, that they hunger and thirst after righteousness. The question, however, may be put, "Can hunger for righteousness be taken as an infallible sign of spiritual life as distinct from spiritual death?" And this calls us to consider for a moment or two what is life spiritual and what is death spiritual.

It is not true of all mankind that they hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is not one of their natural characteristics. By nature, man is dead in trespasses and in sins, is an alien from the life of God through ignorance and blindness of heart, walks after the course of this world, and does the will of the flesh and of the mind. By nature, he is in the flesh, and the mind of the flesh, which is enmity against God, rules within him. This mind is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be. And seeing this is its nature, it is impossible that it should submit to the demands of God's unbendingly holy law. But the law presses its demands upon us. We are God's creatures, formed by Himself, and formed for Himself. He claims that we should love Him, and He is all-worthy of the love that He claims. His claim is righteous, and His demand is righteous. He demands that we in all our thoughts, words, deeds, should conform to the standard of His spiritual law, and though we have broken it and cannot conform to it, yet instead of its demands being lowered they are rather increased. God is as worthy as He ever was of being loved, and so perfect obedience ceases not to be our duty towards Him. But He deserves also at our hands, that we should give satisfaction to the law that we have broken, that we should satisfy the justice we have offended. This is the law's claim, and it is a righteous claim. It claims righteousness at our hands, and such righteousness as it deserves at the hands of sinners. The mind, which cannot be subject to the law of God, cannot submit to its claim of righteousness, and thus of man by nature, small and great, rich and poor, it is true that they are destitute of this hunger and thirst after righteousness about which our text speaks.

If all men by nature are destitute of the love and passion for righteousness, while there are those who do love righteousness, we may enquire, how does it come about that there are such. Now the Word of God testifies to us with regard to the first man Adam, and with regard to the second Adam too. It tells us who and what we are, and it tells us who and what Christ is. It tells us our ruin, our guilt, our condemnation, but it also tells us of the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world, of the Lord from heaven the Saviour. Through one came condemnation; through one too comes salvation. Through one came death; through the other comes life. By nature we are the children of the first man

and are in the flesh. Because of this we love not righteousness ; we are dead in sins. But as the first Adam has his natural seed, the second Adam has His spiritual seed, and as we have borne the image of the earthy through natural generation, the church of God bears the image of the heavenly through spiritual regeneration.

Now the likeness of Christ is brought before us in such words as these (Psalm xlv. Heb. i.)—"Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity." He was made of a woman made under the law, and fulfilled as antitype the figures of the ceremonial law. As of old the tables with the ten commandments were in the ark of the testimony, so in Christ the Mediator's heart was in the law of God. "That most holy law of thine I have within my heart," was His prophetic language through the Psalmist, and what was true of Him as the second man, the Lord from heaven, is true of His spiritual progeny. For Christ the king of Israel has not given the promise without having power to make it good. "I will give you an heart of flesh." As He has the power to make it good He has the will too, and time after time in each age and generation He calls from death to life, from darkness to light, and those whom He thus calls are born of the Word of God. They are born of the Spirit of God, and the new covenant is made with them in the circumcision of their heart, that causes them to love the Lord and to delight in Christ Jesus. The law of God is written on their heart in regeneration, and thus with a new heart and a renewed nature, they love the law of God after the inward man. Thus it comes about that these are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, who have respect to the law of God. His likeness is, that he loved righteousness, and their spiritual resemblance to Him, whose they are and of whom they are, secures that they too love righteousness. They love it, because they have the law written on their heart, and loving it they hunger and thirst for it. Spiritual death and spiritual life are wide as the poles asunder. Spiritual death is hatred to God ; spiritual life is the love of God. And all who love God submit to His law and its claims ; so doing, they hunger and thirst for righteousness. Their hunger and thirst tell of their life to God, of their love of God, and correspond to the demands of His law as they are known to them.

Now, the law of God has a twofold claim. It may be viewed either as a covenant or as a rule of life. As a covenant of life and death it assigns death as the reward of unrighteousness, and gives life on the ground of righteousness. Its demand for a perfect righteousness was met by the work of Christ the surety and substitute, and all who love righteousness intelligently seek with Paul to be found in Him, not having their own righteousness but His. They love the righteousness of the law's demands, and loving it they count all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Him who is end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. But the law, viewed as a rule of life, still continues to claim personal loving obedience at the hands of those who have found

its claims as a covenant met in the surety righteousness of Immanuel. In that righteousness they have acceptance, have a title to eternal life made over to them, and have the privilege of the indwelling of God's Spirit to sanctify them. Their own obedience never comes between them as sinners, and Christ as their Saviour. It is impossible either to increase or to lessen their righteousness in the robe of Christ's obedience. But though new creatures, they have not ceased to be God's creatures. Their new creation has not taken away God's original title to their love and homage. It has rather added to His claims on them. They are more obliged now to Him than ever to live holily in this world. They are called to be holy, and the rule of their obedience is the law of God. They obey it now, not to win life, but to please God, and in pleasing Him, they have their own highest pleasure. They walk in new obedience as in the royal law of liberty. This is true freedom, that they should be animated by the principle of love to serve the Lord as their God.

Their spiritual life is not haphazard; its aspirations are not aimless; they are guided by the promptings of an enlightened understanding; and hunger and thirst after righteousness does not mean hunger and thirst after anything that may go under this name among men. The righteousness that is hungered for by the children of God is quite distinct from all merely worldly righteousness and civil obedience. Whatever is truly righteous they desire, but their standard is the law of God and its claims, alike as a covenant and as a rule of life. Righteousness, meeting these claims as a covenant, they find in Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, and inward righteousness they get by the indwelling of His Spirit. In His strength, and to His glory, they obey. They do His will, and their desire is to do it. They hunger and thirst after righteousness.

II. What is said about those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. Christ calls them happy or blessed, and so they are. Would you not yourself call them blessed? They are the friends of God and so love righteousness. They are not satisfied with what they have attained, but press forward. They are happy indeed, for they are partakers of the promised blessing of the Holy Spirit. By Him are they sealed unto the day of the redemption; and this sealing testifies to their being delivered from the curse. They could not be blessed indeed, as long as the curse held them in its grips. It has a desolating, wasting power over every one that lies under it, and because of this power, spiritual death reigns, where it reigns. Where spiritual death reigns, there are no living hungerings and thirstings after righteousness. Those who have such hungerings are not under the curse, the very fact of their so hungering testifies to the truth that they are freed from its power. There is no middle position, however, between the curse and the blessing, and in this sense it is true of one and all of those, that thus hunger and thirst, that they are blessed. Their

standing is in the righteousness of their surety, and they are blessed in Him. But wherever there is this standing of blessedness, there is also the imparted blessing. There is the sealing by the Holy Spirit. This is accompanied with all the blessings of redemption, and those who are in the enjoyment of these are blessed indeed. The hunger and thirst for righteousness testify to the Spirit's sealing, and presence, and power, and in so doing testify to the blessedness of those who have them. For where there is one of the saving blessings of the covenant of redemption, there is the whole golden circle, and where this golden circle is, there is a crown of glory in time, that will but come to light in its proper beauty, when the sunlight of eternity shall welcome within the veil the redeemed of the Lord, now come to Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. The crown is theirs already. It will then be seen without doubt to be theirs, and its beauty and glory will be made manifest. The beauty and the glory are theirs already, but while they are here they live as strangers and pilgrims, and the world knows them not. It knew Him not, and it knows them not.

Happy are they that have this hunger and this thirst. Hunger and thirst are proof of life, and usually of health too; but they are only relative blessings. The rich who have everything in abundance may lack hunger and thirst, and thus the choicest foods and drinks may be tasteless to them. Take away health and appetite, and food becomes a drug and an annoyance. We live here from to-day to to-morrow, from day to day. What we have to-day will not do to-morrow; what we had yesterday did for yesterday, but will not do for to-day. Our system needs to be upheld, and by hunger on the one side and food on the other, the wonderful providence of God secures that we are upheld. Hunger is the index of our need of sustenance. It gives us to know that we need food. Food we need; yet were there no such thing as hunger, we should not know our need of food. Hunger thus taken in connection with food is a merciful provision of our Creator for securing our maintenance in life and strength. But though a merciful provision, it may become a torture. Let hunger be with us, and nothing to satisfy it, then that which serves in conjunction with food, a good and merciful purpose, becomes a pain and a torment to us. Food without hunger is tasteless; hunger without food is pain. But take the two together, and like the two sides of an arch meeting in the keystone, they carry out the end of sustaining our being in this life. The rich man whose appetite is gone would say at once, "Blessed are they that hunger." He has plenty to meet the demands of hunger, when it comes, but the poor man, who is destitute of his daily bread, would not understand the blessedness of hungering and thirsting. Tortured with pangs of hunger, and wanting the wherewithal to allay them, he would rather not hunger than be pained as he is, but give him what will meet his hunger, and then he will appreciate

the end that hunger serves in the economy of the human frame. So it is in connection with this hungering and thirsting. If it were possible that they could be in existence, and nothing provided to meet them, the very lack of supply would be torture. But there is no such thing as hungering and thirsting for righteousness without the provision of righteousness to meet them, for it is only as the reward of Immanuel's toil in bringing in everlasting righteousness, that there are among the sons of men any who hunger and thirst for that righteousness that God's law requires for its claims, and that God's law demands at their hands. As this is so, there is no hunger and thirst for righteousness without provision made to meet them. And this leads us to consider

III. The special reason why those that thirst and hunger thus, are pronounced happy or blessed. This special reason is that they shall be satisfied. Were this not provided, there would be dissatisfaction, and where there is dissatisfaction there is unhappiness. But the Lord has never given being to such hunger and thirst in order to mock them. He has respect to the work of His hands. They are the result and outflow of what He has already provided. He has made the provision, not that it might not be partaken of, but that it might; and for this end He declares its fulness and freeness in the word of the truth of the gospel. "Yea come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." There is a harmony in the works and ways of God. He works inwardly, and He works outwardly, and the task that His inward work gives fits in with the provision that He has prepared from without. There is the outward provision of righteousness in Christ. There is the inward working of hunger and thirst for righteousness; and this can be met only by what has been already provided in Christ. And there is, as a junction between the two, the word of the gospel, in which the Christ that is revealed, is offered; and on the ground of this offer, the faith of His people is able to lay hold of Him. Their hunger and thirsting after righteousness are thus met and satisfied in the exercise of faith, laying hold of a crucified Redeemer.

The words of our text, however, speak not only of a provision made, but of the certainty of its application. They *shall* be satisfied. Not only is there mention made of this certainty; there is also underlying it the provision that the gospel reveals to satisfy the cravings of a renewed heart. The figure used is hungering and thirsting; not hungering alone, and not thirsting alone, but hungering and thirsting both; and the provision that God has made corresponds to that too. "My flesh," says Christ, "is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." He mentions His flesh and His blood. Not His humanity unbroken, but His flesh and blood apart from one another. When were they sundered? Surely when He poured His soul out to death. He bore the sins of many; He bore them in His own body on the tree; up to it and on it He bore them; and His bearing of them resulted in this,

that the sword of divine wrath against sin reached to the dividing asunder of body and spirit. The veil was rent from the top to the bottom. Soul and body parted company, and through the rent veil of His holy humanity, the Divine Saviour entered into the holiest, not without blood. Body and soul parted company, but the alliance between His body and soul, each with His glorious person, secured that, by parting company from one another, death was spoiled of its sting. He brought in everlasting righteousness, while neither soul nor body parted company with His person. The human soul that left His body when He gave up the ghost, was His soul; and the body that His soul left was His body; but body and soul were indeed parted, for He died indeed. Dying He brought in everlasting righteousness, met all the claims of the law of death and life for His people, and thus is the end of the law for righteousness. His blood sealed His work. His obedience included death, for it was obedience to a broken law. His life and His death alike feed His people. In Christ living for them and dying for them, they find the righteousness that satisfies their conscience. It claims that they should render to God's law such righteousness as it demands. The law shows in the resurrection of Christ on behalf of those for whom He died, that it is quite satisfied with Him and His work, and what satisfies it satisfies them. Faith, appropriating this Christ, living and dying, and rising again as surety, substitute, head, and king, gives blessed satisfaction to the cravings of an enlightened conscience. It gives peace, and peace too on an immovable basis, for it is on no other basis than on that laid down when the Redeemer cried "it is finished."

But is there nothing in the satisfaction promised, but what the believer attains to in the exercise of faith here below? Far from it. Fuller satisfaction than ever faith can give is involved in the promise here given. But, before we proceed to consider this further, we may briefly notice the satisfaction promised as embracing provision, not alone for meeting the covenant claims of the law of God, but the claims that that law has inalienably in all God's reasonable creatures. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are zealous for good works. Their desire is to bring forth the fruits of righteousness. This is their desire, and while they live on this earth, however much the testimony of a good conscience may be theirs, that in all godly sincerity they spend their days in their Master's service, yet their eager, fervent desire to serve Him and to glorify Him more than keeps pace with any of their attainments in grace. They do not attain to what they would be, nor do they attain to what they should be, and this leaves with them a holy dissatisfaction with themselves—such a dissatisfaction as does not leave them in despair of ever attaining, but keeps them pressing forward. Cast down they are; not in despair. Such hope is theirs as mans them for continued endeavours and further efforts. Satisfaction is promised, however,

and it is no such imperfect thing as what they attain to in the testimony of a good conscience. For the dissatisfaction with themselves that follows them through this life ever keeps them from being satisfied with their faithfulness or their attainments, and if what a good conscience testifies to is not sufficient to satisfy them, they are shut up for satisfaction here only to hope and hope alone. Drawing the breath of hope through the tender mercies of their Lord, they have foretastes of satisfaction for their cravings after holiness. They cleanse themselves in purpose and design from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. They purify themselves, as He, in whom their hope is, is pure. But this satisfaction that they taste in hope, is but an anticipation of a fuller satisfaction that awaits them yet. The full satisfaction of the craving of their renewed nature is promised to them, and He, who has given them their cravings and has accompanied them with this promise, will see to it that the full satisfaction promised shall be made good to the heirs of the promise.

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness embrace desire for imputed and desire for imparted righteousness. The faith that unites the believer to Christ gives him a standing before God in his surety's obedience, and perfect righteousness is his already. If faith were perfect, the enjoyment of a good conscience before God, on the ground of what Christ did, would be a source of unfailling satisfaction to believing sinners. But faith is imperfect. As God's gift, and in its nature, it is perfect—coming down from the Father of light; but in its measure it is ever imperfect here. It has its ebbs and flows, and so the measure of satisfaction enjoyed here is fluctuating. The title to the enjoyment of a consciousness of acceptance is perfect, but the light in which it is beheld is variable, and the hand by which it is held is sometimes limp and numb; so that, however rich the consolations of Christ's gospel are here, they give not the full satisfaction promised. They have no weakness, there is no shortcoming on their part, but the believer comes short. The clay vessel cannot hold the fulness of joy, and so the fulness of satisfaction has to be reserved for that life where there is no trace of imperfection, where sin is no more, and we know even as we are known.

The promise then here given points beyond the realm of time and sense. It partakes of the noble, spiritual nature of the divine affections, with which it is here indissolubly associated. There is a full satisfaction awaiting the children of God. They are His children, and He has richly provided for their needs. These needs He knows, and according to His perfect knowledge of their needs is the perfection of the satisfaction that He has provided for them. Here they see as in a glass darkly; there they shall see face to face. Here they see but in part, and know but in part; here they shall see and know fully. Their knowledge will know no lacking; their seeing shall no longer be dimmed. He has promised satisfaction, and He will give it too. When they awake

they shall be satisfied with His likeness. They shall be satisfied with Him, and with His glorious image restored to themselves through grace. And while satisfied with themselves in His likeness with a holy satisfaction, they shall likewise be fully satisfied with the ground on which their glory and their beauty rests. They forget not what they were, and what they deserved to be, but they remember this only to see in its light the wonder of the love of God in the Cross of Christ. The blood of the Cross will be the theme of their praise. The love of God in His grace reigns through righteousness with eternal life in Christ Jesus the Lord. His love has brought them where they now are, and they sound forth its praise. It has brought them *through* righteousness, and their whole nature approves of the righteousness; it has brought them *to* righteousness, and they praise Him for it. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things. Glory is His through the church; and glory is theirs in Him. For such is the blessed liberality of the love of God, that, when it is satisfied in their complete deliverance from sin, wrath, and death, they are completely satisfied too. It is glorified in them. They are glorified in it. When they are glorified, He is glorified who glorifies them, and thus what comes to them reverts to Him in ceaseless praise.

Happy indeed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be satisfied. Think you not that righteousness is as worthy of being loved, hungered, thirsted for by you, as by them. Rest in nothing less than this, "That I may be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness but . . . the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."

A Reply to Sceptical Objections.

BY THE REV. DR LOVE.

(LETTER CXXVIII.)

GREENOCK, 13th December, 1798.

DEAR SIR,—In considering what you have written in the way of objection against the great truths of Christianity, I feel horror, astonishment, and compassion at the affecting view of a human soul rushing with eager boldness into the black chaos of error—confessing its own weakness, yet secretly arrogating to itself infallibility, and power of reason sufficient to overturn the throne of the Almighty. Will you, indeed, venture your soul and eternity upon such a cobweb of disjointed speculation? Will you oppose such satanical suggestions, though offering themselves in a grave dress, to the intrinsic evidence, order, and beauty of the truth of God, and to the accompanying demonstration of sense, history, and experience, whereby its certainty is made obvious even to

infant minds? Because the nature and circumstances of moral evil are, to those deeply involved in it, mysterious and hard to be traced and apprehended, will you listen to a series of reasoning, the ultimate conclusion whereof is, "moral good and evil have no existence, the justice of God, and his character as a judge of moral agents, are self-contradictory and chimerical ideas?"

But though I have the fullest persuasion of the absolute futility and impious delusion which your objections exhibit, I confess I have little hope of being able to undeceive you. The full access, which I fear you have given to the wretched effusions of the father of lies, into the very vitals of your soul, is to me manifest by the calm and lofty ease wherewith you manage these speculations. The fondness with which you appear to welcome such illusions manifests a state of the heart and of the will, against which, if persisted in, it is certain that God himself will make war, and discloses that very immensity of relative evil, the existence of which you are tempted to deny. I therefore tremble lest the Spirit of God, who has evidently withdrawn from you, should refuse ever to return, or to concur with any endeavours for your recovery. My fears are increased when I reflect on the clearness and extent of Divine truth with which I know you to have been made acquainted, and over the evidence whereof your mind has too hastily arrogated to itself a victory; and, finally, when I recollect the sublime nature of moral and spiritual truth, and the astonishing depravation of the faculties of man, from which they who are sincerely desirous to shake off the disease, recover by a very slow and arduous course of convalescence. On the other side, however, I state, to encourage my exertions, the sacred energy of truth, the unsearchable riches of the grace and power of God, and the magnificence of the prize which is gained by him, who "saves a soul from death and hides a multitude of sins." I will, therefore, hazard one attempt at least, to convince you, if you will give candid attention, that there is no demonstrative firmness in the reasonings which have deceived you, and that they are only plausible difficulties, not conclusive arguments.

You set forth on the metaphysical ocean without a compass, in this vast proposition, "there is no comparison between time and eternity, nor between the all-perfect God and his imperfect creature man:"—a serious and important truth, taking the words simply. Who can deny it, or suspect the person to be a scorner who gravely rehearses it? But behold the craft of the bloody murderer of souls! On this pedestal is to be erected the pillar of bold irreligion. Because eternity is unspeakably greater than time—because God is infinitely above man; therefore what is done in time cannot influence eternity—therefore man can have nothing to do with the moral government of God. Reasoning worthy of the cause of infidelity—worthy to be raised from its grave every now and then, from Epicurus downward through all ages—reasoning which Satan himself might be ashamed to suggest! What are

the conclusions which sober reason would deduce from such premises? That the concerns of eternity are of immense importance; that to renounce eternal felicity, and voluntarily to incur the hazard of endless perdition is foolish beyond all calculation; that the creature venturing to do so, in contempt and defiance of the all-perfect God, is something worse than an imperfect creature, is impregnated with a madness, not more destructive than detestable, worthy to be loaded with ever-during chains, and covered with everlasting contempt.

To bring the matter into a short compass, let me reduce to a few distinct classes, the perversions of truth which seem to deceive your mind, though, I fear, you have rebelled against many stings and remonstrances of conscience, before such sophistry could settle in your thoughts.

You begin with pleading the cause of sinful man, in a plaintive tone, by alleging his profound ignorance, his proneness to imitation, his slow and partial improvement, his liableness to evil habits and opinions, which, easily acquired, can never be afterwards eradicated. What is the tendency of all this? To spread a veil over the undeniable evidences of the fallen state of man; to represent man as the most calamitous of all beings, yet not depraved or wicked—a glorious foundation for endless improvement and exaltation, if the natural condition of man as we now see it, were indeed his original state! It belongs to deists, not to Christians, to calumniate the infinitely perfect God, by imputing to Him such a mass of imperfection and misery as His original work. We deny that any intelligent creatures of God could be found in such a state of nakedness, filth, misery, and tendency to increasing depravity, but in consequence of a voluntary departure from a state of a very different nature. What you acknowledge, however, on this subject ought to produce a very different spirit from that of the haughty unbeliever—a disposition to suspect of error our own reasonings and those of others, and to seek the decision of moral truth from the testimony of God Himself, saying, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

But you reason to this effect: "Man is so imperfect, so ill-informed, so easily deceived, that he is not capable of acting at all in relation to eternity—he can make no choice that ought to affect his everlasting state; on the contrary, were he sufficiently enlightened he could not possibly do wrong." The consequence is, not only that there is no infinite evil, but no evil at all; that no moral evil, of the least importance, ever did exist or can exist; that murder, falsehood, sodomy, blasphemy, and all that ever were accounted the most horrid evils, are mere accidental appendages of the glorious foundation for man's improvement, aggrandisement, and felicity! Your argument is, at first view, sophistical and false, because it proves too much—it proves the contrary of plain matter of fact. For refuting it more fully, we might proceed in two ways: On the one hand, the present fallen state of man is the fruit of a

criminal choice made by the representative of human nature, in opposition to the dictates of a mind fully illuminated and informed. On the other hand, the true disposition of the wicked heart of man discloses itself, amidst imperfect knowledge, by a self-condemning abuse of the little knowledge he possesses, and by a criminal opposition to further attainable light. Therefore the doom of the heathen runs in these terms, "they hold the truth in unrighteousness," and, "because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind;" and the heavier sentence of the infidel, in the face of the glorious gospel, thus, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds (the systems of their moral disposition and conduct) were evil."

But who can sufficiently lament or abhor that impious forwardness, handed down from the days of Epicurus, whereby the sinner arms himself with the splendid perfection of Deity, that he may resist the claims of Divine authority, and defend his rebellion against the Most High? It is like the impious audacity of the giants, whom ancient poets call "heaven-fighters," and describe as tearing up great mountains, and hurling them upwards against the gods. Surely this must be the quintessence of delusion! Surely, in the spotless light of Divine perfection, "there is no darkness nor shadow of death where the wicked may hide themselves."

Must the immense perfection of Deity occasion a total and eternal separation between God and man? Because man cannot search out the Almighty to perfection, nor sound the bottomless depths of infinite Being, does it follow that man can have no such apprehension of God as founds an infinite obligation to obedience? Or is it likely that God, infinitely wise, would form a creature with some apprehension of himself, without acting as a Judge, in relation to the conduct of such a creature? But, you will say, "these things I do not entirely object to—my difficulties respect not the existence of a moral relation between God and man, but the absolute perfection of the law, the strict infinity of its obligation and the consequent vengeance of the punishment attending its violation." And you reason thus:—"A law proceeding from an infinitely perfect God may be a rule to Himself, but cannot be justly the rule of judgment in the case of a limited creature." Do you not see the fallacy of such an argument? You speak of God as infinitely perfect—but infinite perfection includes infinite wisdom; therefore the law, proceeding from God, is formed on the most perfect inspection of the nature and powers of man: it is adapted to his original circumstances; it demands not an impossible but a complete obedience; it requires not an exertion of infinite powers, but a complete consecration of his limited powers, such as they are.

But your principal objection is, "How can a finite creature be infinitely bound to obedience?" We answer, because God the object of obedience is infinite in majesty and all perfection. You

say "this cannot state the obligation, unless man had a full, that is an infinite knowledge of the perfection of Deity." Here the objection is plausible, and through the craft of Satan may strongly work on a deceived heart and a secure conscience. But the deception may be detected where there is any disposition to embrace truth impartially, by attending to such ideas as the following. You grant that, even in his present degraded condition, man has some ideas of the infinite perfection of his Creator: these immediately fix a claim of authority on the part of God, and render it impious and detestable in man to resist that authority. But you will admit further, that, while man already possesses some ideas of the infinite excellency of God, he must also in some measure apprehend this idea, that there is in God an immense fulness of majesty and perfection and goodness, beyond that which already he clearly perceives: and it will follow, that when he wilfully sinneth, he rebels not only against what he knows of God, but against all his unknown and unsearchable greatness and glory. It will be but fair and just to judge of man's disposition towards all the perfection of Deity, by observing his behaviour respecting what he does know of God. If he treads upon the majesty of God imperfectly revealed, obliged at the same time to suspect that there is an infinity of glory behind that which he does already know, he is to be accounted an enemy of all that belongs to God, known or unknown. The justice of such a decision will be the more manifest, if the transgressor wilfully and artfully shuns such further knowledge as he might acquire. Here the wicked disposition, wrapping up itself in the secret foldings of a kind of unlimited rebellion against all that is Divine, lifts up its accursed head. Your further difficulties about an infinite criminality and infinite evil excluding the existence of good, derive their force from a fallacious use of the term infinite. We pronounce the criminality of sin infinite, not because the sinner possesses infinity of being, but because he presumes to lift up his little partial and dependent being against the majesty of the infinite independent Jehovah: we bring this deep charge against the enemy of God, not because he can give infinite intenseness and energy to his wickedness, but because with all the strength he possesses, he hates and opposes Him who is infinitely worthy to be loved and honoured. And as to punishment, we denominate it infinite, as being the expression of God's infinite abhorrence of evil, the impression of His eternal power; as that which exhausts all the suffering powers of the sinner, and which, on account of the scantiness of these powers, the meanness of the sufferer compared with the majesty which he hath dishonoured, together with his continued inexhaustible rebellion, shall fill an infinity of duration.

With respect to the idea of the necessary extinction of evil by the full display of the excellency of God, many remarks are to be made. This idea must be false, for it would go to prove that no moral evil does exist, and that whatever has the appearance of evil

is merely want of information. Is there not such a thing as ingratitude between man and man, where no pretence of ignorance can take place, and which consequently no degree of information would remove, unless the evil principle itself of ingratitude were destroyed? Is there not ingratitude to God respecting inferior benefits, of which he is the acknowledged Author? The conduct of man under the gospel proves that human ingratitude is proof against the display of infinite blessings, flowing from divine goodness. It is the nature of moral evil to represent all divine excellencies in a light, or rather darkness, criminally perverse and distorted: and while the wicked principle remains, the clearest revelation of God only raises its latent energies and discloses its horrid unconquerable malignity. The most complete discovery of all that is glorious and excellent in the nature and government of the Most High, such as will be made at the day of judgment, where depravity remains, will not abridge that depravity, but expand it in all its hideous dimensions and awaken its utmost rage. As to what God can accomplish, by that power which changes the moral disposition of the heart and by the light connected with such a change, it is not for man boldly to speculate, but rather to mark with reverence and concern the evidence, from matter of fact and from divine testimony, of what God hath done and what he designs to do.

And now, dear sir, having presented a brief and imperfect specimen of such reasonings as may be advanced to oppose the wild ideas which perplex your mind, I must further say, that what I have written bears no greater proportion to the immensity of evidence to be produced, when God arises to plead His own cause fully, than a single shower does to all the vapours and clouds of the Atlantic ocean. At the same time I recur to that important declaration, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded to repent though one rise from the dead." The voice of God Himself, testifying of sin and of divine holiness and justice, is to be heard in the living oracles. And I would recommend it to you, above all reasonings, to make a regular leisurely progress through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, with an impartial, deliberate, and praying spirit. The possibility of being called forth by the Almighty to suffer—for rejecting His revelation of Himself, and that without a fair hearing—ages of misery more numerous than the sand of all the shores on the globe; the possibility of this requires a rational man not to decline such a labour. Indeed, till a man can say he has done this repeatedly, his affecting to decide on the Scriptures is no better, in the view of sober reason, if we may use such a mode of expression on so serious a subject, than Don Quixote's rioting among the wind-mills.

Concerning the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, your objections affect Tritheism, the ancient exploded heresy, not the true Scripture doctrine. You seem to be misled by tracing too strictly

the analogy between the distinct personality of the Three, who are the One God, and the distinction of created persons from one another. The personality in the Godhead is diverse from all that can exist in the creation, and implies no division, no numerical multiplication of the Divine Essence or Attributes. Nor doth this involve any real contradiction: otherwise to believe it would be in fact impossible.

But many men, possessing the best rational powers, giving the closest attention to the subject, and exhibiting the most incontestable proofs of integrity, in different ages and countries, have solemnly declared that they found the belief of this mystery not only practicable, but powerful, irresistible, and productive of the most substantial pleasure and improvement to their minds. This testimony, in which, with all humility according to my feeble measure, I wish to be included as one witness, after having once experienced the power of strong prejudices against this doctrine; this testimony ought to render your ideas on this subject suspected to yourself, and to abate something of the bold tone of decision on so sublime a mystery.

On this awful subject I will further make the following remarks of a general nature. The subsistence of three co-equal persons in the unity of the Eternal Godhead, is stated in Scripture as a fact to be believed, not curiously investigated. This reverential deference to the testimony of God and to the high secrets of His Being, He demands from the souls which He has made; under certification that the opposite haughtiness, which creates its own difficulties by indulging the temerity of presumptuous speculation, shall be punished with the loss of salvation and with the experience of a mystery of fiery vengeance, commensurate in duration with the very being of God. The doctrine we now advert to is held forth, not as a speculative opinion, but as the essential foundation of the divine method of redemption; and is so incorporated with the whole mass of divine revelation, that they must stand or fall together. Of that revelation the evidence takes so deep a hold of all the natural and moral attributes of Deity, that with its fall the very existence of God must sink into ruin. The unbeliever, therefore, of the doctrine of the Trinity must prepare himself for all the contemptible absurdities and tremendous horrors of the chaos of atheism. He will find no station long tenable between the one state of mind and the other. He must make a wide throat to swallow down such contradictory ideas, as—an infinite series of causes, every link of which is feeble, yet supported in a manner which requires infinite power, though such power does not exist; an infinite combination of wise contrivances, the antecedent wisdom of which exists no where; innumerable instances of benignity proceeding from no heart of kindness, but from the cold bosom of chance; a continual and universal panting of all human souls, in the way of dependent desire or fear, towards a nonentity: Having deluded himself for a season with such chimeras, he must in a

short time die in darkness, unable to guard himself from the terrors of the doctrines which he affects to discredit.

With respect to the glorious person of Jesus Christ, a little reflection must convince you how arrogant it must be to imagine yourself able to know the whole extent of possibility, as to the ways in which a created nature may be united with the divine. Alas! you are a stranger to the least and lowest of God's works of this kind. The union with the living God, which takes place respecting the meanest Christian, is above the range of the most acute speculations of them who believe not. What do you know of the union of holy angels with the High God whom they worship? But why speak of things above? Let your reason compare a naked human spirit and a heap of dust, and say is it probable these can become one person? Or how shall the knot be tied between them? You can reason so powerfully as to preclude the possibility of the existence of such a person of Jesus Christ? With what dignified disdain do his burning eyes behold such speculations! O that He whom you have attempted to reason out of existence may look on your situation with compassion, and touch you with that power which dissolves mountains and rocks, and which subdued the spirits of some of those who were chargeable with the murder of Him who is God!

You have felt that the regions of infidelity are black, gloomy, and bewildering. I deny that you have known by experience the a, b, c, of Christianity: all that remains quite new unproved ground. You cannot avoid perceiving that, in the face of strong temptation, of sharp affliction, of the continued threatenings of death, a strong decisive religion is necessary. Therefore linger not on the territories of the murderer of souls: make not a dangerous case altogether desperate: return to the important experiment which you once seemed attempting to make, even to try whether there be a reality in the power of the everlasting gospel. A whole century of years would not be too much to be bestowed on a possibility, the fatal alternative whereof presents an aspect so hideous. Once more, but with more decided earnestness, "strive to enter in at the strait gate," "if peradventure God may give you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," and you may become one of those who love much, "because much is forgiven them." To promote this, not to create or occasion unnecessary distress, is the object of all that I have here written. And I am truly your wellwisher and friend for eternity.—J. L.

You will be no losers by giving to Christ's cause; the Lord will not allow Himself to be in your debt. You, people of the world, that give, He will pay you back in your own coin; and you, child of God, although He may not do so to you, yet you and He will agree about it through eternity.—*David Steven, "Ministers and Men."*

Letters of the late Donald Duff, Stratherrick.

(XV.)

STRATHERRICK, 30th December, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I hope this will find you in health, and as you will receive it on the first day of the incoming year, perhaps I should add that I sincerely wish you and yours a happy New Year. There was, in my native place, a simple-minded woman, and her first salutation always when entering a house was, "Good day to the righteous," and she repeated the same words also when leaving; and was never known to change that practice all her days till she died. Whether I adopt her words or not, this assuredly I can say—it shall be well with the righteous and with none else.

You mentioned that the Communion was observed with you the Sabbath before you wrote, and I hope there were some tokens among you that the Lord has not forsaken the earth; although I find all that are faithful everywhere complaining that there is a great decrease in the waters of the sanctuary; and indeed it is vain to deny it. Oh, for some measure of the spirit that the prophet had when he said, "I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him." Indeed, I am sometimes thinking that although we are too easy under the want of the Lord's presence in these means in which He has promised to be with His people till the end of time, yet if there was on our part a sincere longing for His return, and a holy resolution that if He did not return in our day in the measure we might expect we would die a widow—(a widow, I mean, as mourning our not enjoying His comforting presence)—that such would be a more honest way of doing, and a way more pleasing to the Lord than to be going on as the bulk of professing people are doing; making themselves and others believe that things are prospering spiritually, however unlike the prosperity of our day is to that recorded of the Church in the Word of God, when "great grace was upon them all, when they continued stedfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship," &c. Also, how far behind is the Church in our day from the attainments of former days in this land, as may be seen not only by comparing the recorded spiritual experience of the saints of former times with what is to-day to be met with, but also viewing the manifest outward decline—such as want of love and reverence for the Word of God, want of love and reverence for the Sabbath and the ordinances of religion. No doubt the want of the Lord's presence in these ordinances will make them barren and unfruitful; but on the other hand, it is not at all right to be careless about them, for it is death altogether to be without coming in contact with them, and the command is—

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." And indeed Zion's children, when they assemble together, even though dressed in their sackcloth, are more to be desired than any other company on the earth. That I can say from felt experience. Oh, may the Lord's dear people ever have a place in our hearts; may His blessed Word have a place there also; may His cause have its place there too; and may He Himself occupy the throne.—
Yours, &c., D. DUFF.

(XVI.)

STRATHERRICK, *May*, 1875.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your welcome letter expressing the hope that I would visit you this summer. I had a letter also the same week from Mrs. Macleod, late of Rogart, who now lives in Dornoch, expressing the same wish. I have known Mrs. M. for long, and always enjoyed her fellowship, as I did that of her late worthy husband; and although she is now almost eighty years of age, she is quite smart and lively, and her faculties as fresh as ever. It is wonderful the difference that grace makes; it keeps the mind lively and active at a time of life when the mental powers of the people of the world are in decay. The Communion takes place in Dornoch the third Sabbath of next month, and I may go to visit Mrs. Macleod then, and perhaps may afterwards go on to your part of the country.

In view of the Communions which are now approaching, I am sometimes asking myself—What is the reason of my desire to attend them, seeing there is so little fruit from those that are past? The Lord knows that it is my chief happiness on earth to be at the means of grace, and in the company of his dear people; but is this in order to bring on conformity to Himself, which is the chief end of the appointed means? Is it in order to strengthen the life of faith and to weaken the life of the "old man"? Search me, O Lord, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me in my motive in these things.

Did I tell you that I had an opportunity lately of meeting Dr. Begg, Edinburgh, and had some private conversation with him on the state of the Church? He laments the compromising spirit of our leaders, who seem to be sitting loose more and more to our Free Church principles. He himself has a clear and firm hold of the doctrine of the all-embracing nature of the Headship of Christ, to whom all authority and rule have been given by the Father in reward of His work as the Redeemer of His Church.

Dear friend, I am ashamed of the emptiness of this letter, and alas! the writer is emptier still, for you may be sure if I had any good things to say of myself, it is likely I would say them; but I think I can say this,—“With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption,” and that I have found it to be so.

Best wishes to you all. If you do not hear again by the beginning of next month, you may understand that I hope we may yet meet in this world.—Yours, &c., D. DUFF.

(XVII.)

STRATHERICK, 5th July, 1875.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sit down to write these few lines with as much pleasure as ever on any former occasion, having to thank you for your kindness during my recent visit, and also having to acknowledge the goodness of the Lord to me, one of the most unworthy of His creatures.

On coming off the coach after leaving your house, your friend, Mr. Donald Swanson, met me and accompanied me up to the station, where I had to bid farewell once more to your county, although I never did so with a greater desire to return, if that be the Lord's will. The first part of the journey I had the carriage to myself, and although I could not but feel sad after parting with friends, yet I was not altogether comfortless. That verse in the 51st Psalm, "A broken spirit is to God a pleasing sacrifice," came to my mind with some life and power, and was opened up to me in a way that made it very precious at the time. Then I began to meditate upon it, and to consider what was meant by a "broken spirit." I thought it meant the humbled and self-emptying state of mind into which one is brought by the effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit. Then I considered—what were the means that the Spirit made use of to bring about this brokenness of spirit? And I thought they were, first, a belief let in on the mind of the creature, from the Word of God, that He is a holy and sin hating God, and that the continual transgression of the creature is *sin against God*, in that it defies His righteous authority, and has incurred His just displeasure. And second, a belief, from the Word of God, that He is a God of mercy, in that He delivered up His Son, Jesus Christ, to render in human nature that obedience in which the sinner had failed, and to endure that punishment which was due to him on account of his transgressions. Next I thought, how was it that this state of mind was said to be "pleasing to God"? Because it brought the creature to take his right place before God as a sinner, and brought him to confess that God was just in condemning him, and oh! wonder of wonders, that He would be just also in justifying him for the sake of the merit of the obedience and suffering of His dear Son. And reconciliation on that ground being now established between God and the creature, his contrition because of sin, and his brokenness of spirit because of its workings, are pleasing to the Lord; sin being the only thing in the universe that casts contempt and dishonour on the glory of God. Oh, dear friend, if the Holy Spirit would put within us what would truly hate sin as displeasing and dishonouring to God, it would be the beginning in us of that which a blessed eternity would not see the end of.

On reaching Inverness a person from our place, who was in town with his conveyance, happened to meet me as I was coming from the station, and brought me home that same evening, where

I found all well. Yesterday our small congregation, having heard that I had returned, gathered, almost every one of them, so that the meeting-house was quite full, and I hope there was some spiritual warmth among us also. And now, after all the Lord's goodness to me in providence, if He would favour my soul with a glimpse of His gracious presence, *that* would sweeten all. And on the other hand, if He deny me that, empty would I feel all outward kindnesses if I have no experience of His smile on my soul. For I protest before Him, as the Searcher of hearts, that except His blessed Bible, and His appointed means of grace, and His dear people, my delight is in nothing in this world but in Himself. And although I know that the place of woe is my desert as the chief of sinners, yet should He send me there, He knows that to be separated from Himself, and from what belongs to Him, would be the greatest part of my hell.

Remember me to all the friends and to all in the house,
 especially F. . . . Yours, &c., D. DUFF.

The late Rev. John Willison on the Sanctification of the Lord's Day.

THE PREFACE.

THAT wise king Solomon observes, Eccles. iii. 1.—“To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.” And if there be a time and season allowed for every thing and purpose, even the meanest things and purposes in the world; surely an infinitely wise God will allow a proper time and season for the best things and purposes, and particularly for his solemn worship and service, which is the most necessary and excellent purpose in the world. It is not enough, that we give God, from whom we have all our time, a share of every day for His service; no, we owe Him also some whole days for His solemn and public worship. Yea, it is agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature and of sound reason, that one whole day of every week should be dedicated to Him for that end.

All nations through the world have had their seasons and set times for devotion and sacrifices. The heathens, who worshipped dumb idols, had their festivals and holy days, and particularly one day of the week, which they esteemed more sacred than the rest. The Turks, who have taken up with the most unreasonable delusions and impostures, do still retain the impressions of the rationality and equity of this thing, that there should be a certain day of the week set apart for the solemn worship of God. Indeed, the light of nature, without some other help, could not have determined men universally to dedicate the seventh day of their time to God more than the sixth or eighth. But seeing the wise

Creator of the world, and author of time, thought fit from the beginning, to measure time by days, and parcel out these days into such remarkable periods as weeks, or the revolution of seven days, to be constantly observed all the world over; it is most consonant to reason and equity, that one day of each week should be holy to the Lord.

But, besides the light of nature, we have the light of revelation for this point. God hath expressly appointed in His Word, one day in seven, to be kept holy for His solemn worship; neither hath He left the particular day to men's own choice but hath chosen it for them. And now, in the New Testament He points out the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath to the end of the world, as is made evident in the following treatise.

The Jews have their Saturday Sabbath, which they glory in, and call the Queen of the week; the Mahometans keep the Friday as being Mahomet's birthday; the Parthians and some other Pagan nations observe Tuesday, and esteem it above all other days of the week. But it is the discriminating badge of the professors of Christianity through all the world, to celebrate the first day of the week, being Christ's resurrection day, and hence called the Lord's day. Now, though the Jews and some few others plead that the seventh day from the creation is unalterable by virtue of the fourth command, it is shewed in this treatise, that the words of the fourth command are so framed, that they may be applied to any day of the week that God doth please to pitch upon for the Sabbath, whether it be the first or last of the seven days. For when it is said, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," it doth not mean the seventh day from the Creation, but any seventh day after six days labour which God pitches on; upon which account it is not called that seventh day, but the seventh day. Neither is the seventh day mentioned in the first words of the command, which contain the substance of it; for it is said only, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," not the seventh day. Nor is the seventh day mentioned in the last words of the command, which contain the formal reason of it; for it is said only, "The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it," not the seventh day.

As to the first day of the week, our Christian Sabbath, the great Lord of our time hath appropriated this day to Himself, marked it with His seal, and hath put His name upon it, calling it, Rev. i. 10, *Hemera Kuriake*, the Lord's day; even as He calls the holy supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20, *Diapnon Kuriakon*, the Lord's supper; because the one was His institution as well as the other, and set apart for keeping up His memory, and shewing forth His glory. Wherefore no true Christian, or lover of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be indifferent about the keeping of this holy day. For as the holy observing of this day is an open and visible owning of the Lord Jesus (whose name it bears) for our Lord and Master; so the neglect of this day is a plain disowning of Him, and an open slighting of the benefits of His resurrection. O that men would

think on this, and consider what they do, when they neglect or **contemn** the Lord's day!

Though the way of Sabbath sanctification be the good old way, appointed by God ever since He created man upon the earth; yet **there** is no way more hated, no duty more opposed by Satan and **wicked** men; which we need not be surprised at, seeing it is a special **fence** to all religion, and a great bulwark against the torrent of **impiety** that runs in the world. And that true piety is so low in **most** places, and vice and immorality so generally prevail, is mainly **to** be imputed to the abounding neglect and contempt of the holy Sabbath. For common experience doth testify, that where the **Lord's** day is more strictly observed, there Christian knowledge, **piety** and morality, do prosper most; and where the Sabbath is **disregarded**, there all these do decay. The consideration whereof **should** excite all the lovers of God and holiness, to use their **utmost** endeavours to support the credit and maintain the dignity **of** the Sabbath against all its enemies.

This consideration hath moved me to contribute my mite upon **this** excellent subject in the following treatise, which is partly **controversial** and partly practical; for confuting the enemies of the Sabbath, and for instructing all in the divine warrant for sanctifying **this** holy day, and in the right manner of doing it. There are two **essential** things in the Christian religion, which all should make conscience of; sincerely to believe its truths, and faithfully to practice its duties. The first of these hath great influence upon the second; for, if the Christian truths be not firmly believed, the Christian duties will be ill performed. Now, the best means for promoting both the Christian faith and Christian practice, is the sanctification of the Lord's day.

Had it not been for the observation of the Sabbath, the truths of Christianity had been quite razed out of the minds of the most part; for as the Lord's day, of itself, is a bright and lively memorial of our redemption by Jesus Christ; so upon this day we constantly have sounded in our ears the truths of that religion which Christ and His apostles delivered unto the world, and the excellency of them inculcate upon us. And as the observation of the Sabbath is a great preservative to the truths of Christianity, so is it also to the duties thereof. God hath set this one duty as a hedge or fence for keeping all the rest; for, by keeping the Sabbath conscientiously, the soul is notably disposed and put in frame for serving God in every religious duty. The frequent recurring of this day, and the gospel-ordinances therein dispensed, serve to continue the remembrance of Christ and heaven among men, keep sin and vice under constant rebukes, and put atheism and infidelity to the blush. Take away the observation of the Lord's day, then the worship of God would be cast off, and atheism, profaneness, and all disorders, like a flood, would break in upon us.

We may look upon the duty of Sabbath sanctification to be of no less consequence to the practice of Christianity, than Luther

reckoned the article of justification to be to the doctrine of it, when he called it *articulus stantis seu cadentis ecclesiæ* (the article of a standing or a falling church.) For, if once we make a gape in this hedge of piety, serious godliness will run out at it, and a flood of impiety and looseness rush in upon us. It was surely the sense of this that determined the wisest of emperors, kings, parliaments, and church councils and synods, to frame and publish so many excellent laws and acts for the strict observation of the Lord's day, agreeable to the divine laws thereanent. It would be happy for churches and nations, if these were put in execution, and all sorts of men brought to have a due regard to them.

But, notwithstanding of all the laws, divine and human, for the holy observation of the Lord's day, there are many in the age wherein we live, who adventure to pour contempt upon this holy day. Some there are who dispute against the morality of the Sabbath, and disown the standing and perpetual obligation of the fourth command. Others, though they own the obligation of the command so far as to forbear servile work, and attend public worship on the Sabbath, yet plead for carnal diversions and recreations after public worship is over. Many would incline to the Papists' way of celebrating the Sabbath, who after mass and even-song (as they call it) go presently to piping and dancing, and then to the ale-house; the same way that the Israelites celebrated the feast of the golden calf, Exodus xxxii. 6, "The people ate and drank, and rose up to play." If this profane course were allowed, as of old, in times of antichristian darkness, many would then call the Sabbath a delight, and be, in some measure, reconciled to it; but when they hear that the whole Sabbath is to be spent in religious duties and exercises, they murmur, and say, as those in Mal. i. 13, "What a weariness is it?"

It would be no grievance to many to see that old abomination of the *Book of Sports* revived and authorised among us; I mean, that infamous declaration for liberty of sports and recreation on the Lord's day, published by authority in the year 1633, and appointed to be read from the pulpits; the prelates consenting to it, and persecuting those ministers who refused to read it. O what heinous God-provoking wickedness was it for civil and ecclesiastic rulers, to unite in promoting the profanation of the Sabbath by such methods! As the heavy judgment of God followed them for such avowed profanation, so those in our age have reason to fear His judgments, who continue to be of the same profane disposition. Oh, is it not evident that sports and pastimes do unfit the mind for spiritual service, and take off men's thoughts from what is serious and solemn? Do they not put the heart out of frame for attending on God, and for holding communion with Him in holy duties and ordinances? This is shewed more fully in the following treatise.

Again, there are others who observe this day no better than the beasts do. They only rest from their ordinary labour, and spend

the day in idleness and sloth ; which is to keep the Sabbath of an ox or ass, not of a reasonable creature. To sanctify the Sabbath, it is not to keep it merely as a rest from our common employments, or keep it as an idle day ; but to keep it as a holy day, a day set apart for God's glory, and for promoting our salvation. But, alas ! such is the spiritual sloth and idleness of many poor careless souls on this day, they labour as little for their souls on it, as they do for their bodies ; they sleep, loiter, lie at home, and seldom go to any worship at all ; if they go out of doors, it is for their diversion, to take a walk, to pay a visit, or the like, but not to attend God's worship. Many, alas ! will go a dozen miles to a market for a little gain, that will not go one mile, nor a few steps to the church, to attend the gospel-market for enriching their souls. If the bell that calls them to the worship of God, did advertise them of a stage-play, or some idle pastime, perhaps they would be found there among the first ; but for spiritual work, they have an aversion to it.

Moreover, there are many who go to church and attend ordinances this day, rather to please a natural conscience, or support their reputation in the world, than to serve God or save their souls. Or perhaps they go because it is the fashion, or the way in which they have been brought up ; but alas ! leaving their hearts behind them, they present their bodies to God, and no more. And hence it is, that in the time of the most solemn worship, they have their eyes either wandering after vanity, or else shut with drowsiness and sleep ; they find no delight in the Sabbath, take no sweetness in ordinances, know nothing of communion with God in them. They understand not the psalmist's language, "A day in God's courts is better than a thousand anywhere else." No, this day is to them the longest and most wearisome day of all the week ; the religious exercises of it are irksome and burdensome to them. It may be said of them, as of Doeg the Edomite, 1 Sam. xxi. 7, "He was that day detained before the Lord." They long to be released from the service of that day, and glad when it is over. Alas ! the minds of many are so set upon the world, that they complain in their hearts of the length of this day, as the Israelites of old, Amos viii. 5, "When will the new moon be gone, that they may sell corn ; and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat ?" They count all these days lost days that bring them in no worldly gain. Hence it was, that the heathens (as Seneca tells us) counted the Jews a foolish people, because they lost a full seventh part of their lives, to wit, by observing the Sabbath. But, ah ! it is to be lamented, that not heathens only, but also many professed Christians count the Sabbath a lost day. O what base ingratitude is this to God, for the invaluable privilege and blessing of the Sabbath to the souls of men !

Lastly, there are, besides these mentioned, some prodigies of wickedness in the world, persons who prosecute their lewd and profane courses with more vigour on this holy day than upon any

other ; and so make this day of holy rest the devil's working day, and consume it wholly upon their lusts ! O how daring an affront must this be to a great, a holy God, to make that a day to serve the devil, a day to improve in vice and debauchery, which the Lord hath instituted to be a day for His own worship, and for our improvement in piety and devotion !

It is for remedying these woeful abuses of the Sabbath that I have written the ensuing treatise ; and, to make it more generally useful to the poor, I have shortened this fourth edition of it, by leaving out the *Help of Prayer* which was subjoined to the former and possibly may be afterwards published by itself. I have heard of the usefulness of this treatise to some who have read it. O that God would bless it to many more, and make it the means to preserve and promote the love and esteem of the Lord's day in the hearts of many ! As serious godliness never did, so it never will thrive nor flourish in the world, when or where the Lord's day is disregarded. Long experience confirms it, that the sin of Sabbath-breaking is a woeful inlet to impiety and profaneness. They who once begin to make little difference betwixt the Lord's day and other days, will easily be brought to make little difference betwixt the Lord's name and other names, the Lord's table and other tables, the Lord's book and other books. Whereas a conscientious regard to His holy day is a strong fence to religion, being a mighty awe-band upon the soul against the commission of sin, and the neglect of duty. The Lord's day is an unspeakable blessing to a lost world, and the sweetest day that ever dawned upon it ; it ought to be the delight of our souls, and rejoicing of our hearts. Every wise man that knows the value of this day, will have a peculiar esteem for it above all the days of the week, and will reckon every minute of it precious, and desire that none of it be mispent. What Christ said to His disciples concerning the loaves and fishes, He says to us concerning His holy day, "Gather up the fragments." Gather up the spare hours and minutes of it, count them as precious as the goldsmith doth the small filings of his gold, let nothing of Sabbath time be lost, improve it wholly for God and your souls.

This treatise I recommend chiefly to families, because the duty of sanctifying the Sabbath doth nearly concern all families as such. For all governors of families are charged by the fourth command, to see that it be done in all their dwellings ; and by the command, they are made responsible for their children, servants, and for all that lodge within their gates, that none of them be allowed to break the Sabbath. If any masters of families be excited by this treatise to mind their proper duty, I have my reward ; but let the glorious author of the Sabbath alone have the praise.

May all of us get grace to keep the Sabbath of our God, and choose the things that please Him, and take hold of His covenant, that so we may be numbered among those whom He will bring to His holy mountain, and make joyful in His house of prayer !—Amen.

The late Rev. A. M. Bannatyne on "Church and State."

REV. Mr. Bannatyne, Aberdeen, moved the following motion on one occasion in the Free Assembly:—"The General Assembly disapprove of the report of the Committee on Church and State, in so far as it (1) advocates Disestablishment and Disendowment as the only solution of the Church question in Scotland, in opposition to this Church's principles and historical antecedents, and (2) discourages legislation with a view to reunion on the basis of Establishment, such as would thoroughly vindicate the position and principles of the Free Church."

He said—I might content myself with simply making this motion, for much that is new is not likely to be elicited in this discussion, judging from what has already been said to-day. We had a cognate subject before us on Monday under the question of the proposal made by the Established Church to confer with the Free Church; and the speech of Sheriff Jameson on that occasion, in the lines of anything that might now be said, remains unanswered. Besides, the longer I live, I am becoming more and more averse to long speeches. But some things have already been uttered which one would like to take notice of for a moment, and I am anxious to say a word however feebly, in vindication of the position occupied by those with whom I have sympathy on such questions as the present.

The first of the things brought against us, which I care to notice, is that of anxiety to get back to a corrupt Established Church. This charge we repudiate, emphatically repudiate. We who occupy the left side of the Moderator's chair, on the evangelical side, are, in this charge, represented as blind to the corruptions of the Established Church, in our anxiety to get back to it. Moderator, I have no hesitation in repelling this charge as an altogether unfounded aspersion. We are blind to none of the evils existing either in the Established Church or in the Free Church. Against all these evils we have been foremost in testifying. We are anxious to have the Established Church both in its relation to the State and internally in its worship and other things, made as pure as possible. And, with the Bible in our hands, we strive to bring about the same result in the Free Church. Among other things, we are trying to help to free the Established Church from the remains of Erastianism, and the Free Church from the evil that constitutes the opposite extreme. It is in our attempting this, and because of our attempting this, that we are charged with anxiety to get back to a corrupt Established Church. Not only that, but in pretty plain terms, to-day, we are charged by Dr. Adam with "hanging on the skirts of the Established Church." This charge I for one repudiate entirely. I disdain to hang on the skirts of the Established Church, or any other Church on the face of the earth. I am not even hanging on the skirts of the

Free Church. I am in the very midst of the true Church of Scotland, if this Church had got, or were to get, its rights; and I am sorry to say I am in the midst of those who have to a very great extent—some of them had—departed from the original principles of the Established Church of Scotland. (Hear, hear, and No.) No? Some of those to whom I am referring—I mention Dr. Adam in his speech of to-day in that connection—had in their speeches brought forward formal apologies for that departure.

Dr. Adam said he must not have conveyed the impression he intended if he said their friends were now hanging on to the skirts of the Established Church; he meant that they were pursuing a course which might lead them to that position.

Mr. Bannatyne—Which was simply a mistake. I shall never hang on to the skirts of any Church. In what Dr. Adam has now interposed, he has not denied that, in his speech a little ago, he defended and made an apology for those of the Free Church who, I am sorry to say, in opposing Church Establishment, go upon what they call justice and upon the principles of religious equality. That principle was never a principle of the Church of Scotland at the time of the Reformation, at the time of its recognition by the State, or at any period of its history till the present day. It was not a principle of the Free Church of Scotland at the time of the Disruption. It is not a principle of the Free Church now. (Hear, hear, laughter and applause.) Yet, I have heard that principle advocated on the floor of this Assembly formerly, as well as apologised for to-day, and it has been, with equal inconsistency, advocated, beyond the region of the General Assembly, by some ministers, other office-bearers, and members of this Church. That so designated element of justice, disregarding the paramount claims of Christ and justice to Him, and that principle of religious equality, disregarding also their claims, whether adduced for Disestablishment or for other purposes, constitute an out and out departure from the sound original principles of the Church of Scotland. (Applause.) As to the corruptions in another Church, see to it that you rid your own of them. In the work of purification, I for one am ready, however feebly, to lend a helping hand. So much in reference to the first aspersion cast upon those who usually support such motions as the one I now propose.

There is another aspersion cast upon us. We are charged with putting our trust in the State and not in the Most High. That charge was virtually brought against us to-day by Mr. Watson, in the concluding quotation in his report on Church and State:—"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will depend upon the name of the Lord our God alone." It was brought forward against us, a year or two ago, in a speech here, advocating Voluntaryism, and that on the ground of politico-religious equality and of justice so-called, when the speaker ended with the words:—"Trust God, not the State." It was adduced indirectly by Mr. Murray Garden, on Monday last, when, for our special benefit, he quoted the psalm:—

"Trust not in princes nor man's son,
In whom there is no stay ;
His breath departs, to's earth he turns ;
That day his thoughts decay.
O happy is that man and blest,
When Jacob's God doth aid," &c., &c.

Moderator, the charge and aspersion implied in these words, as used and quoted, I distinctly deny and repel. (Hear, hear.) Who is trusting the State, rather than God? Who is depending on chariots and horses, and not Jehovah? Who is substituting reliance on princes or man's son for reliance on Jacob's God? It certainly is not we. I subject myself to none of these in preference to God in Christ. The family, the community, the Church, ay, and the State too, we aim at willingly subjecting themselves to Christ and owning His authority in every practical way. Christ, as Head over all, we hail. And I sternly repudiate every insinuation to the contrary. (Hear, hear.) I am old enough to have observed, when a lad, all the stages of the notable Voluntary controversy, in which the great men of the subsequent Non-intrusion and Disruption periods did yeoman service. Since those days I have oftener than once gone carefully through my Bible, from beginning to end, observing what in the Old Testament and in the New bears upon the subject of Christ's supremacy over nations and kings as such ; and I have found everywhere the duty of nations and their rulers, as such, to hail and to honour and to submit to Christ, and to promote the interests of His Church by their influence and resources, pointed out. You find it in the Old Testament institutions ; predictions of it for New Testament days in the Psalms and Books of the Prophets, because, in token of the subjection of themselves, not as individuals merely, but officially and as representing their kingdoms, kings are to bring, I see, by way of subjection to Christ, "gifts and presents unto Him ;" you find it in the New Testament, for among other things of like import Christ is described as having on His vesture and on His thigh "King of kings, and Lord of lords" written ; the kingdoms of this world are described as destined to become "the Kingdoms of our God and of His Christ," and in the very last portion of New Testament prophecy, the kings and nations of the earth are described as bringing into the Church "their glory and their honour." Now, Moderator, it is in the line of the consummation of these predictions we are acting, when, aspersed as I have indicated, we try to influence the Established Church and our country. The aspersions are misdirected and unfounded. And it is a remarkable fact that in the speeches in favour of the motion which mine is opposing, to which we have just listened, there was not from beginning to end the very slightest recognition of Christ as King of kings, nor of national subjection to Him. To say that we are trusting to princes and not to Christ, when we are trying to get princes and all our rulers and other sons of men to submit to Him, and practically to own their admission, is very like an absurdity.

We are charged, virtually and formally and in express terms, with denying or overlooking Christ's scripturally appointed arrangement as to the way in which, and the sources from which, the ministry of the Church is to be supported. This charge is simply a repetition of what we were very familiar with during the Voluntary controversy to which I have referred. It has not yet ceased to be made elsewhere. But one is surprised to hear it made on the floor of this General Assembly, as it was made here on Monday by Bailie Dickson in the cognate discussion in his speech against Sheriff Jameson's motion. The allegation made then and at other times is to the effect that, in the New Testament, it is the voluntary liberality of the people of Christian congregations to whom ministers of Christ minister, that is to afford these ministers support in temporal things. In making that allegation, a great deal is attempted to be made of the portions of the New Testament in which by inspiration voluntary liberality is enjoined. There are such portions of the New Testament to which of course we all yield submission. But let us not apply them to the exclusion of what is divinely required as well as such liberality. Moderator, our opponents overlook the fact that the number of New Testament passages in which liberality to ministers by their people is enjoined, are only a fractional part of those passages in which Christian liberality is inculcated and exemplified. The great mass of such passages, as every careful reader of the New Testament knows, refer not to the temporal support of the ministry at all, but to the temporal support of the poor. And to apply to ministers what is intended for the poor is to misapply it. Besides, and apart from the non-exclusion of State provision for the poor by such passages, there are intimations in the Bible, very express and numerous, applicable and applied to New Testament times (the principle involved in which pervades the New Testament writings) to the effect that the thrones and governments of the nations of the world, who are all bound to bow the knee to Christ and to own Him with their tongue, are to use their own resources of all kinds in support of Christ's Church. And it is with something akin to indignation one hears it said that, in insisting upon divinely required State support of a well-constituted Established Church, we are opposing or ignoring the New Testament arrangement for the support of the ministry.

The last aspersion cast upon us, which I venture to mention and repudiate, is that, in the position we on this side of the House occupy, we are refusing to help on the legitimate issue of the Disruption. I abstain from entering upon this point. I could not do it without occupying too much time. We deny the truth of the allegation. We deny the logical sequence averred. We maintain and can defend the contrary. We let the Disruption documents speak for themselves. We abide by them. We utterly deny the propriety of departure from them. And we declare that the Free Church, in so far as it moves towards Disestablishment,

is departing from its own fundamental and Scriptural principles, instead of logically carrying them out.

Several things already said to-day I refrain from noticing. I cannot refrain from noticing the way in which what are called the endowments of the State have been held forth as deserving of contempt. Of the important Scriptural principle involved in them I have spoken already. Apart from that you have, Moderator, in your Sustentation Fund, what was designed by Dr. Chalmers, the distinguished founder of that fund, to be as near an approach as could be made to the endowments of the Established Church, that were given up at the Disruption. (No.) Without the least fear of contradiction I repeat that that was the idea and design of Dr. Chalmers. So that you have in the original idea, and in the existence of your own Sustentation Fund, a very explicit answer to the derisive words spoken to-day about the endowments accruing from State provision.

Something designed to stigmatise the action of the State towards the Established Church, and to cast a stigma upon that Church in its relation, as established, to the State, and to convey the impression of unfairness towards other denominations, was said by Dr. Adam when he spoke as if the State had been pleased to "select" the present Established Church and to disparage all the rest of the Churches. Now, Moderator, the State did nothing of the sort. At the time of the Reformation, it was an undivided and unanimous presbyterianism that was acknowledged by the State. At the Revolution it was an almost undivided presbyterianism that the State acknowledged. Thereafter, for reasons that were deemed by each of them good and sufficient, the Secession, and the Relief, and the Free Church, none of them disowning Establishment, dropped off time after time, and left the present Established Church, as established, in the original position of all. So that no *selection* whatever by the State of the present Church of Scotland from the sides of the Free and Secession and United Presbyterian has taken place. These Churches of their own accord placed themselves and keep themselves outside of Establishment. And the State certainly is not now pushing them away.

I sit down by noticing a comment upon Mr. Finlay's bill, several times referred to, made by Mr. Binnie in seconding Dr. Adam's motion. Mr. Binnie represented that bill as declaring that at present the Established Church of Scotland has perfect spiritual independence. Moderator, that is a misrepresentation of Mr. Finlay's bill. What that bill declares is that, by the constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, spiritual independence belongs to it. That declaration is perfectly true. Therein Mr. Finlay's bill is sound and Free Church; because that declaration was made and contended for by the fathers of the Free Church, the heroes of the 'Ten Years' Conflict, during the whole of it, and it is yet a principle of the Free Church itself.

The Duty and Privilege of Christian Liberality.

IT is written of the Messiah in the psalm that celebrates the final triumph of His cause on the earth, that "He shall live, and given unto him shall be of the gold of Sheba." Two things we find notable in this prophecy, viz., the condescension of this blessed and only Potentate who, though He is now rich, yet deigns to be beholden to the offerings of His people for the advancement of His public cause; and secondly, the wealth and willingness of the people that shall then be His. His people, in that day of his power, will be a rich and generous people. They shall be willing and able to give ample effect to the words which the angelic and redeemed company are singing in heavenly places, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches." Hitherto Christ, as it were, has only received pence, but then He shall receive gold, and that abundantly.

But the liberality towards Christ which the Church of the latter day shall have such power and willingness to show, is no less the duty and privilege of His people now. It is their duty, for it is commanded in many places of the Scripture, and it is their privilege, for neither now nor at any other time shall deeds of self-sacrifice and willing heartedness towards the cause of Christ be unnoticed by Him. He that sat of old opposite the treasury the while the thronging worshippers cast in their varied offerings, still sits there to distinguish the poor man's copper, the widow's mite; and to assign strange value to these apparently base offerings because of the zeal and sincerity which He finds underlying them.

But though the widow's mite be a comfortable and significant incident for the poor of the flock to think of, we would not adduce it as a precedent or apology for the many copper coins which pile themselves up in the Church plate, or the many humble sixpences which besprinkle the monthly or even the quarterly column of the Sustentation Fund book.

Paul, in his second epistle, takes occasion to acknowledge the many graces of the Christian character which were cultivated by the Corinthian believers. At the same time, in order that the circle of their graces might be complete, he sent Titus to them that he might finish in them this grace of liberality also. The present writer thinks that there are not a few persons in the Free Presbyterian Church and perhaps some provinces of the same, that are much in need of a visit from Titus, in order to bringing out to more perfection this grace of Christian giving. Very notable are the words of the Apostle "This I say, that he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly." Men are able to understand that a parsimony of seed corn will result in a poor harvest, and that to invest money sparingly is sometimes to invite the loss

both of principal and interest, but it has not dawned on many that the same law holds good in the spiritual sphere, and that, according to the Apostle, if men are to get good of the gospel their alms and offerings must be on a heroic, self sacrificing scale.

It is far from our intention to imply that the grace of God can be purchased by money. No; but there is a law of the fitness of things at work here, and a man's conscience will tell him, and tell him truly, that if he spends less on his religion than he does on his tobacco, his soul deserves to starve, and he has no right to expect that the minister will give him a good sermon.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Bring ye all the tithes into the store house that there may be meat in My house, and prove Me now herewith saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not pour you out a blessing, such as there shall not be room enough to receive it."

It is an evil incident to the scant giving on the part of many members of the brotherhood, that an extra burden is thereby cast upon those who are willing. We will speak it to the honour of this Free Presbyterian Church that she has not a few members who are willing to give up to, yea and beyond their ability, for needful causes. The Apostle does not approve of an arrangement whereby one set of men are eased and another burdened. But he calls for an equality in this matter; and we wish, therefore, to suggest that those whose consciences have, or ought to have, a quarrel with them in regard to this point, should reconsider their ways and see if the building again of the Lord's house in Scotland be a cause which it is safe for them to neglect. Is it not rather a cause which redounds to the spiritual and temporal good of those whose hearts and purses are in a due manner open towards it?

Cardinal Newman and the Bible.

THE case of John Henry Newman who, in 1845 joined the Church of Rome, and from being a minister of the English Church became a Cardinal of the Romish Communion, is a case that has supplied matter of reflection to thinking men ever since. Newman arrived at the goal of an infallible church by a gradual process of conviction, and though there are depths of Satan in this process unsuspected by himself, still in some of his writings he frankly states things which mark the issue between him and Protestantism clearly enough. The following is a significant extract from his book "*The Development of Christian Doctrine.*" Italics are ours.

"The common sense of mankind does but support a conclusion thus forced upon us by analogical considerations. It feels that the very idea of revelation implies a present informant and guide, and that an infallible one; not a mere abstract declaration of

Truths unknown before to man, or a record of history, or the result of an antiquarian research, but a message and a lesson speaking to this man and that. This is shown by the popular notion which has prevailed among us since the Reformation, that the Bible itself is such a guide; and which succeeded in overthrowing the supremacy of Church and Pope, for the very reason that it was a rival authority, not resisting merely, but supplanting it. In proportion, then, as we find, in matter of fact, that the inspired Volume is not adapted or intended to subserve that purpose, are we forced to revert to that living and present Guide, who, at the era of our rejection of her, had been so long recognised as the dispenser of Scripture, according to times and circumstances, and the arbiter of all true doctrine and holy practice to her children. We feel a need, and she alone of all things under heaven supplies it. We are told that God has spoken. Where? In a book. *We have tried it and it disappoints*; it disappoints us, that most holy and blessed gift, not from fault of its own, but because it is used for a purpose for which it was not given. The Ethiopian's reply, when St. Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading, is the voice of nature: 'How can I, unless some man shall guide me?' The Church undertakes that office; she does what none else can do, and this is the secret of her power. The human mind, it has been said, wishes to be rid of doubt in religion; and a teacher who claims infallibility is readily believed on his simple word. We see this constantly exemplified in the case of individual pretenders among ourselves. In Romanism the Church pretends to it; she rids herself of competitors by forestalling them. And probably, in the eyes of her children, this is not the least persuasive argument for her infallibility, that she alone of all churches dares claim it, as if a secret instinct and involuntary misgivings restrained those rival communions which go so far towards affecting it."

From this extract we see how the matter stood with him. He had tried the Bible and been disappointed, and turning away from this (to him) feeble and insufficient authority, he embraced the church instead of the Book—a falsely infallible church instead of the really infallible Book. It may be asked what was Newman to do when he found this oracle silent to him, and no power coming from it either to affect himself or others? For this has been the case not of Newman only, but of men far different, even of Bunyan, Dr. John Love, and other eminent Christians whose recorded experiences show that they had their periods of temptation when these lively oracles were to them dead and silent.

We answer, "Here is the faith and patience of the saints," and here is the strait gate which they resolutely choose instead of the wide gate that leads to the chambers of death. Though this oracle be silent for a time there is clear evidence that it can work effectually when God pleases. The manifold testimonies of saints

in all ages, and that mighty spiritual movement which we call the Reformation are abundant proofs of a mysterious heavenly power residing in the Word of God.

The voice then is, "Though it tarry wait for it, for the vision is for an appointed time, at the end it shall speak and will not lie." This waiting is a painful exercise of spirit, which it is difficult to maintain, but they who will not choose this strait gate will without doubt, be drawn into one or other of the wide roads that lead to destruction.

J. M'N.

An Aonaidh.

A REIR a h-uile coltais tha cuisean ag abuchadh air son an Aonaidh air a' bhliadhna so eadar an Eaglais Shaor agus na Cleirich Aointe. Tha na cinn-iuil anns gach Eaglais ri faidhead-aireachd agus ma tharlas a reir mar a tha iad a' cumail a mach gu'n tachair bithedh an da bhuidhinn nan aon air chionn deireadh na bliadhna. 'Nuair a bha Dr. Rainy a' co-dhunadh obair a gheamhraidh ann an oilthigh na h-Eaglais Shaoir an Dun-Eidionn dh'nnis e do na foghlumaich nach tigeadh iad cuideachd gu brath tuilleadh anns an rathad a bha iad a' tighinn gu ruige so o am an Dealachaidh. An sin sheall e air ais air a h-uile atharrachadh a thainig air an oil-thigh o chaidh a chur air chois. Is math a dh'fheudadh e sin a dheanamh oir 's iomadh atharrachadh a thainig air. Dh'ainmich e a cheud ard-luchd-teagaisg a bha ann—Chalmers, Welsh, Cunningham, agus Duncan. Feudaidd sinn a radh nam biodh na daoine urramach sin beo an diugh nach deanadh iad a mach an Eaglais Shaor mar a tha i. Nuair a mholas na daoine a thainig a stigh 'nan aite agus 'nan dreuchd na fir a bh' ann agus iad fein a' feuchainn mar is fhearr a's urrainn iad ri an teagasgan a chur fo'n talamh cha'n fhearr an obair na obair na muinntir o shean a bha togail aitean adhlac nam faidhean. Dh'aidich Dr. Rainy ma ta gu saor am muthadh mor a thainig air luchd-teagaisg an la 'n diugh seach fir an Dealachaidh anns an rathad an bheil iad a gabhail beachd air teagasgan an t-soisgeil. 'Se a dh'fheudadh. Ach ann a bhi gu saor ag aideachadh sin bha e cumail a mach gu'm bheil a fein agus a luchd-cobhair a' fuireach an taobh stigh do chriochan teagasgan an ath-leasachaidh. Cha'n urrainn so a bhi ma ta oir aon uair agus gu bheil daoine mi-dhileas do theagasg an Deachdaidh cha'n urrainn iad a bhi dileas do theagasgan a' Bhiobuill. Chan aithnichheadh an linn a dh' fhalbh o cheann deich bliadhna fichead air ais Albainn mar an aon duthaich leis an aite a tha soisgeul ur air faodtainn air feadh na tire an diugh. Ach dh'innis e gu soilleir air chionn an ath-gheamhraidh gu'm bi an t-aonadh ann. Mar sin fein dh'innis Dr. Salmond an Abair-eadhain do na foghlumaich ann an sin am muthadh a bhios ann mu'n coinnich iad a ris. Agus mar sin fein Dr. Robson an Ceann-suidhe ann an Seanadh nan U.P. nuair a sgaoil e na foghlumaich aca fein dh'innis e dhoibh nach cruinnich-

eadh iad a ris mar oil-thigh. Leis a chuis a bhi mar so tha e mu shide air son feadhainn a tha an aghaidh an aonaidh a bhi greasad orra ma tha iad a' dol a sheasamh-mar a tha sinn an dochas gun dean. A mhuinntir a tha bagradh seasamh a dheanamh rinn iad aon ni gu math co-dhiubh-chuir iad a mach a ris leabhran leis an Dr. Ceannaideach an aghaidh an aonaidh. Tha sinn an dochas gn'm bi e air a leughadh le moran. Tha e ag innseadh ann cunnartan an aonaidh agus gu dearbh ma bha cunnart ann an uair sin cha'n ann air dol an lughad o'n uair sin a tha e. "Union and Unionism"—'se sin a's ainm do'n leabhran agus tha e air a chur a mach an Inbhir pheotharain le A. M. Ross & Co., pris da sgillinn.

Notes and Comments.

Coming Communions.—Oban and Kames, 1st Sabbath of this month; John Knox's, Glasgow (in O. S. Church, Bedford Street, South-side), 2nd; Glendale, Skye, 3rd; Kilmallie, 4th; Creich, Sutherlandshire, 1st Sabbath of June.

A Spectacle of Folly.—The great international football match took place at Glasgow on Saturday, 7th April. Seventy thousand persons from all points of the compass were present to see the game, and among them Lord Rosebery and his sons. In the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* for August, 1896, we chronicled the enormity which took place on the 4th April of that year, when 65,000 people assembled at Glasgow for a like frivolous purpose; and it nowise consoles us to observe that the appetite for coarse pleasure seems to be growing in the community. It is not the least evil incident to such a carnival of folly and excitement that the ensuing Sabbath is wholly misspent in rehearsing and discussing the points of yesterday's play. This mania for sport is a notable expedient of the devil for bringing about that forgetfulness of God which enlarges the mouth of hell. No doubt the God of Heaven is angry when He sees a generation of men, to whom He has given the light of reason and the revelation of His glory in the Scriptures, giving themselves up to the things that are earthly, sensual, and devilish. "They went their ways, the one to his farm, the other to his merchandise," and the multitude to the football field; and the Master of the house, being angry, said, "Verily I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." "For it is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them shall not have mercy on them, and he that formed them shall show them no favour."

The Week-End Ticket.—This concession of the Railway Companies, whereby Saturday to Monday travellers can make a return journey anywhere for single fare, has now become an established usage. Numbers of persons, whose journeying was highly needful and their means limited, have found the arrangement

to be a benefit; but in the main the privilege, we think, has not been for the public welfare, being, in truth, a mere premium on Sabbath breaking and frivolity. The transporting, week by week, of so many young people from their homes and their churches, to spend the Sabbath in distant places, is evidently a thing of bad tendency, and the gadding, undomesticated habits of many have received an unnecessary impulse. The Sabbath breaking tendency of the time is the foundation of the scheme. A sudden re-establishment of the authority of the Fourth Commandment would abolish nine-tenths of this week-end traffic.

The War, the Indian Famine, &c.—During the last month the war, save for some minor incidents, has been quiescent. Lord Roberts is engaged shifting the basis of operations from the coast to Bloemfontein. An adherent of the Free Presbyterian Church (Mr. John Fraser), presently in South Africa, has lately written his opinion regarding the character of the Boer people and the morality of the present contest. While sojourning in the Transvaal some years ago, he earnestly sought for some religious people of the old stamp with whom he might converse, but failed to find any. The Presbyterianism there professed has the same degenerate features that it has at home. Large sacramental gatherings are common features of church life with the Boers, but at an important event of this kind held in Pretoria, Mr. Fraser was shocked to find that, the service being ended, the piety was ended also, for the young people mainly devoted themselves to flirtation and the old people gave themselves to converse about sheep and oxen. He is also firmly convinced that the war, at bottom, is a just one. We may add that our correspondent's opinion of the Boers as a religious people was formed long before the present contest; and had he found any remains of the piety which, with all our faults, still lingers in Scotland, he would have gladly acknowledged it.

A famine of unparalleled severity at present rages in India. Generous contributions are being sent from this country, but notwithstanding, there are many deaths and much misery prevailing in Bombay and Central India.

The Duke of Argyll died at Inverary on Tuesday, 24th April, aged seventy-seven years.

On the 25th April an immense fire occurred in Ottawa, Canada, whereby a great part of the city was destroyed, and damage to the amount of £1,000,000 was inflicted.

The Impending Union—Dr. Walter Ross Taylor has been nominated for the Moderatorship of the coming Free Church Assembly. In May the Synod of the U.P. Church will meet for the last time, and so also will the Assembly of the Free Church. In October a joint meeting of the two bodies will take place, in order to consummate the Union. The name of the new denomination will be "The United Free Church."

"He will keep the feet of His Saints."

I SAM. ii. 9.

HE will keep the feet of His saints,
All their toilsome, unknown way,
Lest they stumble and fall in the dark,
Lest they err and go astray.

He will keep the feet of His saints—
Tired oft-times and weak and worn—
Lest they dash them against a stone,
Or wound them against a thorn.

He will keep the feet of His saints,
Shod with the Gospel of peace,
Which waxeth not old nor weareth out
Till their pilgrim-wanderings cease.

He will keep the feet of His saints
From the snares thick-spread for them,
Till they come at length to the gate
Of His own Jerusalem.

He will keep the feet of His saints,
Let us say it to one another,
And encourage our hearts in the Lord,
Who is our Elder Brother.

Sorely wounded once were His feet
When the cruel nails went through,
But those feet to-day in the Heavens
Are like burnished brass to view.

And the feet of His saints shall stand
With the Lamb on Sion hill!
Though our path seem rough—He is King
And good is His holy will.

Watchword.

IF this generation go to heaven, they will go by an easier road than those that went before them. They have good roads to travel to the public ordinances, and bridges over the rivers instead of uncertain fords, and good beds and full tables, none of which we had. But though our outward comforts were less, our clothes being often wet upon our backs, and our feet nearly frozen in our shoes, yet under the lively preaching of the gospel our hearts would be so warmed that we would not feel the cold of our bodies.—*George Mackay, Golticlay, "Ministers and Men."*