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The Christian Race.

(Continued from page 123.)

LET us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." We have already observed three things—first, What is implied in the comparison of the Christian life to a race; secondly, "the race that is set before us;" and thirdly, the preparation that is required in order to run successfully. We now call attention to:—

4. The manner and spirit in which the race is to be pursued ;
"Let us run with patience."

(1) The manner. This is indicated by the command, "Let us *run*." Sometimes the Christian's course is spoken of as a walk. Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have been "walking in all the commandments of God blameless." This is a view of Christianity as it glorifies God in the world irrespective of the prize in eternity. But the figure presently under notice has a special eye to the reward of eternal glory. The life of the Christian in prospect of this great attainment is represented under a livelier and more energetic figure than that of a walk; it is that of an earnest forward pursuit, an exercise engaging every activity of the new man, a vigorous race. Let us not creep, or even walk, but let us run, says the apostle. He knew well what was in all true Christians that tended to dull their spiritual energies and make them indolent and slothful, and so he urges them forward in the race. He also knew that their sufficiency for spiritual activity was not of themselves but of God alone, who was able and willing to supply all their need and to make them swift runners in the way to heaven. It is good that believers should be roused out of their lethargy and made fully sensible of their shortcomings. Running is a high spiritual standard, one not easily attainable, and yet if we attain to so much realisation of the importance and necessity of it as will keep us "running" constantly to a throne of grace, for mercy and grace to help, we may yet attain the prize at last.

(2) The spirit. "Let us run *with patience*." It is clear from the exhortation to patience that Christians need not expect to find

the race a smooth and easy one. There are difficulties and trials to be met with, and to be overcome. These things come from a variety of quarters. Some spring from their own hearts; some from their temporal lot and circumstances; and others from the people of the world. The world, the flesh, and the devil are combined against the true followers of Christ. The race for the prize is also a conflict with many enemies. The runners, therefore, need much spiritual strength and courage in order to overcome; they also require patience. "For ye have need of patience that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."—(Heb. x. 36.) They need patience to bear the cross, for they will find that do what they will, and fight as they may, still they have some difficulty to contend with, some trial to endure. And here is the very place that they are apt to lose themselves and to kick against the dispensation of God. Let us seek grace to keep our rebellious spirits under; let us run with patience.

Now, there are several considerations that are fitted by the application of the Holy Spirit to produce a spirit of patience in the soul. The first is, that it is our own sin that is the original cause of all our troubles, whether we can point or not to a particular transgression as the direct cause of any special trial. The second is, that our sins deserve not merely the heaviest possible affliction in this life, but unspeakable misery throughout an endless eternity. The third is, that all things being of God, He has appointed in infinite wisdom every trouble that meets us. The fourth is, that if we suffer anything for the name of Christ, we are to reckon ourselves happy and honoured. And the fifth and last consideration that shall be mentioned at present is that, if we be among the true people of God, all things shall work together for our good. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

What is the nature then of true patience? It is a gracious, loving submission to the will of God. It is not a mere stolid fatalism, or compulsory recognition that things cannot be altered once they have taken place, a frame of mind that is possible to the natural man; but it is an exercise of patient endurance flowing from a genuine sense of our own sinfulness and unworthiness on the one hand, and of God's righteousness and grace on the other. In other words, it is faith recognising that the flesh requires to be mortified, and that the Lord doeth all things well, and thus stilling the rebellion of the heart and producing a gracious endurance of the will of God.

Patience, or patient endurance, is not an easy or common attainment, especially in its riper degrees. No doubt the root of it, as well as that of every other grace, is to be found in every regenerate soul. Indeed, the regenerate have more of it in their most rebellious moods, than the unregenerate in their most placid ones. But that thought will not satisfy the true runners in the Christian race; they desire to have patience in living exercise, overcoming the

murmurings and opposition of the carnal mind which is enmity against God in all His ways. The Apostle James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

The question lastly to be answered is, "How is patience to be got?" It is just to be got in the same way as all the other graces of the Spirit. We must come as poor sinners to the feet of Christ for "it pleaseth the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," and "out of his fulness" have all the children of God received, and "grace for grace." Patience is to be found in Him as well as all other things we need. He was Himself the great example of it; He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." However, if He were only the example of patience we might well despair to all eternity; but He is also the giver of patience. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also." And one of these gifts for the rebellious is the grace of patience. Come then poor and helpless, unbelieving and rebellious, as you feel yourself to be, to the Lord, as He is seated upon a throne of grace, and you will find mercy to pardon your past and present sins, and the very grace you require to help you, in the time of need. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

The late John Gillies, Plockton.

THERE passed away last month at Plockton, Ross-shire, after a few days' illness, John Gillies, a man of worth and deep piety. He was a man that said very little, but that proved more faithful in the day of trial for truth and principles than many who spoke much. He was a man that felt nothing too much for him to do for the cause of Christ. His regard for the Lord's people was not a mere flash of feeling but a deeply rooted affection in a heart renewed by the Holy Ghost. We deeply sympathise with his bereaved family, and with our people at Plockton. N. C.

Lord Low's Decision.—On the 9th of August Lord Low issued his interlocutor on the case between the Free and U.F. Churches. He gave judgment in favour of the defendants (the U.F.). There is a widespread inclination to doubt the justice of his Lordship's decision. It is based on the theory that the Church had power, by a decree of the majority, to change her creed in such a matter as the Establishment principle, and that therefore the pursuers have no case. Our Gaelic readers will find the situation discussed at some length on another page.

The Profanation of the Sabbath.

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. GAVIN PARKER, ABERDEEN.

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 "Will a man rob God?"—MALACHI iii. 8.  
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TO rob a person, is to deprive him unjustly of his property. In some instances, time becomes property. The time during which a servant is engaged to labour for his master, is the master's property. If the servant appropriate this time to his own use, or waste it in idleness, he robs the master of his property.

The whole human race are bound to serve God: He is the universal Lord; and has an unlimited right to their service. All time is His: He measures out a portion to each of us, according to His own will. This God is served by the love and obedience of His intelligent creatures: He has authority to prescribe those services that are pleasing to Himself, and to appoint and arrange the times for performing them.

He has said to each of us, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh is the Sabbath of Jehovah thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh, there shall be to you a holy day—a Sabbath of rest to Jehovah. Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." The words of God, by the prophet Isaiah, chap. lviii. v. 13, have also all the authority of a Divine injunction—"If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable, and shalt honour him,—not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words," &c.

He who determines the bounds of our habitation has an unquestionable right to dispose of our time. He claims our time upon earth as His property. He has clearly and forcibly revealed the manner in which it ought to be employed. He demands that the Sabbath be set apart for Himself, to be employed more immediately in the exercises of religion. To appropriate any part of the holy Sabbath to ordinary or common purposes, any further than duty requires, or to waste any part of it in idleness, is to rob God.

In the sequel of the discourse, it is intended to consider the evil of profaning the Sabbath by worldly or common conversation, and to show that this violation of the Divine law is more criminal than common robbery.

Duty requires that some words be uttered respecting common objects and events, even upon the Christian Sabbath. But the worldly conversation by which the Sabbath is profaned, is occasioned neither by duty nor necessity: It is a voluntary or deliberate prostitution of holy time, to common, and, in many

instances, to trivial and useless purposes. Those who trifle away any of the sacred hours of the Sabbath in this manner, are chargeable with robbing God. This, we say, is a crime more aggravated than common robbery.

It is readily admitted, that there may be instances of robbery more aggravated than the other crime in certain circumstances. But the comparison is not to be made between flagrant cases on the one side, and more ordinary cases on the other, but between the sins in themselves.

It is a very heinous crime even to rob a man: it betrays a mean sordid disposition—a hateful excess of selfishness, and a vile contempt for the right of others. It evinces a mind dark, envious, malignant, and ferocious: it discovers a heart deeply depraved and awfully hardened by long-continued habits of impiety and wickedness. The man who can perpetrate such a crime is an object of abhorrence to the wise and the virtuous, and a source of general fear and anxiety: he attempts to nullify those useful regulations which connect society together; and to disseminate sorrow, disorder, and misery, among men. The crime he commits is very daring rebellion against the Most High: it brings disgrace upon his own character, renders him wretched upon earth, and it brings everlasting ruin upon his immortal soul. We cannot depict a character so base, in all its blackness, and all its horror: we cannot describe all the miseries to which such a transgressor may give rise: he may spread calamity, desolation, and destruction, wherever his influence extends: he may be a terror to thousands, and ultimately a terror to himself; for the way of such transgressors is hard. But to rob God is a crime still more aggravated: And this greater crime is committed by those who voluntarily, and in opposition to the revealed will of God, take part in secular conversation on the Christian Sabbath.

This crime is direct rebellion against God, and an avowed contempt of His law. The command is explicit—"Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy." The words were uttered by God Himself. They form a part of that law which shall remain in force after the heavens and earth shall have passed away. This law, all of us are bound to observe: by it we must be judged. The meaning of this part of it is easily understood. "Remember"—be attentive, be careful—"to keep the Sabbath holy;" set it apart from common exercises to the exercises of religion. It is God who issues the mandate: He attends to the manner in which it is received. "God looks upon man. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Disobedience to this mandate is rebellion against Himself. The rebellion is direct, and peculiarly daring. The transgressor says, by his conduct, "I know the words of the law, but I disregard their meaning, and their authority. No, I will not sanctify the Sabbath; I will make a part of it common: I will speak about the trifles or business of the world; I will please myself, and endeavour to please others. I

know that awful threatenings are denounced against those who profane the Sabbath ; but I fear them not ; I know that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but I will compel Him to look on my rebellion ; I will do what is pleasing in mine own eyes, in contempt of all that God has commanded or threatened, and in defiance of all that He can do."

This species of Sabbath-profanation is a rejection of offered grace. All mankind are guilty and depraved. All are justly condemned to perdition. None can save himself. "Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost." The blessings of His salvation are offered to all : but, to obtain a personal interest in them, faith and repentance are indispensably necessary. Without the knowledge of God, and of salvation through Jesus Christ, there can be no saving faith. Without a change of nature, there can be no genuine repentance. All these are the gifts of God's free grace. An earnest and humble waiting on God in all the ordinances of religion is the appointed means of obtaining them. The Sabbath is one of these ordinances. If any part of the Sabbath is wilfully squandered away in idleness or in worldly conversation, the person cannot be earnest in seeking after God ; he cannot feel much concern about his own salvation. But Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life. Ask, seek, knock : Strive to enter in at the strait gate : for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." These injunctions require great concern and activity. But those persons who can profane a Divine ordinance, by common conversation on a Sabbath, show that the precepts and invitations of the gospel have had little influence on their minds. They neglect the appointed means of salvation ; they also neglect salvation itself : and thus their trifling with the Sabbath amounts to a rejection of the offered grace of God.

This manner of profaning the Sabbath presents a strong resistance to the progress of Christianity. It is the opinion of many—and the opinion is well founded—that, were it not for the appointment of the Sabbath, a regard for God and for religion would soon be obliterated upon earth, and the great bulk of mankind would sink into atheism and utter profanity. But the great utility and excellence of the institution must be sought for in the strict and spiritual observance of its duties. When the practice of worldly conversation, during a considerable part of the Sabbath, becomes prevalent, the religious exercises performed on any other part of the day can do very little—perhaps nothing at all, perhaps even less than nothing—to maintain the honour of Christianity in this country, or to extend its influence to other countries. This manner of spending the Sabbath, by those who profess Christianity, is sufficient to prove that they know not the spiritual glory and excellence of religion—that they have never felt its power upon their own souls—and that they have no ardent

desire to see its influence and its blessings extended to others. Thus it frequently happens, that much more injury is done to the cause of Christianity upon earth by its pretended friends than by its avowed enemies. The openly impious, the profligate, and the infidel, may habitually and daringly profane the Sabbath; but their practices and their example are not so pernicious to the progress of the gospel as the conduct of those who profess, on one part of the Sabbath, to reverence His sanctuary, and yet trifle away the remaining hours in common and useless conversation. The young and the ignorant are thus tempted to think that religion is a mere system of forms and of services, that have no influence upon the heart or conduct; and the openly profane are thus tempted to make vital Christianity and those who profess it the objects of contempt and derision. Thus the progress of Christianity is prevented and resisted by the hypocrisy and profanity of its pretended friends.

By persevering in this practice, the everlasting ruin of the soul is rendered inevitable. No rational hope of salvation can be entertained by one who voluntarily and presumptuously persists in violating any statute of God's law. He who pollutes the Sabbath, by habitually employing any part of it as a common day, is chargeable with self-destruction.

This practice manifests a contempt for heaven. Sinners may speak and think of heaven, and express a feeble wish to enjoy its pleasures: But, by neglecting the duties of the Sabbath, they afford sufficient evidence that the exercises and enjoyments of heaven are not adapted to their taste. Heaven is an everlasting Sabbath: there God dwells: there His servants see His face, and enjoy satisfying communion with Himself. The same God is to be enjoyed upon earth. The exercises of the Sabbath are the means of communion between Him and His people. If these exercises be neglected, the favour of God is not enjoyed, nor even desired. Communion with Him, which constitutes the highest felicity in heaven, is not esteemed; and thus heaven itself is despised. The sinner thus prefers earth to heaven—the pleasures of the world to the enjoyment of God—an imaginary, transient, and unsatisfying good, to that magnificent and everlasting good which God has laid up for them that love Him. If it was an evidence of base ingratitude and aggravated wickedness in the Israelites to despise the pleasant land of Canaan, how much greater insensibility and wickedness must there be in despising heaven itself—that better country, of which the earthly Canaan was only typical!

These observations might suffice to prove that the species of Sabbath profanation already mentioned is a more aggravated crime than common robbery; but let us now attempt to bring the two in more direct comparison with each other.

Let us compare them according to those statutes of the law of which they are violations. Sabbath profanation is a transgression

of the First Table, which prescribes our duty to God; robbery is a transgression of the Second, which prescribes our duty to man. The most able and judicious theologians agree with the standards of our Church, in affirming that sins committed more immediately against God are more heinous in their own nature than sins committed more immediately against man. All sin is committed against God; but Sabbath profanation is more directly against Him than robbery. He who knows the law, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy," and yet employs a part of the day in common conversation, offers a direct insult to God, and provokes Him to anger. The robber seldom thinks of God: what he intends chiefly is, to appropriate to himself, by injustice or violence, that which belongs to his fellow-creature. It is surely the more aggravated offence to violate the rights of Deity, and to prostitute his peculiar property to the purposes of self-gratification or of vanity.

Compare the places they hold in the gradation of crimes. One sin leads to another; evil men become worse and worse; the first departure from comparative innocence is in many cases the most daring; the crime of our first parents in Paradise was perhaps the most aggravated that ever was committed upon earth; the sins that follow are partly the result of the former. Sabbath profanation is nearer the commencement of a course of sin than robbery; Sabbath profanation naturally leads to robbery; many who have brought themselves to a disgraceful death have made this acknowledgment; but who can say that robbery leads to Sabbath profanation? The robber's heart has been hardened by profaning the Sabbath before he ventured to do such violence to man. Sabbath profanation has not become so common in Dundee because the town was formerly infested with robbers; but robberies have recently become more frequent, because the profanation of the Sabbath has long prevailed. Sabbath profanation is a radical crime; robbery is one of its remotest and wildest ramifications. Although the branches were lopt off, the root may remain in all its vigour, and may still send forth luxuriant shoots; but destroy the root, and all the branches will quickly fade, to revive no more. While Sabbath profanation abounds, it is almost vain to expect any considerable improvement in the observance of social duties; but were the sanctification of the Sabbath to become general, an act of robbery would seldom be heard of in our land.

An act of robbery may be done by an individual, and no other be concerned in the crime. Worldly conversation on Sabbath involves more than one in deeply aggravated guilt; it may bring whole families and communities under its corrupting influence.

Robbery occasions to the individual injured the loss of property of a worldly kind; the profanation of the Sabbath occasions the loss of souls. The robber, indeed, brings destruction upon his own soul; but he may do no injury to the souls of those whom

he deprives of their property : they only sustain a temporal loss ; their present misery is increased, but their guilt may not be augmented. But worldly conversation on Sabbath may ruin the souls of all who may take part in it, and of all who may give it encouragement and approbation.

We should also take into consideration the different circumstances of the parties. Common robbers, for the most part, are the very refuse of society : they have received little education, and have never been taught Christianity ; they are ignorant of God and His laws—ignorant of their own guilt and danger—and as ignorant of the way of salvation. No man has cared for their souls. Perhaps they had no friend, no teacher of religion, to warn or admonish them ; they are outcasts from the abodes of virtue and of decency. From them little good can be expected. But many of those who profane the Sabbath by common conversation, have been well educated—have enjoyed the advantages of friendly attention from the wise, the virtuous, and the good—have been taught the doctrines and duties of Christianity ; not a few of them even call themselves Christians ! These should know God and His laws : they ought to stand in awe of His judgments, and to believe that He is highly displeased with their crimes. How hateful to profess love to God, and to promise obedience to His commandments, and yet to mock and insult Him by a voluntary profanation of the Sabbath ! Might not such hypocrisy, such wickedness, appear shocking even to the hardened mind of a barbarous ruffian ?

In some instances, the comparative atrocity of crimes may be determined by the temptations which induced the different parties to commit them. From the habits of idleness acquired by the robber, it is difficult for him to submit to honest and regular industry ; from his habits of dissipation, it becomes difficult to learn sobriety ; his temptations to prodigality and dishonesty acquire a fatal influence ; his propensity to live by plunder gathers strength by practice of injustice, and he ultimately appears the confirmed slave of vice : he makes his living by the wages of unrighteousness ; he is thus entangled by the bond of iniquity : his present enjoyments and his future expectations upon earth, seem to him dependent upon his nefarious achievements. But little good of any kind is obtained by worldly conversation upon Sabbath : the temptations to this crime are comparatively feeble. Few individuals in this country can add anything to their riches, or honours, or respectability, by this practice—very little is added even to their pleasure—very meagre and sordid is the enjoyment it affords. The robber obtains a reward for his wickedness ; the other is a volunteer in the service of sin. If, then, a person will not restrain himself a little, that he may keep the laws of God, he must surely feel very little regard for the Divine authority ; his rebellion must be peculiarly daring. Very few sins are so easily avoided as worldly conversation upon Sabbath. Almost every

one has this in his own power. If any deal unfaithfully toward God in this which is least, they will be unfaithful also in much. If they will not bridle the tongue during one day in the week, how can they be supposed to keep the heart every day, and with all diligence? How can they keep themselves in the love of God? How can they be in the fear of God all the day long? How can they resist, and obtain dominion over sin in the heart? How can they purify themselves as Christ is pure? If the easiest duties are habitually neglected, there is sufficient reason to conclude that the more arduous are never seriously attempted.

Let us also compare the influence of these crimes upon society. The moral consequences of robbery in this country must be very limited. Robbers are comparatively few in number; their character is not esteemed but detested. Robbery can never become fashionable among us; it can never appear innocent; the practice of it can never become general; and those by whom it is committed will always be regarded with abhorrence. But secular conversation upon Sabbath is a common and a fashionable vice. The decent and respectable are not ashamed of it; many have the presumption to pronounce it harmless. In many families, the man would be accounted rude, or austere, or a hypocrite, or a fanatic, who would venture to reprove it; the impious practice has gained firm footing among us, and has extended its baneful influence over all ranks of society. The rich and the poor have been brought upon a level by this powerful destroyer; all classes are vitiated by this moral pestilence. Injustice, oppression, and violence, can never appear harmless; but it has been considered a trivial crime to rob God and to trample His glory in the dust. Misery, desolation, and destruction, may be spread far and wide by the unfeeling cruelty of the robber; but an evil more awful than all these has been disseminated among all ranks of society—the voluntary pollution of the Sabbath. This is the cause of many evils; it is more to be dreaded than misery in any form, in any degree. Sin abounds in our land; it rears its odious head in many terrific and disgusting forms, and it will continue to hold a conspicuous place as long as worldly conversation upon Sabbath prevails.

Are not these observations conclusive? Do they not sufficiently prove, that the profanation of the Sabbath, in the manner already stated, is a more aggravated crime than common robbery?

The voice of conscience, if not corrupted, would decide in favour of these statements: For, if there is a God at all, He is infinitely great and glorious; He is to be feared more than man; His rights are more sacred than those of man. Is not sacrilege pronounced the most aggravated species of robbery? If to rob a temple of God be reckoned more criminal than common robbery, must it not be still more criminal to rob God Himself? Conscience attests that God ought to be honoured and esteemed, and feared more than man; conscience will also pronounce

concerning an insult offered to God, that it is more criminal than any insult offered to a fellow-creature.

God is good: His mercies and His benefits are great and numerous, even to the evil and unthankful. Never can one man do so much good to another as God has done to each of us. Conscience attests that we should feel and express gratitude to this God; it also pronounces ingratitude towards the greatest benefactor upon earth a crime not nearly so base and wicked as ingratitude towards God; but when God receives direct insults and avowed rebellion from the objects of His compassion and kindness, conscience must attest that such wickedness is peculiarly aggravated.

But let God Himself decide. Let us listen to His voice; His words must be conclusive. In the text the prophet asks, with a feeling of astonishment, "Will a man rob God?" There would be no expression of astonishment at one man robbing another—the act is not uncommon—the crime is not too great to shock a depraved heart—the person injured may be nearly on a level with the robber. But will a man, a feeble, dying man, venture to rob the omnipotent, the immortal God? Can there be so much ingratitude and so much wickedness in a human being as will permit him thus to mock and insult his great Creator, his bountiful benefactor?

The words of divine inspiration uttered by Eli convey the same idea. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against Jehovah, who shall entreat for him?" It is possible to make up the loss to an injured individual, and to inflict a punishment upon the offender commensurate to the evil done against man; but sins against God are so great that no earthly judge can inflict a punishment adequate to their guilt.

The same doctrine is taught by the great Founder of Christianity. Jesus said to an impious and insidious lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and great commandment." The duty of the first and greatest importance is to love God; the neglect of this duty is a greater crime than the neglect of any other. It is a great evil not to love man—it is a greater evil to do injury to man; but it is a greater evil than both not to love God, and still greater to violate His laws, to rebel against His authority. To profane the Sabbath by worldly conversation is rebellion against God. All who voluntarily and deliberately do so give sufficient proof that the love of God is not in them. The thing is impossible. All who love God love His commandments and keep them. It is their aim, it is their pleasure, to do whatsoever He hath commanded them. But if one of the easiest commandments is habitually violated, it is quite impossible that the same persons should even attempt to keep the whole law. The Scriptures and the dictates of reason direct us to say, "The love of God is not in them. They have therefore violated the

first and great commandment. They have not loved—they have offended, they have insulted—the Lord their God.”

The respective punishments which God, as the legislator of Israel, adjudged to the two species of crime under review, may also assist us in deciding upon their comparative aggravations. “If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. Ye shall keep the Sabbath; for it is holy unto you. Every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death; for whosoever doth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from amongst his people.” The greater punishment was adjudged to the profaner of the Sabbath. Nor was this an unmeaning or empty threatening, intended only to alarm. The punishment was actually inflicted. A man was found near the camp of Israel, in the wilderness, who had gathered sticks on the Sabbath day. He was brought to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. He was kept in ward till the divine will should be ascertained. Jehovah said to Moses, “The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.” And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as Jehovah commanded Moses. Although these laws were given to the people of Israel while under a theocracy, the holy God could not be more severe in punishing moral evil while He acted as King over a peculiar people, than while He acts as “the Judge of all the earth.” Whatever changes have taken place in the dispensations of God upon earth, there is no change in His nature, in His law, or in His counsel. The precept concerning the Sabbath belongs not to the ceremonial but to the moral law—even to that law which God hath “founded for ever.” Jesus, the Son of God, that infallible teacher from heaven, confirmed the authority and the permanent obligation of this precept when He said to His followers, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from *the law* till all be fulfilled.” These words assure us the sins against the moral law, which God punished with the greatest severity during the Jewish dispensation, must still be the most heinous in His sight.

For the same kind of disobedience the most severe calamities also befel the Israelites in subsequent ages. Their captivity in Babylon was predicted, and afterwards took place on account of profaning the Sabbath. “I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths. They polluted my Sabbaths; then I said I would pour out my fury upon them. I lifted up my hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries; because they had polluted

my Sabbaths. If ye will not hearken to me to hallow the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, and it shall not be quenched." Nehemiah contended with the nobles of Judah, after their return from Babylon, respecting the profanation of the Sabbath, saying, "Did not your fathers thus; and did not God bring all this evil upon us and upon this city? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath." How awfully have these predictions been accomplished! The people have been led away captive and dispersed among the heathen. They are in a state of dispersion to the present day. Jerusalem has been burned and destroyed, and ploughed like a field. Its palaces and gates and temples have been levelled to the ground, and a sorry and meagre-looking town now occupies their place. Can we produce any one instance in which robbery has been punished in a manner so terrible?

We can, therefore, have no hesitation in affirming that the pollution of the Sabbath by secular conversation, is a more aggravated sin than common robbery.

At the conclusion of the discourse it may not be improper to mention some reasons for illustrating and enforcing this doctrine.

We have reason to think there are some among us who sigh and cry for the abominations of the land. They are grieved at witnessing the disgraceful and impious profanation of the Sabbath, so prevalent in this place. They complain that the evil has greatly increased during their own time. Should not something be said and done to resist its progress? It may soon come to a crisis. Who knows but that period may speedily arrive when God will say to this overflowing deluge of profanity, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." O that many present may begin to think on the Sabbaths they have wasted in idleness, or profaned by unprofitable conversation! O that God would awaken them to consideration, and bless them with true repentance!

It is a scene awfully affecting, to witness so many of our brethren deliberately bringing everlasting ruin on themselves. Little do thoughtless sinners consider the worth of a soul! Seldom do they seriously anticipate what awaits them in the approaching eternity. But the people of God are affected, and weep over their perishing brethren.

It is peculiarly distressing to think of the dangers to which the young are exposed by the prevalence of Sabbath profanation. They are thus induced to think that the Bible is not true; or that many of those who profess to believe it are mere hypocrites. They are in danger of following the multitude to do evil, and of imitating the hypocrisy and profanity of those among whom they live. Although something is done for their instruction and admonition, the influence of evil example may counteract all their good resolutions, and soon efface from their minds every serious impression. None but God can preserve them from the ways of

the destroyer. O that I could successfully exhort them to avoid this fascinating sin, and to flee from the wrath to come!

The sacred Scriptures hold out to us the prospect of great prosperity to the Church of God upon earth. Some preparations are carrying forward in different countries for this auspicious change. The Word of God is read with eagerness and pleasure by many thousands who never till of late enjoyed the precious gift. A general desire to possess the Bible is excited among the nations. In several heathen countries the gospel has been preached with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, and astonishing have been the effects. "Waters are breaking out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert." Would it not be desirable that a revival of religion should take place in our country? We have reason to think that God yet intends to favour our land, and to bless her children within her. But while Sabbath profanation so greatly abounds among us, little good can be effected even by the preaching of the gospel. If a people can attend the sanctuary of God on one part of the Sabbath, and wilfully employ another part of that day in worldly conversation, the most alarming, the most discriminating, the most animating truths of Christianity will be to them of no avail. They may come to the house of God as His people come; they may sit as His people sit; they may hear His words, but they will not do them; they are triflers in religion; they are hypocrites in Zion. The solemn ordinances of God become the means of blinding their minds and of hardening their hearts.

If God revive His work in our land, there will be among us a very great and conspicuous change in the manner of observing the Sabbath. At present, how painful it is to think of an institution so useful, so fraught with good to man, perverted to the meanest purposes! A day "made for man," for his instruction, improvement, and comfort, wasted in idleness, or wantonly abused by dissipation and open profanity! There is a loud call for a Divine visitation. May it be in kindness, and not in wrath! Let God appear in glorious power and majesty to shake the earth, to destroy the false confidence of impenitent sinners, and to subdue a people to Himself! Then shall the Sabbath be accounted a delight, and its prescribed exercises sources of dignified pleasure. Then all its hours shall be devoted to God, and employed in His service. In place of idleness, and amusement, and festivity, and vain talking, after retiring from the sanctuary of God, there will be great searchings of heart; there will be deep convictions of sin; there will be earnest prayer for the blessings of salvation; there will be vigorous attempts to make proficiency in the knowledge of Divine truth and in holiness; there will be zealous and persevering exertions to promote the interests of religion in families, and vicinities, and towns, and in all places of the land.

It may occur to some, that were they to refrain from worldly conversation, the Sabbath would be to them dull, and melancholy

and "a weariness." It might be so. But what would heaven be to the same persons? Surely much more cheerless. The Sabbath is a type of heaven, and a happy means of preparation for that everlasting and holy rest. If sinners or professing Christians cannot take pleasure in the exercises of religion during one day in seven, how could they endure to remain for ever before the throne of God, and to serve Him day and night in His heavenly temple? If they have no desire for communion with Him in the ordinances He has appointed upon earth, how could they relish that full and uninterrupted enjoyment of communion which constitutes the bliss of heaven? Let not men, therefore, deceive themselves with a false hope of heaven: Their dislike to the spiritual and delightful exercises of the Sabbath, proves that they are totally unqualified for heaven; and that, without a change of nature, they can never be admitted into that holy place.

It is a happy circumstance for our country that the crime of robbery is held in general detestation. This useful feeling holds out the prospect of a quiet and peaceful life upon earth to the great majority of our countrymen. Long may this feeling remain in all its acuteness, and in all its strength! It ought to be cherished; it ought to be improved and extended. O that this discourse may have some influence in exciting a similar and proportional abhorrence of the crime of Sabbath profanation! Although this crime cannot disturb the order and harmony of society *upon earth* as much as the other, there is an *eternity* to come: and if the peace and happiness of *eternity* be prevented by Sabbath profanation, it cannot be too much abhorred.. God has published a law, by which the world shall be judged. He who said, "Thou shall not steal," has with equal authority commanded, "Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy." God will render to every one according to his works. Multitudes may live in peace and honesty; they shall not be condemned for robbing man; but if they have neglected to sanctify the Sabbath, God will assuredly condemn them to endless woe, for robbing himself. The serenity and comfort that exist among the profaners of the Sabbath in this world, afford no proof at all that they shall enjoy any peace or any pleasure in the world to come.

The very appointment of the Sabbath calls upon us to admire the wisdom and goodness of God. To the sincere Christian, it is a day of holy rest from the toils and anxieties of life—a day of intercourse with God—a day of refreshing to the soul. It is the means of increasing knowledge, and faith, and holiness. Sabbaths spent with God will soften the terrors of death. They bring heaven down to the earth, and introduce the saints to the exercises and pleasures of the celestial world.

Even to those who are yet in their sins, the Sabbath is a distinguished blessing. Were it not for this day, and the exercises prescribed upon it, their salvation would be very improbable. Many have been called into the grace of God by this appointed

institution. Let even those who have long profaned the Sabbath by vain conversation think on their ways. Let them seek God while He is yet to be found. Let them call upon Him while He is near. Let them return from their evil ways, to fear God, and to reverence His institutions. Let them henceforth employ the precious hours of the Sabbath in attending with ardour to the things that belong to their everlasting peace. Let them read, and hear, and meditate, and apply to themselves the truths of Christianity. Let them think on the compassionate and almighty Saviour, whose finished work and resurrection the Christian Sabbath is intended to commemorate. Let them be ashamed and grieved in heart on account of their base ingratitude in so long despising His great salvation and rejecting His gracious invitations. Let them be horrified at the insults they have offered to the Son of God, in trampling His blood under their feet, as if it had been something common, or even contemptible. Let them seek grace to repent of all that they have done against God, and against the anointed Saviour. Let them humbly and patiently wait on God, and beseech Him to make them new creatures, to sanctify them wholly, and to prepare them, by His grace, for that everlasting Sabbath which remains for the people of God.

In retiring from this place of worship, it may be proper to think upon the meaning of these words of Divine inspiration, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation."

"I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say."

A Pastoral Letter to Young Persons.

BY THE LATE REV. CHARLES CALDER MACKINTOSH, D.D.,
OF TAIN AND DUNOON.*

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

While I feel thankful in knowing that your religious instruction is faithfully attended to during my short absence, I am desirous to address a few lines to you, which I am persuaded you will receive as an expression of my affectionate solicitude for your eternal welfare. The Lord guide and help me to say a few things in sincerity and love, which He may make use of for your souls' good.

1st. In your meeting for prayer and reading God's Word you profess to be seeking nothing less than the eternal salvation of your soul. Many who are altogether careless about divine things will acknowledge in words that this should be first sought. It is

* This letter was written by Dr. Mackintosh from Pau in France, and was addressed to a number of young persons in his Congregation at Tain, who met together for prayer and reading God's Word.—ED.

a wonderful mercy when it is truly sought before the days of grace come to an end, for few there be that find the way of life. It is a precious mercy when sought and found in youth, not only because we thus attain to good hope through grace, whatever may be waiting us in the journey of life, and because we escape bitter reflection in after years for the mis-spending of precious time; but because we are thus prepared for doing something for the one great end of life, and for serving Christ in our generation. Pray continually that the Holy Spirit may keep you awake to the realities of the greatness of salvation, for it is only His grace that can make us realise this, and keep us awake from day to day, and remember, if salvation be so great, that the change we must undergo, in order to our being saved, is a correspondingly great one. We must be born again. No one has right views of the nature and vastness of this change who has not passed through it. There are thousands in the visible Church who think it a slight and superficial work, and therefore it gives them little concern to know whether it be wrought in them or not. But when God's Spirit is teaching us we shall be afraid with taking up with any counterfeit work, and we shall be learning every day that there is a great work which must be going on in us while we are in this world, as well as a work to be done by us in the strength of grace if we have obtained mercy. When thoughts like these dwell in the mind they do away with all light thoughts of religion, and produce a growing solemnity of spirit.

2nd. It is not unlikely that there may be three different states of mind among you. (1) Possibly there may be one or more among you who have some sense of need of peace with God and a change of heart; but you are not burdened with this. Your sense of need does not much interfere with your enjoyment of worldly things. You are not seeking salvation as a matter of life or death, and yet you may have the feeling (for the heart is very deceitful) that if you go on seeking as you now seek, you will in time come to enjoy the peace and experience the change which you need. If there should be any one of you in this state of mind it is owing to your not having right views and a right sense of your guilt and sinfulness in the sight of God. Seeking in this way you may find *false* peace, but never true peace. Oh! pray that the Holy Spirit may make you see and feel that salvation is the one thing needful, and that you need to be saved in a way of pure grace. (2) Some one of you, again, may be ready to lose heart and to give over seeking. You have not found true peace or true rest. You labour under much darkness of mind about God and Christ, for you cannot be content with notions about the changes which concern your peace; you must have such a knowledge of them as will assure your heart of their reality. You have the feeling, it may be, that sin is stronger and stronger within you. You see more and more defilement in your heart, your prayers, your duties, and all your thoughts. Sometimes, perhaps, you get

a glimpse of the sufferings and beauty of Christ, but it goes away, and you are more burdened and sadder than ever. You are afraid you will never get your feet on the rock, or have any true liberty in the presence of God. Satan will be ready to back you in this fear, in order that he may get you by degrees to give over seeking. Such a state as this is very common among those who are striving to enter in at the strait gate. It is your mercy if you feel more and more that you have nothing of your own to trust to, and if you are made willing to be wholly indebted to Jesus for righteousness, wisdom, and strength. And it is your mercy if you are afraid of substituting any notions or feelings of your own for those views which the Spirit of God alone gives, and those dispositions which He works when He leads souls to Jesus. But remember, the more you feel that without His grace you can do nothing, the more you are called upon to look up for that grace which can remove all your darkness and so show you Christ in His blood, and righteousness, and grace; so that all your fears shall be scattered, and you shall know that He is mighty to save you. Seek the Lord, then—seek His precious face—until the “Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing under his wings,” on your soul. (3) Some of you, I trust, have tasted of the Lord’s preciousness and the divine sweetness of the Word of Christ. If, under a sense of your perishing condition in yourselves, and from a view of the all-sufficiency of Christ, you have entrusted your soul to Him for eternity; if you look to Him for deliverance from sin as well as from wrath; if, unless your hearts deceive you, this is true of you, then be not afraid to indulge the blessed hope of salvation. Endeavour to believe and wonder that you have obtained mercy, but remember that the great evidence of our hope being growing, is abiding in Christ and in striving ever to grow in grace and to do something for Christ’s glory. “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” And be sure, if you are Christ’s, Satan will do his utmost to draw you away from the simplicity that is in Christ, and to induce you to act inconsistently with your calling and profession.

Watch, therefore, and pray. The Christian life is a conflict, but the conflict lasts only for a short day. Pray that you may be kept at Christ’s feet, desiring every day the sincere milk of the Word, and afraid of losing your first love.

The present time, when there is such an effusion of divine grace, is a peculiarly favourable time for making advances in the divine life. Strive to make the most of it; it may not last long. And if it has its blessed advantages, let me warn you that there are dangers connected with it. One of these dangers is undervaluing clear views of the truth as it is in Jesus; as though it did not matter much though one should have confused and mistaken views of the truth if only there be warmth; or thinking that one has come to the end of the Gospel when we are getting only the A B C of it. A matter of danger to which young Christians are

peculiarly exposed in the present day is spiritual pride. Oh! pray that the Lord may keep you humble, for there is an end to spiritual prosperity when humility is not in exercise. Pray that you may be growing in the knowledge of sin and of grace, that you may feel more and more your need of Jesus as a Saviour and a Shepherd, and that you may be enabled to rely on Him for preservation from all the evils which are in the world, and grace to cleave unto Him to the end.

I trust there is no falling off in the attendance in your meeting, but the reverse. It is a blessed thing to associate together with the view of encouraging one another in the ways of the Lord, and supplicating the outpouring of the Spirit. Seek to feel the stirrings of love to the brethren, and concern for perishing souls. If you know something of this, seek to feel it more and more, and be hopeful of a blessing. I know that such of you as are resolved, through grace, to serve the Lord, will be anxious to draw others to unite with you. "Come with us, and we will do you good," &c. Ask the Lord what He would have you to do in the way of commending His Gospel, and He will give light, and wisdom, and strength. The time is short; the end of all things is at hand. If the Lord will, I expect ere long to be again among you. The good Lord give you all to know that Christ is precious, and vouchsafe His presence in your meeting, and make you a blessing to one another, is the prayer of your affectionate pastor,

CHARLES C. MACKINTOSH.

PAU, 30th January, 1860.

Assurance of Salvation.

BY THE LATE REV. PROFESSOR JOHN DUNCAN, LL.D.,
EDINBURGH.

THE following article appeared in the *British Messenger* (edited by the late Rev. William Taylor), for 1st December, 1869, and is reprinted by Dr. Brown in his Biographical Supplement of Dr. Duncan, which forms the preface to the volume of Sermons by Dr. Duncan, entitled, "In the Pulpit and at the Communion Table":—

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.—We have already published the opinions of five correspondents on the question, "Where ought a man to seek, and expect to find, assurance of his own eternal salvation?" The following remarkable contribution to the theology of Christian experience embodies the conversational statements of a venerable servant of Christ, as arranged by us at his desire, but expressed almost exactly in his own words:—

VI. THREE ELEMENTS OF ASSURANCE.—With reference to the three opinions which you have mentioned in your leading article for last month as prevailing among evangelical Christians on the

subject of assurance, I think there is truth in them all; but that each of them, if held exclusively of the others, is attended with its own danger. (For conciseness' sake let us call assurance by direct faith, No. 1; assurance by evidences of regeneration or marks of grace, No. 2; and assurance by the witness of the Spirit, No. 3.) Undoubtedly the danger of No. 1, held exclusively, is antinomianism; that of No. 2, held exclusively, is legalism; while if a man pretends to have the third without the first and second, it is either hypocrisy or the deepest self-delusion. Set up exclusively, they are each right against the others. But they can well agree. Yet I do not think they are three independent ways of assurance, nor so much three steps of a ladder to assurance, as three elements found by analysis to be contained in all true assurance. In fact, they constitute a living organism—No. 1 being analogous to the root, and No. 3 to the matured fruits of a tree; though, indeed, as they come out in recognised experience, they are often like three steps of a ladder; and there must be always great delicacy in dealing with these theological relations in respect of living men, inasmuch as there may be morbid states of soul even in true Christians, and inasmuch also as some of the above-mentioned elements may in some souls be merely *seminal*.*

Let us take them in order.

1. *Direct Faith—the first element of Assurance.*

Assurance by direct faith has, when held *ultra*, an element of truth, and also one of falsehood. Its element of truth is the plenitude and freedom of the Gospel—Christ and His unsearchable riches offered to mankind-sinners as such. Its element of falsehood appears when the necessity of regeneration unto faith is not exhibited, and we are represented as receiving Christ with the fallen hand of Adam; or where it is so held as to obstruct the way to No. 2 by putting aside such texts as these: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. viii. 13); "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24); or such as this, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). It is a bad faith that has not room for these texts. Faith has room for them; and if it is really faith, they will set us to self-examination.

I am afraid that assurance by direct faith is sometimes urged in a way to make men merely infer from their (real or supposed) faith that they have got what faith itself would actually get. Take the case of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment. There the faith was complete. She did not *infer* that because she believed she was healed. *She touched*. Then came a double experience; virtue went out of Him; and she *felt* she was healed.

* In the seed.

When men merely infer they have got what a touch would really get, a false assurance is produced for the time, though conscience prevents its continuance; for nothing but the blood of Christ will satisfy the conscience. All this makes the question so tremendous.

2. *Marks of Grace; or, Reflection—the second element of Assurance.*

I am not quite sure that the Bible speaks of what we call assurance by that name. It speaks of the full assurance of understanding (Col. ii. 2), the full assurance of faith (Heb. x. 2), and the full assurance of hope (Heb. vi. 11). But whether as meaning the same thing, or only connected with these, John in his first epistle calls it *knowing*—"knowing that we know him" (ii. 3), and "knowing that we have eternal life" (v. 13). And what John says about this *knowing* appears to me to be most important, not only as specially written for the very purpose of producing this knowledge, but also as teaching us how we are to employ other scriptures to the same purpose. John's first Epistle is written co-relatedly to his Gospel. The end of the Gospel we have in the words, "But these are written that ye might believe in the name of the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name."—(John xx. 31). The Gospel, therefore, was written for the production of faith and the conveyance of life; whereas the object of the Epistle is given in the words, "These things have I written *unto you that believe* on the name of the Son of God, that ye may *know that ye have* eternal life, *and that ye may believe* on the name of the Son of God."—(1 John v. 13). This text implies three things:—1. That they who believe on the name of the Son of God *have* eternal life; 2. That they may be brought to the *knowledge* that they have eternal life; and 3. That this knowledge is not to supersede their living by direct faith on the Son of God;—in saying, "And that ye may believe," etc.; it is as if he had said, "Now ye see what good ye have got by believing; therefore keep believing; yea, grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Son of God; for ye see what good comes by believing." This co-relation then between the Gospel and the Epistle seems very much to intimate that a man may believe on the Son of God and have life by His name, and yet need somewhat to help him to *know* that he has eternal life. The whole Epistle presupposes the Gospel; it presupposes faith in the Son of God, and the possession of life thereby, and then seeks to bring believers to the knowledge of their having eternal life by what are commonly called *marks of grace* (our No. 2.)

Believing and receiving life is direct (No. 1); the knowledge that we believe and have life must have in it *reflection* upon ourselves (No. 2). And this reflection will embrace not only the actings of our faith, but its fruits; for the Spirit who works faith

works all the concomitant graces (in such a way as always glorifies Christ); and these are cognoscible things.

Now Scripture attaches promises of life to the possession of these things, so that when I perceive them in myself I can reason in this way: God says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" but I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore I shall be saved. The major proposition of this syllogism is God's Word. But to have assurance of my salvation, I must be *sure* of my minor proposition also. I would like, therefore, to have *two* witnesses to it. If it is the testimony of my own conscience simply, it may be true; but the heart is deceitful. Now, "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—(Romans viii. 16). This is our No. 3.

3.—*The witness of the Spirit—the third element of Assurance.*

It seems to some to be enthusiastic and horrible; yet, considered doctrinally, it is the apex of this question; and *experimentally* it goes into the very essence of religion.

What is meant in the above-quoted verse by "our spirit?" Is it merely our intelligent minds? It is that, but it is the spirit born of the Spirit. "The Holy Spirit," says one of the fathers, "makes us *holy* and *spiritual*." The testimony of God's Spirit, then, is only with the spirit of a regenerate man: it is the witness of the *regenerating* with the *regenerated* spirit.

[O my leanness! my leanness! (here interjected the venerable speaker); No. 3 will lead us into the very core of Christianity, far, far beyond my experience. I have certainly more light about it, than experience of it. Indeed, my light about it is flickering; but it goes beyond my experience—at least as interpreted and judged of by myself. Ah! yes.]

Not only does the Spirit of God bring out His own graces into vivid exercise (No. 1); and not only is He pleased, especially at times, to shine upon these—without which the believer's perception of them (No. 2) is dark and indistinct—this testimony is something more. It is the Father and the Son communicating with the souls of believers by the Holy Ghost, by means of the truth; and in this lies very mainly the secret of experimental religion. For example, prayer. The Spirit working sincerity, earnestness of desire, etc.—all that is contained in the "inwrought prayer" of a Christian man—this Christian man may not only be conscious by his own spirit (namely, his regenerate soul) that he doth so pray; but, if the Father heareth and answereth prayer—that is, if there be as much reality in God's speaking to man as there is in man's speaking to God,—then, as certainly as the believer has access by the Spirit through Christ unto the Father in presenting his supplication, so certainly the Father hath access through the Son by the Spirit that dwells in this man to convey the answer. Is this strange? Given a spiritual world—given a living God and (by regeneration) a living soul, is it incredible that there should be such intercourse

between them ; that the soul should speak to a hearing God, and hear a speaking God? This indeed is the very kernel of experiential religion ; sending us to our closets, to our Father who seeth in secret, to be alone with God ;—where there is no voice audible by the outward ear, but yet a voice audible by the inner ear. For faith has an ear, as certainly as God has a mouth ; though if we be asked, “How do you know that God speaks to you?” we could only answer, “Because I hear Him.” It is like asking a man, “Why do you believe your senses?”

Now, then, to full assurance, we need a particular *saying* of God to our individual souls (“*SAY* unto my soul,” was David’s prayer, “I am thy salvation”); and this to a man without faith, and without fruits of faith, He will never say. But wherever faith (No. 1) is—implying, as it does, regeneration, or good seed in good ground—it will be certainly followed by discernible fruits (No. 2), and by the witness of the Spirit (No. 3). Faith is *seminal** of all.

WHOM TO SUSPECT.

I have said that there is great delicacy in applying these relations to the cases of living men who may be in a morbid state, or in whom some of the elements may as yet be merely seminal. I am not suspicious, therefore, of professing Christians merely because they want assurance of their own salvation ; neither, on the other hand, am I suspicious of the assurance of young converts ; for I believe God may give assurance as soon as He gives faith. But I am suspicious of the profession of assurance and high joy, when it is without any indication of brokenness and contriteness of heart ; when it is without the solemnizing of character which a view of God’s tremendous wrath and great salvation must give ; and when it is without docility—when young converts set up to be teachers—and various other things. I can conceive a man or woman, boy or girl, coming home from church and telling us they had found Christ, and I would not doubt it ; or telling me so, and I would doubt it much.

I think I saw during the late revival two great evils—*first*, an over suspicion in old professors (who *may* have been old believers) regarding the young converts ; and *secondly*, a foolish, rash, presumptuous judgment on the part of the young converts, going almost to make out that those who had long consistently professed the Gospel of Christ were no believers at all, because they had not that apparent, ardent, and high assurance which these young people had. Yet even these corrupt elements led me only to a suspicion, not to a negation of those young professors ; for I believe that there may be some true faith incrusting with a vast deal of presumption, and that the whole being taken for faith bulks very much in their esteem, and that when it is peeled off their faith won’t appear so very big. I believe there may be God-made faith and man-made faith in the same soul. However,

* Productive.

"Every branch in me," saith Christ, "that beareth fruit," he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." After the scythe will come the dew—"the rain on the mown grass."

"Of the doctrine that will allow none to be true believers who want full assurance of their own salvation, Andrew Gray of Glasgow (if I remember right) says, "It is more discouraging than the dark and doubtful faith of the Papists." I have much sympathy with doubts which arise from a high estimate of Christian character as set forth in the scriptural delineations of what *all* true believers (regenerate men) are, and, in contrast therewith, from a low view of their own attainments, that stimulates while it humbles. There are, however, it is to be feared, those who by a latent Popery, "the pride which apes humility," make their doubts a part, and no small part, of their religion. Others again there are with consciences partially enlightened, with a glimmer which hinders them from being at ease in grossest self-delusion, but not sufficiently penetrating and arousing to stir them to honest effort, who sink into a state of dull apathy or fretful despondency. Such should be warned to look well to it, that their self-suspicions be not too well-grounded. The only way to be taken with such doubts is, honestly, manfully, resolutely, in the sight of God, and by the light of His Word to face them, that by His grace they may, if found groundless, be dismissed; or if found well-grounded, the removal of the doubts be sought by the removal of their causes, in the way of betaking themselves to the all-sufficient, freely-offered Saviour of sinners. Other way of relief know I none. (Prov. xiii. 4; xv. 19; xxi. 25.) Whether assurance be or be not, in the present state of the professing church, a *rare attainment*, I know not; but I am convinced that no good, but on the contrary only much harm, can accrue from further letting down of the duly moderated doctrine of all the Protestant churches, that *fidelis potest et debet esse certus de sua salute*—"a believer can and should be sure of his own salvation"—*i.e.* in the way of giving *all diligence*, which it may be feared is *too rare an effort*.

Letters of the late Donald Duff, Stratherrick.

(IX.)

STRATHERRICK, 11th December, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your letter, as also Mr. Watt's, in due course.

I was trying lately if I could compare myself with the prodigal son coming back. Christ says, "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." The nature of true repentance is brought out in that case in this word, "I am not worthy any more to be called thy son." In what light did he see his own unworthiness?

First, in the light of what he was before he left his Father's house, or what he was in his first creation ; second, in the light of what he had done in his own person to dishonour God and to destroy himself; third, in the light of how unworthy he was of the glorious dignity that belongs to all the sons of God ; fourth, in the light of his own unlikeness to the children of God ; and fifth, in the light of his unworthy efforts when he would attempt any duties. In all these respects he saw his own unworthiness to be called the son of such a Father. In this state of mind he was clothed with the best robe. This robe gave him a right to all the privileges in the Father's house, but it never changed his opinion of his own unworthiness. . . I was trying if I could follow him in this respect. . .

Truly sympathising with your own state, my dear friend, but expecting a blessed eternity for you,—Affectionately yours,

D. DUFF.

(X.)

STRATHERRICK, 15th November, 1882.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 2nd November. I may truly say there is many an unanswered letter beside me, although I am trying to answer yours. Since my trouble came on about the middle of March, I hardly answered any letter. Lately my trouble came to a considerable height, so that my friends had not much hope of my life. For three weeks the doctor was attending me daily, being laid up at Inverness. Even the doctor himself acknowledged that he had not much hope of my life. But you will be glad to hear that I am much better. As to my general health, I am much improved ; however long that may continue, the Lord knows ; but one thing I may tell you, although the trouble took the strength from my body, and indeed disabled my mind while I was very poorly, yet sin maintained its root in my spirit through all trouble, and is beginning, since my health is coming back, to sprout up as healthy as ever. Is not that wonderful? Nothing but the grace of God and the work of His blessed Spirit is able in any measure to keep it under. I do truly sympathise with you, kept down as you are, but I have no doubt the Lord has a blessed end in view towards you. It is written, "As many as I love, I chasten."

Give my kindest compliments to my friends. . . . When I was going through a course of self-examination lately on my view of eternity, one of the marks I thought I could claim for myself without my conscience giving me the lie, was love to the Lord's people. May the Comforter be with you.—Yours, etc.,

D. DUFF.

(XI.)

STRATHERRICK, 11th April, 1883.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I find that I did not answer your last letter, and no doubt the enemy will be giving you his own interpretation of this, as well as of many other providences.

Well, some time ago I was comparing your case to that of a poor man in this neighbourhood, some years ago taken to eternity. He was questioned on his deathbed by a friend whether he had any hope for eternity. He answered, "Well, if the Lord does intend to send me to hell, I do not know what reason He has had for taking such dealings with me in this world as He has done." Neither can I see that in *your* case. But it is very clear He intends to make this world very empty to His own people, and to some of them more so than to others, in order to wean them from it. As to their affections, they will be brought to feel not only the emptiness of forbidden pleasures, but things that may be lawful in themselves will come in a measure to be empty to them. A number of professors of religion will be found very empty to them, and a great deal of the common profession of religion will be found wonderfully empty to them. So the cry will, in earnest, be wrung from their heart, "O, that I knew where I might find him." They will be also emptied of themselves, so that they can honestly say from their own experience, "In me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwelleth." When the creature is brought to this, he will understand something of the word, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." He is then shut in—whether he will or not—to the Lord Himself for mercy and comfort. The whole creation cannot make him happy. Others will confess this, but he feels it to be truth. But that is a gracious promise, "There is a rest that remaineth to the people of God."

Remember me in the kindest manner to my very dear friends at Lybster. Whatever is the reason, Lybster is one of the green spots which I met in my wilderness journey, and which I can never forget. May the Comforter be with you. Amen.

D. DUFF.

(XII.)

STRATHERRICK, 5th January, 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am in receipt of your letter. All I can honestly say is that surely I do sympathise with you in your trouble which I confess is trying to flesh and blood.

I will tell you one thought that often at least put a stop to my murmuring under troubles; that whether I could understand the reasons for His dealing with me or not, He has always a blessed end in view in His dealing with all creatures, and particularly with His own people. And all God's dealings must answer the end He has in view. Should all the Lord's people that are in Scotland join, they could not change your circumstances till the Lord's time will come; and then you will be able to see that you had not one stroke too much. Oh, dear friend, although I can give you my reason for this, I am not able to give you the faith to believe it, you complain of your inability to pray or meditate. Remember your salvation does not depend upon your gracious

exercise, but upon the covenant, ordered in all things and sure, in which your salvation is secured already. There is nothing in your case but what is according to the discipline of that covenant. . . .

The cause of Christ is come to a low ebb indeed in many quarters. It is fearful how silent the Lord is to congregations and individuals, but it's a comfort to be assured that none of the elect can perish. Oh, may the Lybster friends be found among them in the day when He shall make up His jewels. Amen.—
Yours, etc., D. DUFF.

(XIII.)

STRATHERRICK, 12th June, 1884.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am in receipt of your letter a day or two ago. You see I am sure always to answer your letters, although there are other friends whose letters I am unable to answer. So you see I am truly sympathising with you, although I am unable to help you.

The state of your sight must be very trying to you indeed, and to be dependent upon others for everything you want must be trying. I see the Lord is indeed putting you through a humbling process, but, my dear sir, is it not even against reason itself to think that the Lord would take such dealings with you as He has done, if He had nothing in store for you but to send you to hell at last? No; it is His own glory in connection with your salvation that He has in view in all His dealings towards you. A few moments in the rest that remaineth for the people of God shall swallow up all your wilderness troubles for ever. Be trying, my dear sir, to hope even against hope, which would be very much to His glory if you could. As to the Assembly, the Lord, it seems, is giving them up to their own counsels, and removing every barrier out of their way that was likely to oppose them.

There are a few friends at Lybster that have taken a strange hold of my mind since the first time I saw them, but whether I shall ever have the pleasure of seeing them in this world or not I am not able to say. The state of my body, perhaps, would make it a risk for me to go far from home. Whether I will go north or not I am not able to say, but as far as I know myself my heart's desire is that the Comforter be with you and your friends.—Your sincere, though unworthy friend,
D. DUFF.

Ordination at Harris.—The Rev. Ewen Macqueen, probationer, was ordained at Tarbert, Harris, by the Northern Presbytery on the 31st July. The call to Mr. Macqueen was signed by upwards of one thousand members and adherents.

The Conversion of Dr. Goodwin.

Some Extracts from his own Account.

AND thus my younger time was at times spent ; but God was to me as a wayfaring man, who came and dwelt for a night, and made me religious for a fit, but then departed from me. The Holy Ghost moved upon the waters when the world was creating, and held and sustained the chaos that was created, and so He does in carnal men's hearts ; witness their good motions at times. In a great frost, you shall see, where the sun shines hot, the ice drops, and the snow melts, and the earth grows slabby ; but it is a particular thaw only where the sun shines, not a general thaw of all things that are frozen. But so it was, that for these lighter impressions and slighter workings, my heart did grow so presumptuous, that I thought myself not only to have grace, but more grace than my relations, or any inhabitant of the town that I knew of, and this for the time I was a schoolboy before I came to the University.

But the turning point came on Monday, 2nd October, 1620, when the Doctor, being twenty years old, accidentally heard a sermon by Dr. Bambridge in St. Edmund's Church, Cambridge, on Luke xix. 41, 42. He proceeds :—

I thought myself to be as one struck down by a mighty power. The grosser sins of my conversation came in upon me, which I wondered at, as being unseasonable at first ; and so the working began, but was prosecuted more and more, higher and higher : and I endeavouring not to think the least thought of my sins, was passively held under the remembrance of them, and affected, so as I was rather passive all the while in it than active, and my thoughts held under, whilst that work went on.

I remember, some two years after, I preaching at Ely in the minster, as they call it, in a turn of preaching for Dr. Hills, prebend of that church, Master of our College, I told the auditory—meaning myself in the person of another—that a man to be converted, who is ordinarily ignorant of what the work of conversion should be, and what particular passages it consists of, was yet guided through all the dark corners and windings of it, as would be a wonder to think of, and would be as if a man were to go to the top of that lantern to bring him into all the passages of the minster, within doors and without, and knew not a jot of the way, and were in every step in danger to tread awry and fall down. So it was with me ; I knew no more of that work of conversion than these two general heads, that a man was troubled in conscience for his sins, and afterwards was comforted by the favour of God manifested to him. And it became one evidence of the truth of the work of grace upon me, when I reviewed it, that I had been so strangely guided in the dark. In all this intercourse, and those that follow

to the very end, I was acted all along by the Spirit of God being upon me, and my thoughts passively held fixed, until each head and sort of thoughts were finished, and then a new thought began and continued; that I have looked at them as so many conferences God had with me by way of reproof and conviction. My thoughts were kept fixed and intent on the consideration of the next immediate causes of those foregone gross acts of sinning. An abundant discovery was made unto me of my inward lusts and concupiscence, and how all sorts of concupiscences had wrought in me; at which I was amazed to see with what greediness I had sought the satisfaction of every lust.

And here let me stand a while astonished, as I did then: I can compare this sight, and the workings of my heart rising from thence, to be as if I had in the heat of the summer looked down into the filth of a dungeon, where by a clear light and piercing eye I discerned millions of crawling living things in the midst of that sink and liquid corruption. Holy Mr. Price's comparison was, that when he heard Mr. Chatterton preach the gospel, his apprehension was as if the sun, namely Jesus Christ, shined upon a dunghill; but my sight of my heart was, to my sense, that it was utterly without Christ. How much and deeply did I consider that all the sins that ever were committed by the wickedest men that have been in the world had proceeded from the corruption of their nature; or that the sins which any or all men did commit at any time were from the same root; and I by my nature, if God had left me and withdrawn from me, should have committed the same, as any temptation should have induced me unto the like. But what much affected me was a sight and sense that my heart was empty of all good; that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelt no good, not a mite of truly spiritual good, as the Scripture describes true inherent grace to be some good in us toward the Lord our God, which none of my goodness nor ingenuity was, which I boasted of. What is all such goodness to God who is only good, and is the only true measure of all that is called good? which is so only so far as it respects Him, as He is holy and good, as of the law it is said, Rom. vii. Thus at present I was abundantly convinced.

But next I was brought to inquire into and consider of what should have been the original cause at the bottom of all this fore-mentioned sinfulness, both in my heart and life. And after I had well debated with myself that one place, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by him, and passed upon all men, in whom," or in that, "all have sinned:" that it was in him they all sinned, for they had not in and of themselves sinned actually, as those that die infants, "after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" which limitation is cautiously there added by the apostle to show that they had not actually sinned of themselves, but are simply involved in his act of sinning; and

that sin wherein we were all involved, as guilty of it, is expressly said to be the disobedience of that one man; for by one man's disobedience many of his children of the sons of men were all made sinners, for disobedience notes an act of sinning, not a sinful nature or a habit. This caused me necessarily to conceive thus of it, that it was the guilt or demerit of that one man's disobedience that corrupted my nature. Under such like apprehensions as these did my spirit lie convicted so strongly of this great truth, that being gone to bed some hours before, and filled with these meditations, I, in the end of all, rose out of bed, being alone, and solemnly fell down on my knees before God, the Father of all the family in heaven, and did on my own accord assume and take on me the guilt of that sin, as truly as any of my own actual sins.

When God now by a true work of grace effectually converted me to Himself, the vanity of my former religion was, by serious reflections on these passages mentioned, sufficiently manifested. The deficiency of the root of all my devotions did also abundantly add to the discovery. For God did vouchsafe me a new and further light into the bottom of my heart, to discern that self-love and self-flattery, acted by the motives of the word so far as they will extend, were but the roots of these gaudy tulips which I counted grace: and I needed no other scripture than that in the parable, together with my own heart, for the proof of it: Mark iv. 5, 6, "Some fell upon stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away." And with this one blast, and thus easily, did the flower of all my former devotions wither and come to nought, because they wanted moisture in the heart to nourish them.

By the prospect of all these heads of sinning which I lay under, I was surrounded and shut up, and saw no way to escape: but together with the sight of all this sinfulness, hell opened his mouth upon me, threatening to devour and destroy me; and I began withal to consider the eternity of time that I was to pass through under this estate, that it was for ever and ever. But though I was subjugated and bound over to these apprehensions, yet God kept me from the soreness of His wrath, and its piercing my soul through and through: that though I had a solid and strong conviction of God's wrath abiding on me, as being in a state of unbelief, yet my soul suffered not the terrors of the Almighty, though I lay bound as it were hand and foot, subacted under the pressure of the guilt of wrath, or of being subject to the just judgment of the Lord, as the word has to be translated, Rom. iii. 19. How long my soul lay filled with these thoughts, I perfectly remember not; but it was not many hours before God, who, after we are regenerate, is so faithful and mindful of His word, and His word of promise, as to suffer us not to be tempted above what we

are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it ; and He, loving us with the same love as we are His own dear elect, does not often suffer a destroying apprehension to continue long upon us, but out of the same faithfulness and pity to us finds a way to escape.

I do not speak now of temptations, but of the just conviction which many such souls have, previous unto their believing. See what God says, Ezek. xvi., of the whole body of His elect church, comparing their condition to that of a child born dead, and covered over with blood, as it came out of the womb, the navel not cut, neither washed in water, but in this plight cast out into the open field, as a child that was dead, among the carcases. And therefore God, when He was said to have compassion on him, said to him, *Live*, which implies that he was dead. In this plight was my soul, dead in sins and trespasses from my nativity, and from thence so continuing to that very day, together with that heap of actual sins that were the continual ebullitions of original sin. And no eye pitied me or could help me, but as God there, in Ezek. xvi., on the sudden—for it is spoken as a speedy word, as well as a vehement, earnest word, for it is doubled twice, “*yea, I said unto you, Live,*”—so God was pleased on the sudden, and as it were in an instant, to alter the whole of His former dispensation towards me, and said of and to my soul, *Yea, live ; yea, live, I say, said God.* And as He created the world and the matter of all things by a word, so He created and put a new life and spirit into my soul ; and so great an alteration was strange to me.

The word of promise which He let fall into my heart, and which was but as it were softly whispered to my soul ; and as when a man speaks afar off, he gives a still, yet a certain sound, or as one hath expressed the preachings of the gospel by the apostles, that God whispered the gospel out of Zion, but the sound thereof went forth over the whole earth : so this speaking of God to my soul, although it was but a gentle sound, yet it made a noise over my whole heart, and filled and possessed all the faculties of my whole soul. God took me aside, and as it were privately said unto me, *Do you now turn to Me, and I will pardon all your sins though never so many, as I forgave and pardoned my servant Paul, and convert you unto Me, as I did Mr. Price, who was the most famous convert and example of religion in Cambridge.* Of these two secret whispers and speeches of God to me, I about a year after did expressly tell Mr. Price, in declaring to him this my conversion, while it was fresh with me, as he well remembered long ; and I have since repeated them to others I know not how often, for they have ever stuck in my mind. And examples laid before us by God do give us hope, and are written and proposed unto us : Rom. xv. 4, “*For whatsoever things were written to us aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope ;*” and we use to allege examples, not only to illustrate and explain rules, but to prove and

confirm them. That God pardoned such a man in such a condition, is often brought home unto another man in the same condition, and impliedly contains a secret promise, that so He may do to me, says the soul in the same condition. And I remember that I, preaching at Ely two years after, urged to the people the example of Paul (which I was before referred to) as an example to win others, in having in my eye and thoughts the said experience of God's dealing with me in the same kind; and that the examples of such are to be held forth by God, as flags of mercy before a company of rebels to win them in.

Now as to this example of Paul, it was full and pertinent for that purpose for which God held it out to me; I then considered with myself the amplitude of my pardon, that it involved all sorts of sins of the highest nature, in which Paul had so walked as he was even upon the narrow brink of sinning against the Holy Ghost. And God suggested unto me that He would pardon me all my sins, though never so great, for boldness, hardness of heart, and heinousness of sinning, as He had pardoned Paul, whose story of forgiveness I was referred unto; and also that He would change my heart, as He had done Mr. Price's, who was in all men's eyes the greatest and most famous convert known to the whole University of Cambridge, and made the greatest and notedest example that ever was, of a strange conversion to God, and who was the holiest man that ever I knew one or other, and was then preacher at King's Lynn, whither my parents had removed from Rollesby, and then lived there.

The confirmations which myself have had, to judge that these instructions and suggestions were immediately from God, were these:—

1. I considered the posture and condition of my spirit, and that this suggestion took me when my heart was fixed, and that unmovably, in the contrary persuasions, not only that I was guilty of those sins, and had continued in them to that time, but that I was in a damned estate, without hope for remedy: and when God had set a guard upon me as the prisoner of hell, then came in these contrary apprehensions and impressions as it were in an instant, which impressions also were so deep and rooted in my heart that I remembered them ever since. And I did accordingly acquaint Mr. Price at Lynn a year and a half after this, setting them on upon my heart, in rehearsing to him the story of my conversion, which he exceedingly approved of.

2. It was a word in its proper season, like that which was spoken to Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and which ran in a proverb among the Jews, "In the mount the Lord will be seen," or "provide;" which they apply to the immediate remedy which God does use to afford out of pity to a man in a strait or distress, and which none but Himself can give remedy to. It is a word fitted and proper to such an occasion, and peculiar to the case of the person; a word that was quick and sudden, and

interrupting all contrary expectations and fears, as the manner of the speech was "Abraham, Abraham," as a man that speaks in haste to prevent any contrary fears. It is a word spoken in season, which Christ Himself was taught by God to speak to distressed souls, Isaiah l. 4.

3. This that was suggested to me was not an ungrounded fancy, but the pure word of God, which is the ground of faith and hope. It was the promise and performance of God's forgiving of Paul the most heinous sins that ever any convert committed who was saved; for he was the chiefest of sinners, as himself confesses. And this instance was directed unto me as the most pertinent to my case that I could elsewhere have found in the Book of God.

4. In considering the consequents and effects that followed after God's speaking to me, I was hopefully persuaded it was from God, for the things were fulfilled which God had spoken of. For, first, I felt my soul and all the powers of it, as in an instant, to be clean altered and changed in the dispositions of them; even as our own divines of Great Britain do set out in their discourse of the manner of conversion in the effect of it. Secondly, I found from the same time the works of the devil to be dissolved in my heart in an eminent manner, my understanding enlightened, my will melted and softened, and of a stone made flesh, disposed to receive, and disposed to turn to God. And, thirdly, I found my spirit clothed with a new nature naturally inclining me to good, whereas before it was inclined only to evil. I found not only good motions from the Spirit of God, as He was pleased to incite me formerly, not only flushings and streamings of affection, which soon vanish, or stirring my bodily spirits with joy, when I applied myself to a holy duty, but I found a new indweller, or habitual principle of opposition to and hatred of sin indwelling, so as I concluded with myself that this new workmanship wrought in me was of the same kind as to matter of holiness with that image of God, expressed, Eph. iv. 23, 24, but more expressly affirmed, Col. iii. 10. It was this one disposition that at first comforted me, that I saw and found two contrary principles, of spirit against flesh, and flesh against spirit; and I found apparently the difference of the opposition that only conscience makes against a lust, and that which the spirit—that is, the new work of grace in a man's heart—makes against the flesh. That the spirit not only contradicted and checked, but made a real natural opposition, such as fire does to water; so that the spirit did as truly lust against the work of the flesh, as the flesh against that of the spirit. And this difference I found not by reading, or hearing any one speak of it, but, as Austin did, I perceived it of myself, and wondered at it, for I may say of this combat, that it is proper and peculiar to a man that is regenerate. It is not in God or Christ, who are a fulness of holiness; not in devils, for they are all sin; not in good angels, for they are entirely holy; not in wicked men, for they have no grace in them; to fight with their corruptions

after such a manner. Fourthly, the consequent of this that fell out in my heart was an actual turning from all known sins, and my entertaining the truth of all godliness, and the principles of it, as far as I received it from the Word of God, and the best examples of godly men I lived withal. And in general, I took this course through God's direction and assistance, that I looked back upon my sinful estate and took a summary survey of my chiefest sins and lusts; and I found them to be love of pleasure more than of God, corrupt ends, especially of vain-glory and academic praise, which I sought with my whole soul: and God was pleased to direct me to take up, as the rule of my turning to Him, a sincere aim at His glory as the rule of all my inward thoughts, words, actions, desires, and ends whatsoever. And in this it pleased God to direct and assist me, to consider asunder all the sorts of actions I had gone through in my life, and to take them asunder in particulars, every one in order, but especially the principallest of them.

One of Oliver Cromwell's Letters.

FOR the Right Honourable Lieutenant-General Fleetwood,
Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland: These:—

1652.

Dear Charles,—I thank you for your loving letter. The same hopes and desires, upon your planting into my family, were much the same in me that you express in yours towards me. However, the dispensation of the Lord is, to have it otherwise for the present; and therein I desire to acquiesce;—not being out of hope that it may be in His good pleasure, in His time, to give us the mutual comfort of our relation: the want whereof He is able abundantly to supply by His own presence; which indeed makes up all defects, and is the comfort of all our comforts and enjoyments.

Salute your dear wife from me. Bid her beware of a *bondage* spirit. Fear is the natural issue of such a spirit; the antidote is Love. The voice of Fear is: If I had done this; if I had avoided that, how well it had been with me! I know this hath been her vain reasoning.

Love argueth in this wise: What a Christ have I; what a Father in and through Him! What a name hath my Father: *Merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.* What a nature hath my Father: *He is LOVE*; free in it, unchangeable, infinite! What a Covenant between Him and Christ, for all the Seed, for every one: wherein He undertakes all, and the poor soul nothing. The new Covenant is *Grace*, to or upon the soul; to which it, "the soul," is passive and receptive: *I'll do away their sins;*

I'll write my law, etc.; I'll put it in their hearts: they shall never depart from me.

This commends the love of God: it's Christ dying for men *without* strength, for men whilst sinners, whilst enemies. And shall we seek for the root of our comforts within us,—What God hath done, what he is to us in Christ, is the root of our comfort: in this is stability, in us is weakness. Acts of obedience are not perfect, and therefore yield not perfect grace. Faith, as an act, yields it not; but only as it carries us into Him who is our perfect rest and peace; in whom we are accounted of, and received by the Father—even as Christ Himself. This is our high calling. Rest we here and here only.

Commend me to Harry Cromwell: I pray for him that he may thrive, and improve in the knowledge and love of Christ. Commend me to all the officers. My prayers, indeed, are daily for them. Wish them to beware of bitterness of spirit; and of all things uncomely for the gospel. The Lord give you abundance of wisdom, and faith, and patience. Take heed also of your natural inclination to compliance.

Pray for me. I commit you to the Lord; and rest, your loving father,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

Death of the Rev. D. Macdonald, Shildaig.

IT is with profound sorrow that we record this month the decease of the Rev. Donald Macdonald, which took place at the Free Presbyterian Manse, Shildaig, Ross-shire, on Tuesday, the 20th August. Mr. Macdonald, who was several years above the threescore and ten, had been in failing health for some time, and had gradually become weaker and weaker, until at length on the date mentioned he passed away to his everlasting rest. We need hardly say that the removal of this beloved and revered minister has caused universal grief in the Free Presbyterian Church. We also believe that the sad tidings of his decease will be received with sorrow by friends in many parts of the world.

It is not our present purpose to give a sketch of the character and life of the deceased. We simply remind our readers that Mr. Macdonald was the one ordained minister in the Free Church who stepped to the side of Mr. Macfarlane, Raasay, when he raised a testimony for the truth of God and the doctrines of the Confession of Faith in 1893. These two ministers, along with elders, constituted a court that was known for a time as the "Free Church Presbytery of Scotland." They claimed—and we believe justly—to be the true representatives of the Free Church of 1843. Eventually, in 1894, the name "Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland" was assumed to designate the whole body, the word

Presbyterian being added for the exclusive purpose of distinction. Mr. Macdonald was never a man who took much part in ecclesiastical courts, but he was a faithful preacher of the Gospel and a devoted lover of the truth as it is in Jesus, and when he saw that "the truth" was at stake, he was prepared, by the grace of God, to stand for it at all hazards. Eviction from church and manse did not move him in the least from the steadfast position he took up. Eight years have come and gone, years full of much loving and honoured toil in Christ's vineyard, and now the humble, zealous, heavenly-minded servant of Christ has passed within the veil to the enjoyment of his rest and reward in the immediate view of that beatific vision towards which his eyes earnestly and wistfully looked on earth. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Much sympathy is felt with the Shieldaig congregation in the removal of their venerable pastor, as also with his esteemed widow in the great loss she has sustained.

Gnothuichean Eaglais.

STEIDH EAGLAIS AN DEALACHAIDH.

CHAN ann an diugh no an de a thoisich comh-stri ann an Eaglaisean Albainn; ach bha cogadh sonruichte ann airson fad deich bliadhna roimh am an Dealachaidhchan e a mhain gu'n robh an Eaglais Steidhte a' cogadh ris na cuirtean sìobhalta a dhion a cuid choirichean fein ach bha cogadh aice cuideachd ris na Fein-thoilich (Voluntaries) a bha a' feuchainn ri Eaglais agus Stàid a sgaradh o cheile. Gu math tric tha e air a radh gur ann mu thimchioll ceannas Chrìosd air na cinnich a bha a' chomh-stri eadar i agus na Fein-thoilich ach gur h-ann mu cheannas Chrìosd air an Eaglais a bha an cogadh aice ris an Stàid. Tha firinn ann a bhi 'cur na cuise mar sin ach cha'n eil an fhirinn iomlan ann. Oir ged a bha an Eaglais a' cur dìon air coirichean Chrìosd mar a Ceann ann a bhi 'cur an aghaidh aintighearnas na Stàid gidheadh bha i dol air bonn ceannas Chrìosd air an Rìoghachd. 'Se so ni agus chaneil e duilich a dhearbhadh.

Ma sheallas sinn ris a' Choir-thagrachd a rinn Eaglais na h-Alba ann an 1842 chi sinn gu'n robh i ag iarraidh air son aon ni gu'm fagadh an t-Uachdaran Aimsireil aice an t-saorsa ann an nithibh spioradail a bhuineadh dhi mar Eaglais Chrìosda, a dh'fheumadh a bhi umhal Dha mar a h-aon Cheann—an t-saorsa a chaidh a ghealltuinn dhi 'na steidheachadh. Bu mhi-cheart an ni do Eaglais gu'n gabhadh i steidheachadh o'n rìoghachd air cumhachan sam bith nach fagadh saor i gu uile thoil Dhe a dheanamh. O'n a dhiult an rìoghachd ann am Parlamaid eisdeachd ris a' Choir-thagrachd a rinn i cha robh an caochladh aig a' mhuinntir nach b' urrainn ceannas Chrìosd 'na thigh fein a reiceadh ach dealachadh

o'n steidheachadh, o'n ionmhas, o na sochairean a bhuineadh dhoibh mar Eaglais Steidhte. Shaoil iad gur e ni mi-cheart a bhiodh ann do'n Eaglais Chleireil steidheachadh a ghabhail air bonn nach biodh iad saor gu toil Dhe a dheanamh. Chreid iad cuideachd nach ann air bonn mi-cheart mar so a ghabh i an toiseach ris an steidheachadh a fhuair i ann an 1690 agus 'nuair a dh' aon an Rioghachd so ri Sasunn ann an 1707 gun robh an steidheachadh so air a dhionadh air chor 's nach gluaisteadh e. Cha robh iad an duil aon chuid gur h-ann o'n Rioghachd a bha a saorsa aice no gun robh i mar Eaglais gun saorsa. Ach bha na cuirtean lagha le aintighearnas a' buntuinn saorsa na h-Eaglais uaipe, bha iad a' cur cuing eile air a muineal seach cuing Chriosd agus a' tighinn a stigh eadar i agus an umhlachd a bha Criosd ag iarraidh. Gu bhi air an saoradh o'n aintighearnas so thagair iad an Coirichean—na coirichean a bhuineadh dhoibh mar thigh Dhe agus ris nach do bhean an Stàid nuair a rinn Stàid is Eaglais cordadh.

Nise an fhadsa dh'fheudamaid a radh gun robh a' chuis chonnsaid anns a' cheisd am bheil Criosd 'na Cheann do'n Eaglais. Ach seallamaid air son mionaid ris a bhonn air am feudadh an Eaglais saorsa spioradail a thagradh mar a coir o'n Stàid—eadar dhealaichte ris a' chordadh a rinneadh ann an 1690. Am foghnadh e do'n Eaglais so a radh, "'Se Criosd is ceann domh agus feumaidh mi mar sin a bhi saor gu a thoil a dheanamh." Dh'fheudadh an Stàid freagairt mar so, "Ro mhaith, ach am buin e dhomh-sa a bhi umhal do'n Chriosd a tha sibhse ag aideachadh gur E bhur Ceann agus bhur Righ." "Buinidh," dh'fheudadh an Eaglais a radh a ris, "oir is e Righ nan Righ e—'se Uachdaran Righrean na talmhainn E se Ceann nan Cinneach E." "Ma's e Ceann nan Cinneach e," theircadh an Stàid s i a freagairt, "an do rinn e a thoil aithnichte a thaobh na saorsa a tha sibh ag agairt? Oir, ma rinn, tha agam ri bhi umhal Dha mar bhean Cheann nan Cinneach." "Oh, rinn," theireadh an Eaglais, "agus 's ann air a' bhonn sin a tha sinn a' cur 'nur cuimhne an ni a tha mar fhiach-aibh oirbh ann an rathad umhlachd do Righ nan Righ. O'n is e a thoil fhoillsichte gu bheil an Eaglais gu bhi saor ann an nithibh spioradail, tha e 'na dhleasdanas dhuibhse gun an t-saorsa sin a bhuntuinn dhi." Chi sinn mar so aig àm an Dealachaidh gu'n robh a' cheisd, 'ne Criosd Ceann nan Cinneach, co dhiubh cho bunaiteach ris a cheisd, 'ne Criosd aon Cheann na h-Eaglais.

Is minic a tha daoine a' cumail a mach gur e saorsa spioradail na h-Eaglais an t-aon ni a bha an Eaglais Shaor ag iarraidh aig àm an Dealachaidh. Ach chunnaic sinn mar tha nach robh i ag iarraidh a saorsa a bhi air a h-aideachadh mar ni nach robh i a' creidsinn a bhi aice a cheana. Am feadh'sa bha i a' stri ris na cuirtean roimh 'n Dealachadh bha i ag iarraidh a bhi saor mar Eaglais Steidhte agus lean i air sin iarraidh gun an do rinn an Rioghachd aithnichte nach faigheadh i saorsa agus steidheachadh comhla. Mar sin cha mhor nach fheud sinn a radh re na bliadhnachan cogaidh sin gun robh Eaglais shaor na h-Alba ag

iarraidh aig an aon àm a bhi steidhichte agus saor. Cha reiceadh i a saorsa air son ni sam bith. Bha i saor ach a' dion a saorsa o ionnsuidhean naimhdeil nan cuirtean lagha. Chan e Eaglais Steidhte ag iarraidh a bhi saor a bh' innte oir bha i saor a cheana ach 'se a bh' innte Eaglais Steidhte a' cogadh air son a saorsa a chumail.

Ann's a' cho dhunadh gus an tainig am Morair *Low* a thaobh steidheachadh na h-Eaglais nach robh e 'na phung bunaiteach aig an Eaglais Shaoir a bhi 'creidsinn gur e coir na h-Eaglais a bhi steidhte cho math is saor 'se ar barail nach do thuig e ceart aobharan an Dealachaidh mar a bha an Eaglais a' sealltuinn orra. Air son aon ni cha tug e an aire gur h-ann air bonn Criosd a bhi 'na Cheann nan Cinneach a thagair an Eaglais a coir air an t-saorsa a bha an Rioghachd a' cumail uaipe. Cha'n e Eaglais gun a bhi steidhichte a chuir a stigh a' Choir Thagradh ann an 1842. Dh'iarr i a bhi air a dion 'na saorsa a reir nan cumhachan air an robh i steidhichte ach dh' iarr i a saorsa a bhi air a dion cha'n ann a mhaire a reir cordadh a steidheachaidh ach do bhrìgh gum b'e sin a coir a bhi saor am feadh a bhi i steidhichte. Cha b-urrainn Eaglais ach Eaglais Steidhichte a leithid do choir-thagradh a chur a stigh agus ma's ann air bonn a' choir-thagraidh a bha an Eaglais Shaoir air a togail, mar is ann, 'se sin a coir thagradh fathast, is tha e 'na ni soilleir nach urrainn an Eaglais Aonaichte coir cheart a thagradh ann an ainm no ann an aite na h-Eaglaise Saoire air dhoibh so a bhi 'na cheisd fhosgailte a bhi no gun a bhi 'creidsinn ann an coir na h-Eaglais gu cordadh-steidheachaidh a dheanamh ris an Stàid chan eil iad mar Eaglais ni's faide a' tagradh mar an coir a bhi aig an aon am saor agus steidhichte.

A ris cha tug e an aire cheart dha so—do bhrìgh agus gun robh an Eaglais ann an 1842 'nuair a thagair i a coirichean 'na h-Eaglais steidhichte cha robh feum no gairm aice gu bhi' leudachadh anns a Choir-thagradh air dleasdanas na Rioghachd ann an umhlachd do Chriosd mar Cheann nan Cinneach a bhi 'cabhair le 'Aobhar agus 'Eaglais. Tha gu leor anns an Tagradh a dh' innseas gur h-e sin an inntinn dhe'n robh i agus 'nuair a chuimhnichas sinn gun robh i an uair sin a cheana steidhichte saoilidh sinn gu bheil e soilleir gu bheil dleasdanas na Rioghachd a bhi' toirt gnais do'n Eaglais freumhaichte co dhiubh cho domhain ann an grunn a steidh ris an dleasdanas eile a bhi' fagail Eaglais na h-Alba saor gu obair agus toil a Tighearn a choi-lionadh.

Comhla ris a sin aig àm an Dealachaidh na dearbh dhaoine a chuir air bonn an Eaglais Shaoir bha iad air ùr-fhaotainn a mach á teas na comh-stri a bha aca ris no Fein-thoilich agus 'se ni iongantach a bhiodh ann aig a leithid sin a dh'am nach tugadh iad cothrom do'n dara Ceannas co-mhath ris a' Cheannas eile, Bha sar-fhìos aca cuideachd gun robh Leabhar-Aidmheil a' chreidimh a' teagasg dleasdanas an Uachdarain Chriosdail gu

bhi' toirt gnais do Eaglais Chrìosd. 'Se sin aon do na nithibh a bha na Fein-thoilich a' càineadh mar phung foirneartach agus geur-leanmhuinneach annsan Leabhar-Aidmheil. Cha d' fhuaras a mach an uair sin nach robh an Leabhar sin a' teagasg steidheachadh sìobhalta na, h-Eaglais. 'Nuair a chuireas sinn na nithe sin comhla tha e furasda fhaicinn gun robh e domhain ann an Steidh na h-Eaglais Shaoir a bhi 'creidsinn ann an deasdanas an Uachdarain a bhi 'cabhair na h-Eaglais, agus buidheann sam bith a sguireadh a bhi 'g aideachadh so nach e an Eaglais Shaor a tha ann. Ach feudaidh neach a radh ciod e an gnothuch a th' againn ri breth a thugadh ann an cuis nach buin dhuinn? Tha gnothuch againn, oir is ann mu steidh-bheachdan Eaglais Shaor an Dealachaidh a bha a' chuis agus saoilidh sinn nach do ghabh am breitheamh beachd mionaideach air seasamh na h-Eaglais air neo cha tugadh e aite na h-Eaglais Shaoir do'n Eaglais Aonaichte. Air an aon laimh cha tug e fainear cho domhan 'sa tha teagasg an Steidheachaidh ann an seasamh na h-Eaglais Shaoir agus air an laimh eile chaidh e am mearachd ann a bhi 'cothromachadh ro eutrom cho daingean agus a bha an Eaglais U.P. ann an aghaidh an teagaisg sin.

Anns an dol seachad thug e lamh air an Achd-mhineachaidh 1892 agus bha e dhe'n bheachd gun robh e ann an coir na h-Eaglais an Reachd sin a dheanamh. Dh'aidich e ma ta gu bheil puingean ann a tha cho bunaiteach ann an Aidmheil Eaglais agus nach urrainn a' bhuidheann a threigas iad a bhi ni's faide do'n Eaglais sin. Dh'ainmich e mar aon dhiubh sin gu'n cuireadh an Eaglais cul gu buileach ri a Leabhar-Aidmheil Creidimh. Nuair a tha aobhar ann air son puingean a tha an seadh 'ga chur an teagamh a mhineachadh tha sinn ag aideachadh gu bheil e ceart do'n Eaglais Reachd-mineachaidh a dheanamh. Cha robh sinn riamh a' cur an aghaidh sin. Ach 'nuair a tha ni a' dol fo ainm Achd-mineachaidh nach eil 'na Achd-mineachaidh tha feum air gun sealladh muinntir cha'n e a mhain ri ainm ach ri gne an rud a th'ann. Agus 'se so a tha sinn a' creidsinn a dh'fheumar a dheanamh a thaobh Achd 1892. 'Nuair a theid so a dheanamh gar am biodh rud ann ach an earrann mu dheireadh bu leor sin fein a dh' innseadh gu robh tuilleadh is mineachadh anns an Achd sin. Leis an earrainn sin tha an Eaglais 'ga fuasgladh fhein o theagasg iomlan an Leabhar Aidmheil agus 'ga ceangal fhein ris an ni a cho-dhuineas i fein a bhi do bhrìgh a chreidimh ath-leasaichte anns an Leabhar. Mur e so an Eaglais a bhi 'cur cul ris an Leabhar Aidmheil mar riaghailt sheasmhaich cha'n aithne dhuinne ciamar a ghabhas sin deanamh. 'Se ainm diolan a fhuair an t-Achd sin oir cha'ne mineachadh air puingean deasboireachd a th' ann ach atharrachadh buileach o fhìor chreud na h-Eaglais.

Cha'n iarramaid a bhi 'leantuinn ro fhada air an ni so ach tha dearbh-bheachd againn duine sam bith a chitheadh gne an Achd 1892 gun a bhi air a mhealladh leis an ainm nach b'urrainn e ach tighinn gus an co-dhunadh gu'n do threig an Eaglais Shaor a

seasamh mar Eaglais 'nuair a rinn i an t-Achd sin 'na lagh. Cha b'e cleachdadh Eaglais na h-Alba a bhi 'gabhail beachdan luchd-lagha mar riaghailt ann an gnothuichean creidimh agus ged a thigeadh ceud fear-lagha gu bhi do'n aon inntinn nach e treigsinn creidimh a bha anns an Achd mhineachaidh cha b'urrainn sinn mar dhaoine reusanta cunntachail ach am beachd a ghabhail a ghabh sinn agus an fhianuis a thog sinn a thogail. Cha choir do dhuine beo a bhreithneachadh agus a choguis a chur fo chasan an luchd-lagha. Tha eadar-dhealachadh eadar am beachd a ghabhas Eaglais dhe a teagasgan agus a bunaitean fein agus am beachd a ghabhas lagh na rioghachd dhiubh. Ged a theid an lagh agus an luchd-lagha cli cha'n aobhar sin do neach sam bith nach cleachdadh e a bhreithneachadh fein no gum muchadh e fianuis a choguis fein. Theid gnothuichean saoghalta a reir barail an luchd-lagha ach ged a bheireadh an lagh air falbh maoin na h-Eaglais air fad cha choir dhi a bhi neo-dhileas do'n taisgeach mhath a dh'earbadh rithe. Tha sinne riarachtaiche 'nar n-inntinn gu'n do ghabh sinn an ceum ceart aig an am cheart o chionn naoi bliadhna air ais agus an ceum a ghabh an taobh beag a tha anns na cuirtean a nis gun seas sin 'nan aghaidh ach ma 'se agus gun teid cuisean 'nan aghaidh ann an sin ged a dh'fheudas e cuid a tha lag-chridheach a chriathradh cha toir e aobhar do dhuine beo dhiubh dol a stigh leis an Aonadh. Ach cha'n eil fhios ma theid an lomadh nach ann mar sin is fearr dhoibh oir cuiridh e dearbhadh 'nan toil gu calldach fhulang air sgath fianuis a thogail.

'Se sealladh glormhor a th'ann a' ghrian fhaicinn a dol fodha ach ann an seadh 'se sealladh muldach a dhuisgeas bron cridhe a th' ann cuideachd—oir 'nuair a theid i fodha tha solus an latha a' falbh. Gidheadh ma luidheas i eiridh i a ris. Ma tha bron co-cheangailte ri luidhe na greine tha aobhar araidh air a shon ma theid i sios aig meadhan latha. Bha an t-aobhar broin so againn mar Eaglais uair is uair anns na bliadhnachan a chaidh seachad. 'Nuair a chlachadh Stephan rinn iad caoidh mhor air a shon. Cha'n ann airson gun deachaidh e do ghloir a rinn iad caoidh; rinn iad caoidh air son an call fein. 'Se ni mi-nadurra a bhiodh ann mur deanadh iad caoidh agus ged nach e ni nadurra a tha ann an gras cha'ne ni mi-nadurra a tha an agus chaneil e saoradh a' Chrìosduidh o fhaireachduinn air briseadh a' cheangail nadurra a tha anns a' bhas. 'Nuair a bheirear dhachaidh cruach arbhair lan abuich na h-am cha'n eil an t-aobhar araidh airson caoidh ann a th' ann 'nuair a ghearrar sios fianuis og ach tha aobharan araidh caoidh an 'nuair is e prionnsa agus duine mor ann an Israel a tha air a thoirt dhachaidh. 'S math a dh' fheudamaid caoidh a dheanamh mar Eaglais air son bas Mhr. Domhnallach a bha ann an Sioldaig "M'athair, m'athair, carbad Israel agus a mharshluagh," thuirt am faidh agus mar sin dh' fheudamaid a bhi as a dheigh. Anns an fhoghar tha gairdeachas aig an luchd-buain ach tha bron aig na h-achaidhean loma.

J. M.