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Life and Death.

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"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—PHIL. i. 21.

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THE Apostle Paul wrote these memorable words during his first imprisonment at Rome. He was enduring bonds for the Gospel of Christ. The end of his earthly career appeared to be at hand, and so he contemplates the great concerns of life and death. The sum of his thoughts is expressed in the words before us: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Should he live, life to him was Christ; should he die, death to him was gain. He knew, in either case, that Christ should be magnified in his body, "whether it be by life or by death."

Life had no value for the apostle apart from Christ. He did not consider that it was worthy of the name except in so far as it served to show forth Christ. Not so was his opinion always. The time was when he despised Christ, persecuted His followers even unto death, and would have extinguished, if he could, the name of Christ from the world. But the Lord, in the riches of His grace, stopped him in his downward career, and made him a powerful instrument for the advancement of that glorious name which up till then he destroyed. Christ now became to Paul fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely one. The love of Christ was so richly shed abroad in his heart that he was enabled to consecrate himself with intense devotion to the service of his Lord and Master. The man who formerly might have said, "To me to live is to hate and persecute Christ," now says in effect, "To me to live is to love and magnify Christ." He now considered the chief end of his life to be the glory of Christ, and he was by grace enabled to realise that end in a remarkable degree. In this he was a public example to the Church of God, and was authorised, as an inspired ambassador of Christ, to say, "Brethren, be followers together of me," "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

We notice by the way that there is here an indirect but powerful testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man's chief end is to glorify God; it is idolatry for any one to make a mere creature the chief end of life. And so when the apostle says, "To me to live is Christ," he bears testimony to the great and precious truth that Jesus Christ is no mere man, but is God over all, blessed for ever. It may be asked, however, "Are there not three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? Why does he not say, 'To me to live is the Father,' or 'To me to live is the Holy Ghost'?" The answer may be given: Certain it is that the Father and the Holy Ghost are as truly God as is the Son, but the glory of the three persons of the adorable Trinity has had its fullest, richest, and most exhaustive expression in the Son, Jesus Christ, as God manifest in the flesh. The Son, in the work of redemption which He accomplished, glorified God to the highest degree. He says to the Father, who is the representative of the whole Godhead in the covenant of grace, "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." All the attributes of a Triune Jehovah shine forth in their fullest perfection in the person and work of Christ. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself." The coming of the Holy Spirit, who applies redemption to the souls of men, is also contingent upon the work of Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin . . . of sin because they believe not on me . . . He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." It is clear, therefore, that when the apostle says "To me to live is Christ," he does not exclude the Father and the Holy Ghost, but that he includes both. He devoted His life to the glory of Christ, and in doing so, he devoted it to the glory of a Triune God.

Let us observe some particulars in which the apostle by his life magnified Christ and glorified God. *He lived by the faith of Christ.* Once upon a time he depended for eternity on his Hebrew descent, his morality, his religious zeal, his own righteousness, but he discovered by the teaching of God's Spirit that all this was a vain foundation to build upon, and so he was led to count it but loss and dung that he might win Christ and be found in Him. He now began to depend upon the righteousness of Christ as his only ground of justification before God. He now saw that all his former performances were but the dead works of a dead man, and so he looks to Christ as the light and life of his soul. In fact he finds every blessing his soul needs in view of time and eternity in Christ—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal redemption. He therefore says, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." *He preached*

Christ. "We preach," he says, "Christ Jesus the Lord." "We preach Christ crucified." The preaching of the Gospel was the great work to which he was specially called by God, and the central theme of his preaching was Jesus Christ. He delighted to unfold before the eyes of perishing sinners, the person, work, and offices of the Redeemer. He set Him forth in regard to His person as the eternal Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His essence, the Creator of heaven and earth, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, and as God manifest in the flesh, the Son of Man as well as the Son of God. He set Him forth, in regard to His work, as the Peacemaker between a righteous God and guilty man, the Redeemer of the Church of God by His own blood, and "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." He set Him forth, in regard to His offices, as the great prophet, priest, and king of His people. The apostle declared "the whole counsel of God," law and gospel, sin and salvation, and extended to his hearers warnings and invitations, promises and precepts. He did not omit, as many do in our time, the sterner aspects of divine truth. Christ is the deliverer from sin, and wrath, and hell, and it is not a true but a false Christ that is preached if these solemn realities are ignored. The law is handmaid to the gospel, and it is the Christ who has magnified the law, satisfied justice, made reconciliation for iniquity, and obtained eternal redemption that poor sinners need. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men;" and further, "The love of Christ constraineth us." *He exemplified Christ.* The apostle did not only live upon and preach Christ, but he also exemplified Him in his life and conversation. He was a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." The image of Christ was stamped upon his soul, as it is upon that of all the children of God in regeneration, but he grew in no ordinary measure into conformity with the image of the Redeemer. He was a bright example of meekness and lowliness of mind, love to God and His commandments, personal holiness of heart and life, intense desire for the salvation of sinners, and burning zeal for the glory of God. He was not perfect until death more than others; he often cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He did not count himself one that had apprehended, but he pressed towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Nevertheless, his work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope constituted a living testimony to the glory of Christ before the eyes of men. Such are in brief some of the particulars in which the apostle Paul realised his own words: "For to me to live is Christ."

Now, a remark or two in regard to the second part of the text: "And to die is gain."

Death is not a gain to all ; it is a loss to many, the greatest of all losses, the loss of the immortal soul for eternity. Death would not have been gain to Paul if he had died in his unconverted state. There is no doubt but at that period of his life he thought all was well with him, that he was on the sure way to heaven, that a man of his moral and religious character was certain of everlasting happiness. But when the Lord met with him in a day of power He showed him that he was a child of wrath even as others, and that he was in danger of hell-fire for ever. The apostle then learned that it is only those who are born from above and united to Christ to whom the dissolution of soul and body is a real gain. Once, however, he passed from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, he then became an heir of eternal life. Death was no longer the gate of hell ; it was now the gate of heaven.

Death would be a gain to Paul in many respects. He would then be freed from all misery ; sorrow and sighing of every kind would flee away for ever. He would then be delivered from all sin. The body of sin would be for ever destroyed. He would be perfectly conformed to the image of Christ. No spot or wrinkle or any such thing would attach any longer to the spiritual beauty of his character. He would be admitted into the heavenly fellowship of the glorified spirits and holy angels before the throne of God. His fellowship with the saints in this world was partial and broken ; the angels were invisible, though ministering spirits here. He would enter into the immediate and perfect fellowship of the God of glory. Who can tell what this meaneth ? It is certain that it is the same in nature as the communion which is enjoyed on earth, but the degree of access is so unspeakably greater in heaven that it cannot be comprehended now. Even the apostle who was favoured with such wonderful intercourse with the Lord has to say, "For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known." In the heavenly Jerusalem he would have the close, perfect, uninterrupted enjoyment of God ; there is no night there. "And they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." Such then are some of the respects in which death would have been an infinite gain to the apostle, as it is indeed to every person, small or great, who dies in the Lord.

We have attempted to open up the words of the apostle with a special reference to himself. But they are sometimes forcibly suggested to us when any eminent Christian completes his earthly course and enters the eternal world. There is one who is specially present to our mind on this occasion to whom reference is made in another part of this magazine, and whose loss we deeply mourn. Mr. Macdonald was one who loved Christ and was devoted to His service. His thoughts revolved with peculiar strength and vivacity around the person and work of the Redeemer, and he preached

Christ and Him crucified with rare unction and power. No one who ever heard him under the dew from above—and that was seldom wanting—can forget the impression. He has now gone to be “with Christ which is far better.” But he though dead, yet speaketh. His life, his preaching, his testimony for the truth of God, still make their voices to be heard. Let us seek to hear with profit.

The final question confronts each of us, “Where am I as to this living for Christ? Am I still dead in sins and living solely for this present world, and is Christ nothing but a mere name to me?” Should conscience require to answer, “Yes! that is so;” what a fearful case we are in! How can we calmly contemplate it? Death may come at any moment, and if it find us in this condition it will immediately carry away our souls to an undone eternity. On the other hand, happy are the persons who have a well-grounded hope that Christ is indeed precious to their souls, and that it is their genuine desire and effort to live for the glory of Christ in the world. Of such, however poor and imperfect they feel themselves to be, it may be truly said at last; “With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; they shall enter into the king’s palace.”—(Psalm xlv. 15.)

Notes of a Sermon

BY THE REV. DONALD MACFARLANE, RAASAY.

PREACHED AT SHIELDAIG, ROSS-SHIRE, ON SABBATH, 25TH AUGUST, 1901.*

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 “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”—2 TIMOTHY iv. 7, 8.  
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THE Apostle Paul, who was a prisoner at Rome when he wrote this Epistle, begins this chapter by giving a most solemn charge to Timothy concerning his work as an evangelist. There are two things in the exhortation he gives—(1) “Preach the word” (verse 2). The Word of God was to be the matter of his preaching, and not the word of man. “To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” (2) “Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry” (verse 5).

The apostle enforces his exhortation by *three* strong arguments or reasons. The *first* reason is Timothy’s accountability to God

* This sermon was preached on the occasion of the lamented death of the Rev. DONALD MACDONALD, Shielraig, which took place, as intimated in last issue, on Tuesday, the 20th August.—ED.

at the great day of judgment for the discharge of his duty in the office of the ministry of the Gospel. "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (verse 1). The consideration of their responsibility to God at the last day ought to make ministers faithful in the discharge of the duties of their office. The *second* reason is that Paul foresaw that heresies were to be introduced into the Church by false teachers. These teachers would preach *fables* instead of *the Word of God*, and when the people would be brought under the influence of their teaching they would not endure sound doctrine. There would be plenty of men in the office of the ministry, but the great majority of them would not be the ministers of Jesus Christ. Congregations, in electing pastors, would make choice of those who taught "fables" in place of the Word of the Lord. All congregations, therefore, that forsook the faith once delivered to the saints, would be supplied with heretical ministers—no vacant congregation among them—and so numerous would be the false teachers that a number of them might be got for each congregation. The people, having itching ears, would heap them up to themselves. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (verses 3, 4). For this reason it became Timothy to watch in all things, to endure afflictions, to do the work of an evangelist, to make full proof of his ministry. The *third* reason of the exhortation is that Paul was soon to be removed from the Church on earth. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Timothy was to be left behind; the burden of the Lord's cause was to lie the more on him. When some of the ministers of Christ, who were faithful in their day, are taken away from His work on earth, those still left ought the more to take the burden of the Lord's cause upon them, and to prove faithful to the trust committed to them.

In the words of the text the apostle, both for his own consolation and for the encouragement of Timothy, gives a review of his past life as an apostle and a minister of Jesus Christ, and his prospect of everlasting happiness after death.

In speaking from the text let us consider four things:—

I.—Paul's review of his past life—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith";

II.—His prospect in view of death—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness";

III.—The time when he expected to receive the crown—"At that day"; and

IV.—That the crown is not peculiar to Paul, but is the common privilege of all believers—"And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I.—Paul's review of his past life. He was now on the brink of eternity, and he looks back on his Christian course in the world. When men come to the end of their days in the world, it well becomes them to review their past life; for they are soon to render an account of the things done in the body, whether these be good or evil. Many shrink from this task because they have spent their whole life in sin, and in forgetfulness of God and of the things that belong to their everlasting peace. But the apostle could look back on much of his past life with pleasure and a great measure of satisfaction. He was not yet perfect, but he was faithful to the end in the work to which he was divinely called. Of course, his only ground of hope for salvation was the finished work of Christ—His atoning sacrifice—but his own work, the fruit of the Spirit, as a Christian and an apostle of Jesus Christ, was to be taken into account, as he was responsible to God at the day of judgment for the trust committed to him. As to this he could speak with great satisfaction, his conscience bearing witness with him. He could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In the review the apostle makes he mentions three things which comprise the whole work of his past life from the time of his conversion to Christianity to the close of his course, to which he now draws near.

1. "I have fought a good fight." The apostle was a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His life was a spiritual warfare. He began that warfare as soon as he was made a new creature and believed in Christ. He spent all his time before his conversion in the service of Satan, although he thought he was serving God. Many who are diligent and zealous in religion are serving the devil as much as those who live in open transgression of the law of God. But when it pleased God to reveal His Son in Paul, he forsook his old master, and enlisted in the service of Christ—the Captain of salvation. He was hitherto a faithful servant of Satan; he is now a faithful servant of Christ. What a great change grace can make! He is now preaching the faith which once he tried to destroy. Paul is now on Christ's side, and has to fight. Before his conversion he fought *against* Christ, His people, and cause in the world; but now he begins to fight *for* Christ and His kingdom. In this warfare he has to contend with three formidable adversaries—"the world, the devil, and the flesh." These three work in combination, the devil acting as the commanding general of the world and the flesh. But we may speak of them separately.

(1) The world. The world here signifies the men of the world, or worldly men. Christ speaking of His own people, says, "Ye are not of the world; I have chosen you out of the world." No sooner was Paul converted than the world turned against him—the world in the Church and the world outside the Church. The Jews were on friendly terms with him till he became a Christian and an apostle of Jesus Christ, but now they become his bitterest enemies. But the cause of the apostle's contention with the men

of the world, whether Jews or Gentiles, was not their attacks upon himself personally, but their attacks on Christ and His cause in the Church. He pitied them, prayed for them, preached the Gospel to them, and earnestly desired their salvation. But so long as they fight against Christ and His kingdom he must, as a faithful servant of Christ, fight against them. They are the aggressors; he is on the defence. He is defending the cause of his Lord and Master. If he is on the offensive side it is only for the purpose of overthrowing the strongholds of sin and Satan in the hearts of men. He was sent by Christ "to turn sinners from darkness unto light, and the power of Satan unto God." The fight in which the apostle is engaged against the world is "a good fight."

(2) He has to fight against "the devil." There are some men who do not believe in the existence of the devil, but this is because they are spiritually dead. When sinners are quickened by the Spirit of God they soon discover that this evil spirit exists. When they leave his camp and service he makes himself known. He wakens up with renewed energy, and uses every means in his power to make them return to their natural allegiance to him. And when he finds that his efforts in this respect are in vain, he adopts another method of dealing with them—he persecutes them. He uses the men of the world as his willing instruments, and very often men who profess to be the people of God. Paul suffered more from the Jews than from the heathen. So it is still. The people of God suffer more from graceless men in the church than from those who make no profession of the religion of Christ. These are the best servants of the old serpent to do his work. And what men cannot do he employs his host of fallen angels to accomplish. The apostle felt this. He says, "We are not ignorant of his devices." "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." All God's people who are left long in the world suffer from the devil, and have to fight against him, but the ministers of Christ suffer more from him than others. As in times of war between earthly kingdoms, the enemies aim more at the generals, captains, and other prominent officers in the army for the purpose of killing them than they do at the common soldiers, so Satan assails ministers more than others. As they are set up as watchmen upon the walls of Jerusalem, they are more exposed to his assaults, and he hits more at them. They are ruinous to his kingdom, and the evil one hates them with perfect hatred. There are, however, some men in the office of the ministry whom he does not annoy, for the simple reason that they serve him better in that capacity than in any other. But such shall suffer from him in eternity.

There are various ways by which the prince of darkness inflicts sufferings on the people of God—by manifold temptations, perse-

cutions, heresies in the church, &c., &c., but they are not left to contend against him in their own strength. Christ is with them in the conflict. They are weak and helpless in themselves, but He says, "Fear not, worm Jacob, I will help thee." "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." He provides them with an armour whereby they are to fight. They are commanded to put on that armour—the whole armour. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." This is the armour whereby Paul fought the good fight of faith; it is the armour by which all the ministers of Christ fight; it is the armour by which all the people of God fight. It is of God's making; it is therefore complete. It is stored up in the Bible that the soldiers of Christ in every age and place in the world may put it on, and fight the good fight of faith under the banner of the glorious Captain of their salvation—Jesus Christ. The devil has an armour for his own soldiers, and, alas! many in this age who profess to be the servants of Christ have put on that armour. They fight against Christ while they profess to be for Him; they are fed and clothed in body by King Jesus, but they serve the devil! They are in the office of the ministry, like some of old, for a piece of bread.

(3) The flesh. Flesh here means sinful nature. Believers are not in the flesh—they are not in a state of nature—but as long as they are in this world the flesh is in them. The Spirit of God wrought in them a new nature, but sinful nature is in them also. Although they are perfectly justified, yet they are not perfectly sanctified. There are thus in them two principles—the Spirit and the flesh, or, in other words, grace and sin. Hence the conflict between these two opposite principles. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." The Lord might, if He willed, make His people perfect in their sanctification in the day of their justification; but for wise ends He leaves them to struggle with indwelling sin till death, when they shall be made perfect in holiness, and

shall immediately pass into glory. The image of God was lost entirely and at once when man sinned, but its restoration is by a gradual process. Believers "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord." "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." But during their sojourn in the wilderness of this world the Lord's people have the flesh to contend with. The flesh warreth against them, and they must war against the flesh. The apostle Paul found the flesh his worst enemy; it made him groan, bleed, and cry bitterly, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The world and the devil could not injure him were it not for the flesh. His contest with the flesh, however, had a higher end than this. He loved God, he earnestly desired to be delivered from sin, which God hates, and to be perfectly conformed to His holy image. He had a hard struggle with these three enemies, but now at the end he shouts the shout of victory, "I have fought a good fight."

2. "I have finished my course." Believers have to run a race, as well as to fight a fight. The apostle here calls it a *course*. It is the journey of the Lord's people from the date of their new birth to the day of their departure out of this world. The course of some is long; the course of others is short. As the Lord has fixed the bounds of our habitation, so He has fixed the space of time we are to live in this world. Paul's course, like that of other Christians, was from the time of his conversion to the time of his death. It was within that space he did all his fighting as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; performed all his labours as an apostle and minister of the Gospel, and endured all his sufferings. He has now come to the end of his course, and says, "I have finished my course." He was at that time a prisoner, and he knew that his end was near. The Lord made this known to him. His work on earth was done, or his enemies could not put him to death. He was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure from the church militant to the church triumphant was at hand.

3. "I have kept the faith." What is meant by the word *faith*? In some parts of Scripture this word means the grace of faith—the faith whereby we receive Christ in the offer of the Gospel, and rest on Him alone for salvation; in other parts it means the word of faith, which is our warrant to believe in Christ, or the doctrine of the Gospel—including all the counsel of God revealed in His Word. It is in the latter sense we are to understand faith here. This is the faith which was once delivered to the saints. The word of reconciliation was committed to the apostles, and they kept it.

Paul says, "I have kept the faith." He not only preached the faith, but he also kept it. This was a great comfort to him at the close of his ministry. Others threw away the Gospel, and began to preach fables in its place, but Paul kept it, so that it came

down to us pure and entire. In keeping the faith he had to contend for it; for there were many trying to take it from him and from the church. But he kept it, although he lost his life at last for his faithfulness. He does not grudge that loss because he kept the faith. So pleased he is to lay down his life for the sake of the Gospel that he says, "I am now ready to be offered," for "I have kept the faith," which is to overcome the world. It is the duty of ministers, not only to preach the Word of God, but also to defend and keep it for coming generations. We cannot keep any word but that which we received. God gave us His Word, which is able to make us wise unto salvation. Those that will be faithful in keeping the faith may face death and eternity with joy as the apostle did, but on the other hand, those that will not keep it, after solemnly vowing to do so, may expect terrible accusations of conscience at their dying hour. I would not wish to be present at their death bed.

II.—Paul's prospect in view of death—"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

He told us what he did during his past life as a Christian and an apostle: he fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith. He now tells us what are his prospects in the eternal world to which he is going. He expects a crown. He has not yet received it, but it is laid up for him. He is still on earth; he shall not receive it until he cross Jordan; when he arrives in the kingdom of glory he will get it. He is on his way to that kingdom; he is on the very borders of it. Another step forward and he is within the kingdom. He will receive the crown then. He is sure of it. God's word is his warrant; Christ's merit is the ground of his hope, and his sonship is his title.

What are we to understand by the crown the apostle hoped to receive? It is spoken of in Scripture as "an exceeding weight of glory." "The Lord will give grace and glory." He will give grace to His people on earth; He will give them glory in heaven. Grace prepares them, and makes them meet for heaven. Glory is grace ripened to maturity; grace is the seed sown; glory is grace made perfect. Christians are imperfect in grace during their time in this world. They are therefore exhorted to grow in grace. In heaven they are perfect—"without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy and without blemish." The perfection of their nature in the holy image of God is included in the crown. Again, in heaven they shall be made kings, and as kings are crowned, so they shall be crowned. Their exalted state with Christ in heaven is their crown. They are in the most glorious condition which rational creatures are capable of. They are nearer Christ than angels that never sinned! No wonder that the apostle desired to depart, and be with Christ, which is far better. Oh, to die is gain to those who are in Christ! It may therefore be designated "a crown." The apostle calls it "a crown of righteousness." In Rev. ii. 10, it is called "a crown of

life." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In 1 Peter v. 4, it is called "a crown of glory." "And when the chief shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And in our text it is called "a crown of righteousness."

Now, although these three different descriptions are given of it, it is the same crown described in different ways, according to the circumstances of those to whom it is held forth for their comfort and encouragement, as may be gathered from the passages of Scripture referred to.

It may be called "a crown of righteousness" for at least two reasons. (1) Because it is secured by, and given to the redeemed on the ground of the righteousness of Christ. Salvation from first to last—grace and glory—is given to sinners for the sake of Christ, who secured that blessing for His people by His atoning death. (2) Because it is a just thing that they should receive this crown. Christ, the giver of the crown, is called the righteous Judge. When He punishes the wicked in hell and crowns the righteous with glory in heaven, He acts justly in doing so. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," etc.—(2 Thes. i. 6, 7.) At the day of judgment it will be as clear as noon-day, when the sun shines in his full brightness, that the punishment of the wicked and the glory of the righteous are according to justice. However unworthy in themselves God's people are, it is a righteous thing that they should be crowned with glory. "Worthy is the Lamb," who was slain for them. "God is just in all his ways, and holy in all his works."

III.—The time when the apostle expected to receive the crown—"At that day." There are two days when the crown shall be given.

1. The day when the soul shall enter heaven, immediately after death. Going through the shadow of the valley of death it is still night, except as it is made bright by the presence of Christ. He comes to meet the soul, to convey it safely to the Father's house, where there are many mansions. When He introduces the soul into that house then there will be a day, an everlasting day, whose sun shall never go down. That is the first day on which the believer shall receive the crown, with respect to his soul. Christ Himself shall put the crown on his head.

2. The second day is the day of the resurrection of the body. The body shall then be raised up in glory, re-united to the soul, and the whole person—soul and body—shall receive the crown of righteousness. It is not the same persons who carry the body to the grave that will carry it from the grave to heaven. Men carry it to the grave; angels will carry it from the grave to glory. It is Christ that will quicken the body. "I will raise it up at the last day." But He will employ angels—His ministering spirits—

to carry it. The body shall leave behind it in the grave all the infirmities that attached to it in the state of imperfection; it shall be made perfect and fit for the state of glory. It shall bear no mark of old age, such as grey hairs, dullness of hearing, dimness of vision, or any weakness whatever. So great the change shall be that you would wonder if it was the same body you saw on earth. Yea, the believer himself shall be in such a mist of wonder as Peter was in when he was in a miraculous manner taken out of prison. He for a time stood in doubt as to whether his release was real. So it shall be in the case of the believer at the resurrection with regard to his body; the change shall be so great. But after all we have said, how little we can say about the state of the saints in glory! "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we know we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

IV.—The crown is not peculiar to Paul, but is the common privilege of all believers—"And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Christ redeemed by His blood not only apostles and prophets and ministers of the Gospel, but also all the members of His mystical body. All the redeemed are made the children of God by the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in them. Being children they are heirs, "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." They are therefore entitled to the inheritance of their Father. They shall receive the crown of righteousness. But each person shall participate in the glory that shall be revealed in the measure of his growth in grace and usefulness in the Lord's vineyard on earth. Although they all receive the crown on the ground of the merit of Christ, yet there will be a difference in their glory, as one star differs from another in glory. There are some stars greater and brighter than others. So it shall be in heaven. They that have turned many to righteousness shall have more glory than others. Paul says of some—he was the instrument of their conversion—"Ye are my crown." These would be jewels in his crown. They that make more attainment in grace on earth shall have more glory in heaven. (Matt. xxv. 20, 21.) In nature the fruit of the harvest depends on the growth of the seed sown in spring; the more growth the more fruit in harvest. There are, in like manner, degrees of glory in the state of the saints in heaven. Believers are vessels of honour. But all the vessels are not of the same size and capacity; some are large, others are small. The large vessels contain more than the small ones, but both shall be filled with glory; the large vessel cannot keep but its fill, and the small vessel may say, "My cup is overflowing. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel." There will be no jealousy or discontentment among the saints in heaven; all will be fully satisfied with their lot, and they will praise the Lord for ever and ever.

The apostle gives a characteristic mark of those who shall receive the crown—they “love his appearing.” The appearing of Christ means His second coming. He came the first time to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; He will come the second time without sin, for the final salvation of His people. It is said of these that they look for Him. (Heb. ix. 28.) They look for Him, and “love his appearing.” The appearing of Christ at the last day will be most glorious. He shall appear in glory. It is to judge the world—the quick and the dead—He shall come again, to glorify His saints, and to punish the wicked. The mark the apostle gives here is a distinguishing one. It is a text by which we should try ourselves. When you think of the second coming of Christ to judgment, do you love His appearing? Or do you dread and hate it, like the criminal who dreads the sight of the judge who is to pronounce sentence on him? The wicked would wish that Christ should never come again, but His own people love His appearing. They love Himself; they love His first coming, and they love His second coming. They love His appearing, because it is then He shall be glorified in His saints, and admired of all them that believe; they love His appearing, because He comes to raise their bodies and to glorify them with their souls (they now wait for the adoption of the body); they love His appearing, because it is at His second advent vengeance shall be executed on His and their enemies, even “those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Many live as if there were no God, as if there were no distinction between good and evil, as if there were no account to render of the things done in the body. Many trample upon the cause of Christ and persecute His people. This is a grievance to the Lord’s people, but all shall be put right and finally settled when Christ, the righteous Judge, shall come again. They love His appearing, for these among other reasons. Happy are they who, in view of Christ’s second advent, can say at death with the apostle, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

Now, dear friends, you all know the solemn circumstances under which we meet here to-day. The words of our text can be appropriately applied to your late beloved pastor, who departed this life on Tuesday last, and whose remains you laid in the grave at Applecross on Friday. He fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith, and he received the crown of righteousness.

Mr. Macdonald’s career as a preacher may be divided into three parts—(1) as a schoolmaster; (2) as a probationer; (3) as an ordained minister. In the year 1850 he was employed as a teacher of one of the schools of the “Ladies’ Society for the Religious Improvement of the remote Highlands and Islands.” That Christian Society planted schools in many necessitous districts in the Highlands. As part of their object was to help godly

young men who studied for the ministry, students only were employed as teachers, and Mr. Macdonald having finished his first session at the university, was employed as one of their first teachers. It was that year the Society began their good work. It was also the year in which Mr. Macdonald realised a comforting sense of his interest in Christ. His joy was great, his cup was running over. Besides his work at the school during the week, he began to conduct meetings on the Sabbath. Old and young flocked to hear him ; all felt that a man of God had come among them. The fruit of his labours in that district, I believe, met him in heaven on his entrance there. He laboured as a teacher in connection with the Society till he finished his curriculum in the Divinity Hall—teaching the school during the summer months, and attending college in winter. He taught as a school-master in three different districts in South Uist—Uskeva, on the east side of Benbecula, Grinish on the west, and latterly at Stonybridge in the parish of South Uist. In all these places he conducted religious meetings on Sabbath days, and his services were much appreciated and much in demand by the Lord's people, and were also made effectual by the Spirit to the conversion of sinners. After finishing his course at college he was licensed as a preacher of the Gospel by the Presbytery of Skye, and laboured as a probationer in various parts of the Highlands till he was settled as an ordained minister at Shieldaig in the year 1870. He laboured faithfully in this congregation till the end of his life on earth. Mr. Macdonald had fully completed his jubilee in the service of Christ.

Mr. Macdonald *as a preacher*. His preaching was largely experimental ; it was so because he experienced the power of God's Word—law and Gospel—in his own soul as few did. He could say, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you ; that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." He preached the doctrines of the Word also. His experience was produced by the Word. He preached with great energy and unction when the Lord gave him liberty. He was dependent on the Lord in declaring His message. Few ministers have understood the words of Christ, "Without me ye can do nothing," better than Mr. Macdonald. He would require to receive something for his own soul before he could minister the bread of life to others. I often compared him to the prophet who came to the widow who was gathering sticks to prepare the last morsel for herself and her son. He asked her to give him something first (1 Kings xvii. 13). When Mr. Macdonald received from the Lord, he would then give to the people, and living souls would be fed, refreshed, and comforted. Though he was thus dependent on the Lord for utterance, yet he did not neglect his duty of preparing for the pulpit. The many sermons which he has left behind him in manuscript are an evidence of his diligence in this respect. He

always rose early on Sabbath or any other day he had to preach, and read over carefully and prayerfully his note book. Although he would, as he did, preach the same sermons over and over again, he would deliver them with new unction, so that they would be as new and refreshing to the hearers as the first time they were delivered. Such was his nearness to Him who is the fountain of life !

Mr. Macdonald *as a man of prayer*. Prayer was his element ; he prayed "without ceasing." In the manse, in the church, in the field, at sea or on land, in company or alone, he breathed out prayer. I never saw a man that prayed so much as he did. He kept up communion with the Lord by prayer and meditation. When he prayed in the closet or at family worship he wrestled in prayer till he enjoyed the presence of the Lord, and when he got that blessing he would continue long in the exercise, rejoicing in His favour, in which there is life. Even when asking a blessing on the food of which he was to partake, or returning thanks, he was the same. The enjoyment of God was the all in all to him. This accounts for his long, but most sweet and savoury exercises. His prayers, however, were not exclusively for himself ; they embraced others also. He prayed for the Lord's people ; for sinners, that they might be saved ; for the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the coming of the kingdom of God's dear Son. He believed that "the earth shall yet be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," and he prayed for the fulfilment of that promise. Many a prayer he offered up for the salvation of souls in his own congregation.

Mr. Macdonald was *a most spiritually minded man*, and he, like Enoch, "walked with God." In this respect he was a man in a generation. There have been in this generation greater ministers intellectually, but as for spirituality of mind and nearness to the Lord I knew none that would excel him. Since he first tasted that the Lord was gracious he maintained fellowship (not unbroken) with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ to the end of his pilgrimage in the wilderness. The fire of his first love to Christ kept on blazing to the end. Dr. Kennedy said in the course of a sermon that there were some (who were notable for their love to Christ) whose love to Christ never cooled in their heart. This may be truly said of Mr. Macdonald, though this was by no means his own feeling or opinion. When he enjoyed Christ the heat of his love was great, and when he went mourning, seeking Him whom he loved, it was as great, though not as comfortable. But it was Christ's love to him that was the cause of his love to Christ. He spoke sparingly of his own love to Christ, but not so of Christ's love to the Church. The descriptions he used often to give of Christ's love to the Church reminded one of those given of it by the great Samuel Rutherford.

Mr. Macdonald had conflicts as well as enjoyments. He, like the apostle, had to fight against the world, the devil, and the

flesh. He experienced the enmity of godless men to a large extent; but he fought as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and overcame at last. Though weak in body he had the heart and courage of a soldier. He would yield to no man, whatever his position in the Church or in the world might be, in that which he considered to be right. Some men thought they might twist him as they pleased, but found out in the attempt that he was not a reed to be shaken with the wind. His conflicts with the devil were severe, frequent, and of long continuance, even to the end. He was not ignorant of Satan's devices. So well known these were to him that when the evil one latterly approached him with his temptations, he would say, "I know thy black face; get thee behind me, Satan." As for struggles with the flesh or indwelling sin, few had a deeper experience of them. He had a deep sense of the sinfulness of his nature, which made him often cry, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, at a time when many were trying to take it away from the Church. He faithfully contended for it, and kept it for this and coming generations.

During Mr. Macdonald's time at Shildaig—about thirty years—he changed five dwelling houses. When he came to Shildaig he put up in a small house in the village. Shortly afterwards he got a better house, in which he lived till the manse was built. When he was evicted from the manse by the Presbytery of Lochcarron in 1893, on account of his faithfulness to God's truth, he put up in a small cottage on the south side of the loch. The Free Presbyterian Manse, which was built four years ago, was his last dwelling-place on earth. He is now in "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There he is at rest; there he is truly happy in the enjoyment of God for ever. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

In conclusion, a word to the congregation. The Lord favoured you much by giving you such a godly pastor as Mr. Macdonald. Much was given you, and much shall be required of you. He laboured long among you; preached the Gospel to you in love and faithfulness; and earnestly and sincerely sought your salvation. Though dead, yet he speaketh. Pray that the word spoken to you may be blessed to you. If you die in your sins after all you have heard from the lips that are now closed by the hand of death, he will rise up in judgment as a witness against you at the last day, and add his amen to your everlasting condemnation. You who are the Lord's people; and mourn the removal of your beloved pastor, let the thought comfort you that he has gone before you to heaven. You shall soon follow him; you shall meet him again where there shall be no separation. Follow his teaching and the example he has set before you. Be faithful unto death, and you shall receive a crown of life.

This is the first breach that death has made on the ministry of

our Church. I consider myself as the next to be taken away. Younger ministers may be called away before me, but according to the course of nature, I cannot expect to be long in this world. The removal of my brother and companion in labour is a new call to me to be up and doing for the Lord while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. It is with mingled feelings I think of the departure of my dear friend—feelings of sorrow and joy. I deeply mourn his loss on earth, and I rejoice to think of his happiness with Christ in glory. He left a blank behind him—a blank in the manse, a blank in the congregation, a blank in the Church, and a blank in the world. Mr. Archibald Cook used to say when he heard of the death of a godly person, "So much of heaven has been taken from the world." I may add that his removal has caused a breach in my own heart. May the Lord raise up other faithful ministers for His work on earth!

Notes of a Sermon

BY THE LATE REV. CHRISTOPHER MUNRO, STRATHY.

PREACHED AT KILMUIR, SKYE, ON 10TH MAY, 1867.*

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."—TITUS iii. 5, 6.

IN the preceding verses Paul exhorts, or rather instructs, Titus as to the temper Christians ought to manifest towards all men, which, in general, ought to be gentle and meek. One ground on which he urges this is that they themselves were "sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another"; the other is that, if now they are different, this had happened, not by their own wisdom, nor on account of any merit possessed by them, but from the grace of God, which may be said to be that which the apostle describes in the verses now read as a subject of discourse.

* These notes, hitherto unpublished, are from Mr. Munro's own manuscript. The Rev. Christopher Munro was descended from the famous John Munro, "Caird" of Kiltarn, Ross-shire, and was also nephew of the eminent Rev. John Munro, Halkirk, Caithness. He was born in the parish of Rosskeen, Ross-shire, in 1817, was ordained in Tobermory in 1857, was translated to Kilmuir, Skye, in 1864, and thence to Strathy, Sutherlandshire, in 1870, where he died on the 1st October, 1885, aged sixty-eight years. Mr. Munro was an able minister of the New Testament. Possessed of an intellectual and cultured mind, he was also highly esteemed as a man of deep vital piety, and as an impressive preacher of the Gospel of Christ.—ED.

In the text we see the following particulars :—

I.—The source whence salvation has flowed to sinners.

II.—The nature of salvation, or in what does it consist.

III.—The efficient Agent in this work.

IV.—The meritorious grounds thereof.

I.—We are to consider the source of this salvation, which is laid down here in two ways, first, negatively, and second, positively.

In the *first* he declares what is not the source or cause thereof —“not by works of righteousness which we have done.” Some may ask why does he state that it is not by works of righteousness done by them? There are two obvious reasons for it. The first is that man by nature is disposed to entertain the opinion that God cannot do good to any but to him who deserves it at His hand, and consequently that everyone who receives any benefit from Him must be good; by which view he makes God his debtor, and claims for himself all the glory, so far as merit is concerned, and so robs Him of the glory of His sovereign grace—a view which is very sinful, and therefore very dangerous to man and very dishonouring to the glory of God. Man being thus inclined, and God having purposed to reveal the truth, could not leave him to err in so important and vital a matter. The other reason is, that there is no good in man as a sinner, and therefore that he cannot merit anything at God’s hand. By there being no good in man, I mean that he is wholly corrupt, sinful, or unholy, and therefore, as an unclean thing, no clean thing can come out of him. On these two points Scripture is clear and explicit. “There is none righteous; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” “We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin,” that is, that they are sinners, have transgressed the law, are under its curses, and liable to the death threatened therein against the sinner. “Therefore by the works of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God.” No man deserves good; no man merits salvation; no man shall receive pardon; no man shall escape from the just judgment of God on the grounds of any personal merit, or because of anything he does.

Some may say that this is what is taught in Paul’s epistles, but that James, who was an apostle too, says that men are justified by works and not by faith, and that if they both spoke the truth, how are statements so contradictory to be reconciled? Is it possible to reconcile them? They, no doubt, both spoke the truth, and therefore did not contradict each other, for the truth is not contradictory—there is harmony in every part thereof. If they meant the same thing, they must be contradictory, and therefore cannot both be true. But as they *are* both true, they cannot have the same thing in view, but things that differ. Is not

justification that of which each of them treats, and must they not then speak of the same thing? It is quite evident that each of them speaks of justification, but justification may be looked upon from two points of view, and it is quite clear that Paul, in the passage quoted, looks at it or considers it from a different one than James. The former treats of it as an act which takes place in the sight of God as a judge, or in the court of God and of conscience; whilst the latter as evidently treats of it in its external fruits in the sight, no doubt, of God, but especially in the sight of men, and more particularly in the sight of the Church. It is quite clear that the doctrine of Scripture, as to the first aspect thereof, is that it is by faith in Christ, and not by works of law, that man is justified. Supposing then that a man said unto the Church, or to yourself, if you will, that he had faith, and had believed in Christ, and so was justified, what would you think about him? Would you take it for granted that he was justified because he said so? It is not likely. You might perhaps say, "That is a great privilege, a great blessing, which I know to be given by God to sinners, and which He may have given you, but as faith is an exercise of the soul, and therefore hid from the observation of your fellowmen, I cannot for myself conclude, on the ground of your mere statement, that you are justified. Knowing, however, from Scripture that those who are sincere believers bear a certain character and pursue a certain tenour of conduct, I must therefore see you manifesting such a character ere I can have any satisfaction as to the truth of what you allege." This is the very thing that the apostle James demands. He says, "You maintain you have faith; that may be true, but show me by your life or your works that what you state is really the case. It is easy to *say* that you have faith—that you have believed—but as that is an act of the soul which I cannot see directly, therefore I cannot have any proof of its truth till I see you walk in the ways of God and bring forth the fruits of repentance." It is thus that all who profess faith in Christ are tried, and it is according to their walk or their fruits their fellowmen judge whether they are believers or not. "By their fruits ye shall know them." You will not believe that an ignorant or profane man, or one who habitually breaks God's law, is a believer, however strenuously he may maintain the contrary. It is those who lead a life of godliness you take for believers. This, then, is the point of view from which James treats of justification, and you must therefore perceive that there is no variance between what Paul and James teach on this subject, and that both are easily reconciled.

In the *second* place, under this head, we are to consider the positive ground or source of salvation, or that from which salvation comes, and that is God's mercy.

Mercy, according to some, is not an inherent attribute of God. And if by mercy be meant only an affection of pity such as moves man to feel for the misery of a fellow-creature and causes him

pain, an uneasiness till it is removed, or that blindly impels him to attempt his deliverance, I suppose few will venture to say that there is mercy of this kind in God. But that mercy is an essential attribute of God is, I think, clearly revealed in Scripture. In declaring His name to Moses, He calls Himself "the Lord God merciful and gracious," etc. This He calls His name, which must signify either His essential nature, or the manifestation He gives of Himself in His works, or what is called His declarative glory; and should we take it in the latter sense, it leads, in my opinion, to the same conclusion, namely, that mercy is an essential attribute of God. I suppose there can be no two opinions on what is meant when God is said to glorify Himself, and if it be His revealing Himself, not only in His Word but in His works, and especially in His work of redemption, where He not only makes Himself known objectively, but communicates unto the poor and needy soul out of His infinite fulness what renders it unspeakably and eternally happy; it is evident that all His works are indications of what He is in Himself, or the result of some property or attribute that is essentially in Him. The creation of the world is an indication of power and the result of omnipotency, which no one doubts to be an essential attribute in the Creator. The laws, according to which it is sustained which are so manifold and intricate in their operation are the result and indications of infinite wisdom, another attribute of His being, so that in the creation and in sustaining it, He reveals what is essential to Him, viz., power and wisdom. We may, it appears to me, safely say then, that God does nothing contrary to His essential being, but all things in accordance with it. There must be then a property in God agreeably to which He shews mercy, and which therefore is in Scripture called mercy. And so we read that He delighteth in mercy. Those who say that mercy is not an inherent attribute seem to think that the legitimate consequence of this would be that He must shew mercy unto all. But with all deference, I cannot see how this consequence could follow when it is the independent, eternal and sovereign God of whom it is said. To say or maintain that God, absolutely considered, is under a necessity of doing anything external to Himself, is virtually to deprive Him of Godhead, of His eternal independence and sovereignty. It was not necessary for Him to create the world. It was of His mere good pleasure He purposed to create it; and it is because He was omnipotent He was able to accomplish His purpose; and are we to conclude that because He did not create it from a necessity of nature, omnipotency is not an inherent attribute? To say that if mercy were an inherent attribute of God, that would lead to its necessary exercise, would be the same as to say that His omnipotency laid Him under the necessity of creating the world, which no one if right minded can for a moment maintain.

What then is this mercy? It is that attribute, according to which He does good to the unworthy; saves sinners from death;

and makes them heirs of life ; which He has purposed to do, not from any necessity arising from this attribute, but in the exercise of that sovereignty which is an essential part of His glory. This sovereignty is that which is meant when He says, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." It is then in God Himself we are to enquire for the source of salvation ; it is in Him, and not in the sinner. God might justly execute the sentence of death upon each one of them, but of his own free will, according to the counsel of His will, He purposed to shew mercy to some sinners, but not unto all. For had He shewn mercy unto all, men might say that He could not do otherwise, and so feel little grateful to Him, and deny Him the glory which is His as a merciful and sovereign God. This mercy is then not only sovereign, but eternal, and unchangeable, as we frequently see in the Word of God.

II.—I am to direct your attention to the nature of the salvation with which He saves sinners. It is a salvation that consists in "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Regeneration is the making of a thing again, and when applied to a sinner, it means the same as to be born again or made a new creature. Man by nature is impure, guilty, and unholy, and so this salvation is represented as a washing, which is a well-known process adapted to cleanse anything that has been soiled. We often speak of a sickly and decayed constitution as requiring fresh blood, which is called the life of the body. The humours of the body are become diseased so that instead of being life the blood is turned into poison. Could we suppose pure and healthy blood infused into a constitution of this habit, it might be said to be renovated. So it is with the sinner whose soul has been corrupted and defiled, and is therefore dead spiritually, when spiritual life is imparted or communicated unto him. He is no longer the same dead diseased person he had been heretofore, but is re-animated by new life from the pure, unadulterated fountain of life, that diffuses new vigour and spiritual health through his whole nature.

He is likewise washed from the guilt of sin ; the curse under which he had lain is removed ; his sins are pardoned and the filthy rags of his own righteousness removed, and he is clothed with the robe of righteousness and the garments of salvation ; so that in a certain sense there is no iniquity nor transgression seen in him by Him who is of purer eyes than to behold sin. He is renewed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which I think means his sanctification, a process commenced in the day of his new birth, and that continues to be carried on in him till the period of death, and which consists in the growth of the new man till he comes to the full stature of man, or till he is made perfect in holiness. This is a work rendered necessary by the dwelling of sin in him, which seems good to God to be the case as long as man tabernacles in the body. It consists in man being renewed after the image of

God, which change evinces itself by men dying unto sin as to its love and power over them, and living unto righteousness ; growing in love to God and in delight in His law ; growing in resolution and strength to obey His will in all things ; increasing in knowledge of sin, of its deceitfulness, strength, and vileness ; and so they not only see their need more clearly but are become more earnest in contending against sin, and rely more on the grace that is in Christ for obtaining the mastery over it, or for being made more than conquerors in the warfare against it.

III.—Under this head I shall only remark that the agent is the Holy Ghost, the third person of the adorable Trinity, the same in substance, and equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, and whose love and grace towards the elect is also equal to that of the other persons. The Spirit then who comes forth from the Father and the Son, and who in fulfilment of Christ's promise has come and dwells in the Church, is the agent whose work is to apply the redemption purchased by Christ. This work is such as cannot be executed by any other than one who is God, and being committed to the Third Person, the work cannot fail of accomplishment. When the sinner lays to heart how depraved he is, how impossible for him to do any good, and when, under divine teaching, he apprehends in some measure the nature of holiness, and when in trial he utterly fails in reforming himself, he is ready to exclaim, "Who can be saved?" To which question the words of Christ may be stated as a reply, "What is impossible with man is possible with God." As it is God's work to regenerate and renew, it is possible with him to change and make a new creature of the most obdurate, most sinful and vile. When He has commenced this work, shall He not carry it on? Submit to Him then ; beware of grieving Him, of quenching Him. He has given you His word, and promises to lead you in your endeavours to walk in the way of His commandments.

IV.—There is to be noticed, in the fourth place, the Second Person's work. Paul says that God the Father poured out the Spirit abundantly on them "through Jesus Christ our Saviour." He is then the way through which the Spirit comes forth. Sin erected a barrier between the divine mercy and the sinner, which had to be removed ere mercy could flow forth to him. There was no way of removing this but by fulfilling the law, by obeying the law in all its extent, and by satisfying justice that demanded the sinner's life. This Christ did by becoming the head of the covenant of grace, for whom, in this capacity, a human body and soul were prepared, which nature He assumed to Himself. His person as mediator being thus constituted, He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, who was given Him without measure, and who rests in Him for ever. Having, under this anointing, magnified the law and made it honourable, the Spirit found a way to come forth to each of His people to apply the redemption purchased by Christ. Christ's work did not purchase the Spirit, as some say, if

by purchasing Him they mean the gaining the love of the Spirit to objects towards which it did not formally exist, or the rendering Him willing towards a work to which He was not till then inclined ; for this could not take place, since the love and will of God as three-in-one were eternally the same, and moved together in loving and electing the saved, and required in regard to the Godhead, considered personally, only the removal of the obstacles in the way of truth and justice, to come forth freely towards them. The love and goodwill of God was not the result of Christ's death, but the giving of Christ and delivering Him for our offences was the result of God's eternal and sovereign love to His people. Christ therefore, having been given and constituted mediator, and having finished the work given Him to do, is the only channel through which this love reaches the elect, and through which all the blessings of the new covenant are bestowed on them. And as the gift of the Holy Ghost is a principal one of those blessings, it is then, according to our text, through Christ He is poured forth abundantly as water upon him that is thirsty, and as floods on the dry ground.

We have thus set before us here the source of salvation, which is God's sovereign mercy ; the manner in which it is applied ; and the way in which it was purchased. We have the work of each person of the Trinity declared in few words, and we see that all is of God, and depends not in any sense on man himself, and as it comes altogether from Him, so to Him must belong the glory. Here, then, boasting is excluded, and God appears as the most glorious author and finisher. If it be of Him, how certain it is that it cannot and must not fail. See here the rock of salvation ; see here the ground of trust, of hope, and steadfast expectation.

We see here also the nature of salvation. It is not what some would desire, viz., a mere deliverance from hell or from wrath. Many at times are very anxious to escape what God threatens against sin, and what their own consciences tell them they deserve, who are quite at ease in their state of spiritual death, ignorance, and distance from God, and rebellion against Him, who are contented with the world and pleased with the pleasures of sin. But there is no salvation as long as anyone is in this condition. No sooner does the Spirit of God quicken the soul than sin is felt, not only as a burden of guilt on the conscience, but as a loathsome disease that renders him abominable in the sight of God. It is felt in its contrariety to God's authority, law, truth, justice, and holiness, and therefore as an evil that is highly dishonouring to Him, and that must separate them from Him as the fountain of living water. Hence the necessity of such a salvation, as is described here, is seen and acknowledged, and earnestly sought after as most precious and desirable. This was the salvation David sought after, and in which he said he would greatly rejoice, and for which at another time he waited with failing eyes.

Is this the salvation you need to-day? Can you call God to witness that it is, and that you must die without it; that on this point you have no doubt whatever, and as little that it is God who must save you? Do you see, then, in the three persons of the Godhead, and in their respective parts in the great salvation, what suits your state as a sinner, or as one needy and poor? Cast yourself on Him, wait on Him, give Him no rest till He appear unto you as your God. Do you desire some motive to stir you up to praise and glorify Him? Look to Him as revealed here, and then you shall be lightened, and be not put to shame, and then you shall magnify Him. Let the consideration of this salvation lead the careless to think of their state and their need of the Holy Spirit. How sad to see people who need Him more than anything else, passing their time absorbed in the events of this life, while there is no thought about this.

Letters of the late Donald Mackay, Student.

LYNEDALE LODGE, BY PORTREE.

I RECEIVED your very kind and welcome letter last week. It is some time now since I came to this place. There are some very excellent people here. I find it good sometimes to be here, though I am often very dry.

You seem to think I will not enjoy myself without the presence of Jesus. I wish I had a heart like the church, for her Beloved was to her the chiefest among ten thousand. The question, Where is my Beloved gone? seems to have gone deeper into her heart than any other question. But what He said to them was this, that He would not leave them comfortless, "I will come to you." By this we may learn that they were comfortless when He was away. Through the fall we have lost all comfort, therefore all the comfort which we enjoy is through Christ Jesus. Even all outward comforts, which all people enjoy, are through Him. But as sure as He was the chiefest among ten thousand to the church, so will He be to every soul which will be brought to the same nearness as the church. But it is to the spiritual mind He is precious, and not to the carnal mind, and He will be no more precious to the carnal mind in a believer, than He will be to the same in another. Dr. Kennedy, in writing of the stones and filthy rubbish taken from the island (Leper Isle), says that the savour it gave quite sickened him, but he says that in course of time he learned that it served the part of ballast. He says, the more the rubbish disgusted him, the more it made him long for the farther shore.

"The troubles that afflict the just
In number many be;
But yet at length out of them all,
The Lord doth set him free."

How precious will the Hand, which has taken you from the broad way, appear to you at a judgment day, when you will see your fellow-creatures going to the lake that burneth for ever and ever with no hope of ever returning, or of ever hearing of mercy to be shown them! O that He would not keep silent, that He would be like a roe or a young hart until the day break and the shadows flee away! I think I heard J—— saying something like this, "that nothing will make the day but the rising of the sun." So nothing will give real comfort to a spiritual soul but the Sun to rise. O to taste as much of the sweetness of Jesus as would keep us from doing with any other thing in His stead! We ought to be thankful for the jealousy that would keep us from doing with other things in His stead! O that I had such a jealousy! Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? O that we would come to the knowledge of Jesus!

Satan will be often saying that there is no such refuge as is in Christ, but greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world, and when the word comes with heavenly power, and light, and love, Satan is not able to stand before it. He cannot stand the Holy Spirit in the word. But it is the duty of the living soul to use the sword of the word, although we would feel quite dry, for Satan does not like the word at any rate. He will be saying that there is no hope for the soul, but he has his own ends in view; he would like the soul to give up all hope and get quite careless, for he knows well that the hand of the diligent maketh rich . . .

Death in itself is a fearful thing. Who would get safe over the Jordan if it was not for the mighty Lord, who is with His people in it? So it will be a fearful thing to enter death without His presence. But He is the life of every soul who waits on Him, and believe me, He will not leave any soul who counts the time long without Him on the earth. O to taste with the soul that said, "My sure and all-sufficient help is in his name." Pray that the Spirit may take me in to the sufferings of Jesus for His Church that I may see the fearfulness of sin. O that this would be the beginning of days with me, to walk with Him from this time forth, and that the time past would do for me to walk according to the course of this world! O to be dead to the world, that we might live to Him who is raised from the dead, and so to be living in truth! There is life eternal in believing that Jesus is the Son of God, for no one can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost. But remember this:—

"He from the dust doth raise the poor,
 • That very low doth lie;
 And from the dunghill lifts the man
 Oppress'd with poverty."

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after His love, and are never right without it. Be sure and pray for us.

I am, your dear friend,

DONALD MACKAY.

LYNEDALE LODGE, BY PORTREE.

I received your very kind and welcome letter some time ago.

I think, if I am not mistaken, my trouble was revealed to you, but pray more that I may be made holy than anything else, for without holiness no one will see His face. I wish I had twenty times a stronger thirst for holiness than I have. This is not despising at all your counsel in seeking grace to support us when going through the place of refinement. But I know not anything that I have more need of than the power of the truth, that is, to behold the glory of God in the truth, and to be changed thereby. I know my heart is grieved for my sins, but for progress in inward holiness where is it? It is this progress I have need of. How precious it would be to gain a little in that way! But I know if I am united to Jesus as the branch is in the vine, and in that way drink in the love of Jesus, I will one day be made holy. I think a soul that is, in truth, in Christ has reason to leap for joy at the thought of such a day, for in that case, though this body is sown in corruption it will be raised in incorruption, and though it is sown in dishonour it will be raised in glory. Who can understand the depth of the love of God to a people that He has redeemed from the curse of the holy law? He revealed His love to them in washing their feet with water, but who can understand the depth of His love in washing them in His own blood? And although they have to taste bitterness going through the wilderness of their own corruption and sin, yet His love is unchangeable towards them. On the other hand, who can understand the joy of the soul at death, leaving this sinful body? Little wonder though Paul said that to depart and to be with Jesus was far better. How the body will rejoice at the resurrection, when it will be raised in incorruption! The state of a sinner brought to Jesus by the drawing of the Father may be compared to gold that would be put into the fire oftentimes, and at first you would scarcely see gold in it at all, but He who created the eye saw some gold in it (I do not mean by nature). And although some have gone through places of refinement on earth—not only some, but all of them have been refined on earth—yet their bodies go down to the grave in corruption. Who can understand the depth of the wisdom and the love of God, even towards their bodies, in changing them so much after death, their bodies being united to their Saviour all the while in the grave? O for the joy of the body that will be raised in incorruption, and O, the fearfulness of the body that will be raised to enter the second death, to fall into the hands of the living God as a consuming fire! Who can understand the joy of the elect of God on that day, and the misery of all who will not be in Him who is true, for the Church are in Him who is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ?

But the question may be asked—What are the fires that they now go through to make them holy? Tell me if you think I am wrong in this. As they are living creatures, and not dead as gold

is, they need meat and drink to support them in the fires. The meat and drink of the kingdom of heaven is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. A great fire may be made up of more than one kind of stuff. So this fire may be made up partly of the troubles of this life, partly of the sins of our own nature, partly of the sins that prevail against us, partly of backslidings; and to some a part of it has come from false professors, a part from the world, and, I am not saying, but a part of it may come from the true Church of God, and another part from the holy law. An angry word from a loving father enters a child deeply, and makes him learn more obedience in the future. And even supposing he would not utter an angry word at all, if he would only keep silent and not utter words of love, the child would be grieved. So this may be a part of the fire. But if I know anything of the work of the Spirit, I do not know anything that makes them thirst more for the day of their deliverance than the sin of their own nature. The sins of the world also go to make up the fire which troubles them.

I am, your friend,

DONALD MACKAY.

Faith and Assurance.

A LETTER OF THE LATE REV. ALEX. STEWART, CROMARTY.

2nd May, 1827.

MY DEAR —, You invite my "strictest animadversions" on your last letter. I therefore freely offer you a few remarks.

First, then, as to the fundamental maxim with which you set out, and which in a subsequent part of the letter you think fully established, viz., that faith is a belief of God's testimony (1 Tim. i. 15); that Christ came to save sinners, and is able and willing to save to the uttermost; and that an assurance of personal salvation is involved in the very belief of this testimony.

When the great king made the marriage supper, and sent his servants to invite the guests, they (the guests) do not appear to have intimated the slightest doubt either of the existence of the feast, or of the sincerity of the invitation. But they made light of it, and with one consent excused themselves on other grounds. So it is to this day. Take any congregation where the gospel is preached. The people generally know and acknowledge that Christ came to save sinners, and that they are freely invited. I do not say that there is not still a lurking unbelief in their hearts of Christ's willingness and ability; but it is not often avowed, nor do they seem properly conscious of it. The chief obstacle, I apprehend, is in that disposition intimated in the parable,—a repugnance of heart, a making light, undervaluing, and neglect of the great salvation—a superior attachment to worldly objects.

You will not easily state a single proposition in the whole system of revealed truth which Satan does not firmly believe; and so may a man in like manner, and yet his heart be in no better moral condition than Satan's, and his final destiny the same. Unquestionably, "he that believeth shall be saved;" but it is not a point to be taken for granted, that this mighty consequence follows, whatever we may think or call believing. There seems to be a faith which leaves the heart unchanged, and a faith which cannot exist except in a renewed heart.

Again, as to personal assurance being involved in the very belief of God's testimony. Unquestionably, the record is true; and he who believes it will be saved. These are Bible propositions—true before we were born, before we believe them, and whether we believe or not. But the proposition, "A. B. will be saved," is nowhere revealed, and may be true or not, as happens. It depends on a previous point—Is A. B. a believer? I do not exactly deny your statement, as if it were erroneous *in toto*. There is truth in it, but in a way in which you are not perhaps fully aware. I suspect you confound a man's certainty of what God says in the Bible, with his certainty of personal safety,—two points which do not by any means stand on the same footing. And this suspicion is confirmed by your overlooking, as it appears to me, the doctrine of evidences entirely. Evidences, you allow, may furnish ground of gratitude or humiliation. But in so many words almost, you deny that they should occasion doubts and fears, that is, that they ought to affect an individual's personal hopes. Hence what follows: "Self-examination was evidently intended to lead *sinners* to perseverance in the faith, from humbling views of the depravity of the heart." I should rather suppose it ought to lead sinners to self-despair, and so shut them up to the faith. And even after they were saints, an apostle seems to see no impropriety in addressing them still, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith." Again you say, "What are the causes of doubts and fears? Temptations, trials, sins of any kind? These but testify his own weakness and Christ's strength." Now, this sounds to me like saying, "What can raise a doubt of this scion's being really engrafted into the true vine? The storms which shake it—fruit of any kind it may produce? That but evinces the weakness of the graft, and the skill of the gardener." And here I requote Luke vi. 43, 44, and the other passages noted in my last. And indeed I wish you had given your views of the texts, for a text gained is a text got; whereas we often spend breath and wits in reasoning which, from some flaw at bottom, goes for nothing, and perhaps entangles us afterwards.

I am curious to know how, on your view, you would treat a self-deceiver. I do not mean one making no pretence to religion, or a conscious hypocrite, but one who was deluding himself with a form of godliness when without its power. Many, many such there are, who silence every fear, hush every suspicion, and supply

all deficiencies with, "Christ has done all; I believe in Him, and that is enough." I do not say what advice you would give him when convinced; but by what means, or how, would you attempt to undeceive him to himself?

As to "doubts and fears," I freely acknowledge that I have been sickened with the mawkish self-complacency with which many nurse themselves up in such a state, imagining themselves very humble, poor in spirit, and so forth. In some cases it seems a spiritual hypochondriacism. Often it arises from a spiritual selfishness. Destitute, or nearly so, of a generous, disinterested activity in Christ's service, the great point with them is to secure No. 1,—slip safely into heaven, and leave Christ's cause to shift for itself. And as often still it springs from a careless, indolent walk and conversation; no "diligence in making their calling and election sure,"—none of Caleb's heroic spirit to go up and possess the good land. Such a state is injurious to the world, and to hypocrites and self-deceivers. Hearing the reputed pious constantly talking in this way, they overlook their own most just and valid doubts and fears, and say, "It is matter of chance; I see with the best, and one man's chance is as good as another's." It tends to damp and discourage and mislead young converts—it is a bringing up of an evil report of the good ways of the Lord. It is dishonourable to Christ; for I am satisfied that the full assurance of hope as well as of faith is attainable—that it is the duty of all to aspire to it—that it is our fault if we have it not. I esteem the full assurance of hope as an incalculable blessing, whose vigorous inspiration is of first moment to a Christian's sanctification, and comfort, and usefulness. We are "saved by hope"—it is the "helmet of salvation."

But the contrary extreme is equally pernicious, and no less disgusting. Oh, there is a mighty difference between a broken-hearted, contrite penitent, rolling a burden "too heavy for him to bear" on the precious all-sufficient blood of atonement, and the easy confidence with which many a carpet knight figures in the religious circle, and from time to time takes a walk to the cross, and quits all scores by a simple *credo** and a hale-hearted *peccavi*.† In the one case there is a heart of flesh, obtaining deliverance from a real felt burden, by a real faith, in a real atonement. In the other case, a heart of stone rids itself of a trifling uneasiness by a delusory faith. The result is in both cases *relief*; in words, and appearance, and in the way it has been obtained, there is a fatal similarity, notwithstanding an essential difference. Hence the danger.

And this leads me, my dear —, to observe that there is no way of avoiding mistakes, and learning divinity to purpose, except by making it quite a personal concern. When we come to see ourselves guilty, perishing sinners, and feel that the salvation of our own souls is at stake, a theory will not satisfy us. Our truly

* I believe.

† I have sinned.

"good shepherd" will compassionate the bleating wanderer, cause us to hear His voice and distinguish it from the voice of a stranger. Thus also we shall be fitted to understand the difficulties of others, sympathise with them, and lead them aright. An "honest and good heart"—that is, a heart which "trembles at the word of the Lord"—is the only soil in which the good seed will take root and bring forth fruit. Many, professing to be wise, make themselves fools; but the "wayfaring man," the sojourner, the pilgrim, although a fool, will not err in the way. It is the man who hears Christ's sayings and does them—hears that he may do, and does as he hears—he it is who digs deep and lays his foundation on a rock, and sits secure from the storm. In such a place as Edinburgh you will hear a great deal in the religious world about simple faith, free grace, self-righteousness, etc., etc.—"good words and fair speeches," by which Satan and his unsuspected agents deceive the simple. Ay, Satan; for he could employ the agency of an apostle—yes, and of a pious as well as reprobate apostle. Such people will politely avoid charging Christ with heterodoxy; but if the same sentiments be put in other language they will condemn it soundly as legal, and so forth. Let us be tender in our consciences, walk humbly with God, sit at Christ's feet as children, and not wonder if we find the rebuke applicable to ourselves, "O fools, and slow of heart." He will teach us to profit, and lead us in the way that we should go, and perhaps, of His marvellous grace, make us useful to others.

You seem to feel an inconsistency in what I said on the distinction between promises and invitations. In saying that the Word of God is the warrant of faith, I meant that the invitation to sinners as such, is a full warrant for sinners as such embracing the Gospel. What more proper than to come to "the marriage" by invitation? What I said of the promises I might repeat, but can hardly do so more clearly. Take Isa. lv. 6, 7 (which you quote) as an example. The terms "seek," "call," "forsake," "return," express a command rather than invitation; these are to the same purpose at present. God's invitations are clothed in an authority which makes them commands; His commands He issues often in the shape of invitations, and even entreaties. On the warrant of this invitation, all sinners are fully authorised to exercise the faith implied in seeking Him, calling on Him, etc. But the promise of abundant pardon is surely not to all "wicked" and "unrighteous men" as such; but to such only as "forsake and return," that is, to penitent (*the character*) sinners. The invitation is to the unbelieving—the impenitent: the promise of pardon is to the penitent only; of salvation, to the believing only. No consciousness of any recommendatory qualifications is requisite to warrant faith; the invitation is the warrant for faith. A consciousness of genuine penitence and faith is necessarily connected with hope.

...—Affectionately yours,

ALEX. STEWART.

Address to the King.

The following is the Address to His Majesty, King Edward, adopted at last Synod, and forwarded in due course. The accompanying reply was received on 14th September.

ADDRESS.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

We, the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, beg respectfully to tender to your Majesty our cordial congratulations on your Majesty's accession to the throne of this kingdom.

We desire to join with the rest of your Majesty's loyal subjects in expressing our deep sorrow at the death of your Majesty's illustrious mother and predecessor, Queen Victoria, and our profound sympathy with your Majesty and the other members of the Royal Family in the great loss you have thereby sustained.

We would invoke the blessing of Almighty God on your Majesty's person and reign, and would give expression to our earnest hope that among other blessings our national Protestantism may be maintained, as heretofore, inviolate.

It is our prayer that your Majesty may receive divine strength and guidance for the discharge of the weighty responsibilities of your exalted position.

JAMES S. SINCLAIR,
Moderator.

REPLY.

SCOTTISH OFFICE,
WHITEHALL, 13th September, 1901.

SIR,—I am commanded by the King to convey to the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland His Majesty's thanks for the expressions of sympathy with the Royal Family on the occasion of the lamented death of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria, and for the loyal and dutiful assurances on the occasion of His Majesty's accession to the throne contained in their Address, which I have had the honour to lay before His Majesty.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.

The Moderator of the
Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,
Glasgow.

An Exposition of Romish Morality.—Cardinal Vaughan's remarks on the King's Oath, while addressing the Catholic Truth Society at Newcastle, on 9th September, are carefully to be noted. "No engagement," said he, "no promise, no oath, was lawful unless the thing promised be just, right, and true. No dispensation from the Pope was needed of an oath that did not bind. Should it ever happen that the King became convinced by God's grace of the truth of the doctrine he abjured, of what value would be the declaration? No oath could stand against the command of God and of conscience."

A Letter of Rev. Archibald Cook, Daviot.*

DAVIOT FREE MANSE, *2nd September, 1851.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your agreeable letter some time ago. I fear you will consider my silence an evidence of coldness or disregard. I assure you it arose not from either, but somehow the time passed. I think, however, I was often with you in my thoughts.

Since receiving your kind letter, I see that you have had a bitter cup put into your hand like many others. Sin has exposed us to any misery in this world and in eternity; but those who through grace have closed with the offers of the gospel will one day be freed from sin; their deliverance from all misery will follow, as it is said, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." You and I have had a bitter cup put into our hands. We, however, must confess that it was not sent as our iniquity deserved, that it was mixed with mercy and loving kindness. I see dear Mrs. Ross was a great sufferer in body and mind, but I hope she is with the Lord. She was a dear person, a lover of the people of God, kept under the rod for many years.

Salvation depends not on assurance, but on the nature of faith. Though this faith was no greater than the first movement of a child in its mother's womb, if it be the creation of the Spirit of grace it will land the creature in endless glory. It is not a little, however, that raises one on the brink of eternity from the fears of death. It is not every one of the dear people of God who is favoured with assurance. To enjoy it is sweet, and those who enjoy it have great cause of thankfulness, it being the fruit of infinite free and sovereign grace. Yet the salvation of the elect depends not on it, though it should be earnestly sought after by all who are in the least concerned about their eternal state. It also is promised in Scripture, and was and is enjoyed by some of the true people of God, being a part of that "sweet tree" put in the bitter waters. If at any time they get something which gives them hope that He will not cast them off, they cannot keep it always; or if it continues, something else will be given them so that they will need it; they must eat the Lamb with some bitter herbs. Yet glimpses of eternal blessedness, in which all these troubles will be ended, must be sweet and strengthening to a broken soul. And I doubt not but you will see your dear companion yet shining as the brightness of the firmament.

I also have had a bitter cup. I think I would not take the whole world to go through the like of it again. My dear wife

* This letter, hitherto unpublished, was written to the late Mr. William Ross, teacher, an eminently pious man, on the death of his wife. Mr. Cook also was left a widower about the same time. For an account of Mr. Ross, see "Ministers and Men in the Far North," by the Rev. A. Auld.—ED.

suffered a good deal, but not so much as Mrs. Ross. Since the time we had the Sacrament in summer last year, it might be easily seen she was not to be long. At that time she was very broken and melted. Since then she appeared to be weaned from the world; hardly looked after anything; it was M—— that took care of things in the house. In her last sickness we never thought it was death. She was half an hour in eternity before we could believe that she was dead. . . . I never saw one who had not made a great public profession that the people of God had so little doubt about as to her eternal blessedness. I now fear that I will be *out*, after all my noise in public, and she *in*. I feel often very lonely in private and public duties, at the table, in church, and wherever I go. I feel a blank that cannot be made up this side of time. My children at present are all with me, and are as kind and obedient as it is possible for them to be. . . . I always comforted myself with the thought that their mother was to be with them after me to take care of them, but the Lord saw it meet it should be otherwise.

Remember me kindly to all my dear friends in Wick. I cannot name them all.—Yours sincerely, A. Cook.

Sealtuinn mu'n Cuairt.

NUAIR nach robh rìgh air Israel rinn gach duine an nì a bha maith 'na shuilean fein. Tha moran anns an t-saoghal an diugh le'm bu mhath a' chuis a bhi air an doigh sid a ris agus uair an deigh uair tha iad a feuchainn na h-inntinn dhe'm bheil iad le bhi marbhadh muinntir ann an ard-inbhe. Mar so tha iad a' nochdadh am fuath do riaghladh suidhichte sam bith. 'Se is coltaiche gur e fear do'n inntinn so a chuir ard-fhear-riaghlaidh Stàitean America Mr. Mac-Fhionnlaidh as an rathad. Ann an cuid a dhuthchannaibh fo riaghladh na Stàide chaneil idir uibhir do shaorsa aig na h-ìochdrain is a tha ann am Breatunn no ann an America. Anns na duthchannaibh sin tha an riaghladh aimsireil gle thrìc borb agus foirneartach agus chaneil e cho iongantach mar sin gum biodh daoine ag iarraidh a thilgeadh bun os ceann. 'Sann gu h-àraidh am measg muinntir nan rioghachdan sin a tha an gluasad a dol air aghaidh air son mi-riaghailt a bhi riaghladh ach tha an gluasad air sgaoileadh gus an duthaich so agus gu America cuideachd. Tha tuilleadh 's a choir do fhasgadh ri fhaotainn againn air son feadhainn a chumadh an Stàid fo cheannsal ann an aitean eile. Bha e ni b' fhearr do Israel nach faigheadh a h-uile duine cead a thoil fein a bhi aige agus is olc a dh'eireadh do rioghachd anns am faigheadh daoine sin. Ged a dh'fheudadh gne do leisgeul a bhi aig luchd na mi-riaghailt ann an Rusia cha n' urrainn a bheag sam bith do leisgeul a bhi aca anns na duthchan far am bheil deadh-riaghladh agus saorsa aig na h-ìochdarain.

Eadhon ann an Rusia fein ged nach eil an Stàid mar a dh'fheudadh i a bhi 's fearr ann i na as. Is olc an leigheas air a cuid ghalaran cur as di fein; ach 's e cur as di a tha luchd na mi-riaghailt ag iarraidh. Dh-fheudamaid a radh gur e mi-riaghladh an luchd-riaghlaidh is coireach air son muinntir a bhi 'g iarraidh an Stàid a thilgeadh bun os ceann. Is amaideach an ni a bhi an duil leighis mi-riaghailt ain-tighearnas. Tha an leigheas ni's miosa na a' phlaigh.

Tha sean-fhocal aig na Gaidheil 's piuthar do'n leobaig an sgait' agus mar sin tha muinntir ann nach eil toilichte leis mar a tha saorbhreas an t-saoghail so air a roinn-bu mhath leo gum bitheadh e air a roinn leth air leth air a h-uile duine eadar olc is mhath 'sann bu dòch a gheibheadh iad fein ni nach eil aca. Dh' fheudamaid luchd-iarraidh-comh-roinn a ghairm diubh. Tha am beachd aca a dol cho fad an taobh eile 's gu bheil iad ag iarraidh an Stàid a bhi riaghladh anns a h-uile tud gun aite idir a bhi air fhagail aig muinntir a bhi deanamh air an son fein. 'S fada o thuirt an t-Abstol gur e gaol an airgid freumh gach uile—agus tha sin soirbh ri fhaicinn air da thaobh—muinntir air an aon laimh a' bleth eudainnean nam bochd agus muinntir an laimh eile lan farmaid air son soirbheachadh muinntir eile. 'Se spiorad na sannt a bhi cho laidir araon ann am maighistirean agus ann an seirbhisich is aobhar air an aon taobh a leithid do fhoirneart a bhi ann agus air an taobh a leithid do spiorad gearain agus talaich a bhi cho pailt. Cha b' aithne dhomh sannt, ars' an t-Abstol, mur abradh an lagh na sanntaich. Is farsuinn an raon a th'aig an lagh an diugh ann ar duthaichne agus ann an aiteachan eile air son luchd sannt a bhuain sios le' chorrann geur. Is mor am feum air a chorrann sin a bhi air a chur a stigh ach am faigh sinn mar chinneach an fhireantachd a dh' ardaicheas cinneach agus gum bi sinn air ar saoradh o pheacadh a tha 'na mhasladh do shluagh sam bith.

Mar a tha an sagart mar sin tha an sluagh—air an laimh eile tha e tric ri fhaicinn mar a tha an sluagh gur h-ann mar sin a tha an sagart. Aig coroc an t-sabhail faisg air Dundeagh tha sagart agus sluagh gu mor air an aon doigh-ann an cleire na h-Eaglais Steidhte ann an sin bha cuis air a togail an aghaidh a mhinisteir ann an coroc an t-sabhail air son mar a bha e leantuinn doighean na h-Eaglais Shasunnaich agus cho fada 's bu dana leis Eaglais na Roimhe anns a chomanachadh. 'Se is coltaiche a nis gu'n d'fhuair e a mhor-chuid de'n t-sluagh gu paipear a chur a stigh air a thaobh. Tha na doighean ura a' cordadh ri seann nadur cloinn adhaimh agus cha'n iongantach mar sin gu'n do ghabh moran an taobh sin. Tha e soirbh ri fhaicinn gu'm bheil da shruth salach a dol thairis air Eaglaisean an Ath-leasachaidh a h-aon diubh 'ga'n toirt rathad na Roimhe agus an t-aon eile 'ga'n toirt rathad an anacreidimh. 'Se an sruth a tha dol gus an Roimh is treise a tha anns an Eaglais Steidhte 'se sruth an anacreidimh is treise a tha ann an Eaglais an Aonaidh. Tha an dara cuinnart cho mor ris a chunnart eile oir 'se bas agus fasachadh a tha iad a 'giulan leo

maraon. Chan'eil Satan air a roinn an aghaidh Shatain ciod air bith an coltas a dh' fheudas a bhi ann car greise. O chionn leth cheud bliadhna air ais ann an Eaglais Shasuinn a mhuinntir a bha 'g aomadh gus an Roimh bha iad a leigeil orra a bha lan do eud ann an aghaidh anacreidimh ach na cinn-iuil nam measg an diugh tha iad 'nam measgachan iongantach do dhorchadas a Phapa agus do sholus meallta an luchd-aicheidh. Tha am measgachadh so ri fhaicinn ann an Albainn cuideachd oir is math a choirdeas bas agus bas. Ma tha gluasad car na Roimhe anns an Eaglais Shuidhichte tha luchd-aicheidh cho ladarna innte ach beag 's a tha iad anns an Eaglais Aointe. Ma tha luchd-aicheidh ann an inbhe mhoir anns an Eaglais Aointe tha moran innte a tha 'g iarraidh cho fad 's is urrainn iad a bhi leantuinn cleachdainnean Sasunnach na h-Eaglais Steidhte. Nam biodh spiorad na beatha o Dhia annta maraon ann an saobhbheas cha'n iarradh iad leabhraichean urnuigh agus shuidheadh iad mar Eaglaisean gu stoldta aig casan Chrìosd a labhairt 'na fhocal. Is mor am feum a tha ann air dusgadh spioradail anns a ghinealach so agus is math a thigeadh do luchd-caoinidh Shìoin a bhi tagradh. "Ann an corruich cuimhnich trocair." 'Se fasach buileach a bhios ann an Albainn —tir an t-soisgeul—ma dh' atharraichear a coinnleir as aite, ma ghraanaicheas sinn Spiorad naomha Dhe air falbh. J. M.

Notes and Comments.

Communions.—Third Sabbath of this month, Lochinver, Sutherlandshire, and Edinburgh; fourth, Wick. November, first Sabbath, Oban; second, St. Jude's and John Knox's, Glasgow; and Tarbert, Loch Fyne.

A Great Crime.—On Friday, 6th September, the civilised world was startled by the report that Mr. M'Kinley, the President of the United States, had been shot. The deed was another outcome of that modern development of wickedness called anarchism. The miscreant who committed the deed is Czolgosz, a Polish anarchist. He found his opportunity while the President was holding a reception at Buffalo. Approaching in the guise of a well-dressed respectable citizen to greet the President he aimed a revolver and wounded his victim in two places. One of the wounds has since proved mortal, and Mr. M'Kinley, therefore, is now the third American President who has died a violent death. On 14th April, 1865, Lincoln was shot by Wilkes Booth, an actor, and on 2nd July, 1881, Garfield was shot by Gaiteau, a disappointed office seeker. The assassination of the Empress of Austria and the King of Italy, and the attempt on King Edward's life in Brussels are fresh in the public memory, and it is thus seen that this world has become a very unsafe place for dignitaries and crowned heads.

"Shall there be evil in the city," asks the prophet, "and has the Lord not done it"? The atrocious wickedness of Czolgosz and the other murderers is allowed, and it is an object lesson to teach the doctrine of original sin; but by permitting such a significant series of outrages in high places, the God of Heaven has doubtless a more specific purpose in view. We think He means to assert the controversy He has with kings and peoples in their public capacity. There is a world-wide conspiracy amongst kings and rulers to ignore the law of God in their public acts and secret councils. God and His Christ are treated as if they were non-existent. Also, the cities of America and, in a lesser degree, of Britain, have become noted for the operations of a godless irresponsible wealth. What if the God of Heaven is thus giving a reminder that the deep foundation of all the thrones and the effectual guarantee of all the peace and prosperity is His mercy and goodwill, and that if He be insulted and despised He can, in righteous judgment, unlock forces that will wreck human society in an hour?

It is likely the Romanist party will be secretly glad at these horrors, and hasten to point out that the villains who commit them are not good churchmen but infidels who, travelling by the rebellious pathways of Luther and Calvin, have gone from the allegiance of mother church to the inevitable goal of infidelity and anarchism. They will propound the thesis that the only safeguard for kings and peoples is to return to the fold of the vicar of Christ who, sitting on his chair at Rome, is a "king of kings and lord of lords." But let the nations beware of being seduced or terrorised. The proposal to cure anarchy and infidelity by the introduction of Romanism is a proposal to supplant one disease by another which is as bad or worse. If the course of cause and effect be narrowly traced it will be found that Romanism is the fountain head of many of these shocking public crimes. But by a long course of easy ignorance concerning the genius and history of the Pope's religion it is to be feared that Protestant nations have rendered themselves too liable to be hoodwinked.

How Americans fill their Pulpits.—In America, many clergymen have begun to advertise their churches after the manner of theatrical enterprise, and in a number of instances devices are resorted to in the pulpit which actually resemble such places of entertainment. The people, they argue from experience, must have their religion "spicy" or they will not bother with it at all—and the spice takes the most ingenious forms. A mild attempt at originality was made by one minister who announced that he would preach his sermons in a "red robe"; a more daring spirit illustrates Bible truths by electricity; there is a roof garden at one church for the fine weather; a Chinese choir is the attraction at another; one despairing Methodist intimated that he

would pay those who attended his morning services, and he made money by it too; a Rev. Mr. Farson wagered a thousand dollars that he would make fifteen converts in two weeks, and thereby drew crowds to witness the operation; and, to crown all, some churches are now provided with a nursery for babies, and nurses to attend them while the mothers worship. Art, as well as science, is utilised as an aid to Christianity. A Missouri gentleman illustrates his sermons by drawing huge pictures and maps on a black-board; one uses wireless telegraphy, one the telephone; another pays parents a dollar to get them attend church and have their children baptised. Verily "the divine of to-day is radically different from his predecessor of a hundred years ago"—that is, in America.—*Newspaper Extract.*

The Editor of the "British Weekly" and Novel Reading on Sabbath.—Dr. Robertson Nicoll in his new magazine, *The British Monthly*, has an article entitled, "Sunday Reading a Generation ago;" in which he describes how the Sabbath was spent in a Free Church Manse when he was a boy. He says—"Thirty-five or thirty years ago the restrictions on Sunday reading were far more severe than they are now-a-days. I shall try to set down my recollections of the periodicals we children were allowed to read at that period in a Scotch Manse. Our favourite periodical was the *Quiver*, which at that time was published as a penny weekly. Its great attraction was the stories by Mrs. Henry Wood. There were three:—'The Channings,' 'Mrs. Haliburton's Troubles,' and 'Squire Trevelyan's Heir.' . . . I am afraid the other contributions to the *Quiver* were completely neglected. We read it for the story, and only for the story. Our other periodicals included the *Christian Witness* and the *Evangelical Magazine*, both of them from the English Congregationalists. We were not much interested in either of these. They contained little or no fiction. Far more interesting were *Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*. These periodicals did more to break down the distinction between Sunday and week-day reading than all other influences. I question whether the results have been altogether good, but it will be difficult to undo what has been done. *Good Words* was a modest enough periodical at first. It contained a serial story by Sarah Tytler, who to-day is writing more diligently than ever. My father hesitated very much as to whether we should have it on Sundays, but I think we generally managed to see it. Then came the *Sunday Magazine*, which discovered for itself a new writer in the person of Mrs. Fyvie Mayo. I still remember the thrill of delight with which we read 'Episodes in an Obscure Life,' and the 'Crust and the Cake.'"

This is an interesting piece of manse history, and discloses more than Dr. Nicoll is aware of. For one thing we have here the explanation of the devotion to the literature of fiction which characterises his own editorial career. The exploiting of novels

and novel writers is one main feature of the *British Weekly* and the other periodicals under Dr. Nicoll's control. As a result of this the epidemic of novel reading has now risen to a portentous height, especially in the so-called religious world. If Dr. Nicoll thinks the manse regime of his youth was an ideal one he has the satisfaction of knowing that he has been instrumental in reproducing it everywhere. It was the editor of the *British Weekly* who had the chief hand in launching the Rev. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) on his lucrative career of novel writing. It may yet dawn upon the latter gentleman what an offensive incongruity has been his attempt to combine the awful responsibilities of a shepherd of souls with the frivolity and triviality of the novel writer. We have often wondered how Dr. Nicoll continued to elude the visitings of his own conscience the while week by week in his advertising columns, his review columns, and almost every page of his papers he was conveying the virus of the novel into the life-blood of his generation. But the explanation of this strange feature in a man who professes to be a pillar of Christianity is now evident. He was ill brought up. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Train him up to read novels on the Sabbath, and when in after days he edits a newspaper he will make it a fountain-head of demoralization, and never have a qualm of remorse. Dr. Nicoll's revelations of the manse of his childhood are also interesting and important in another respect. If ever we come to write a history of the "Decline and Fall of the Free Church of 1843," we shall not fail to note and comment on the significance of Dr. Nicoll's document. Here we have a typical Free Church Manse of thirty-five years ago, when the young people were calmly allowed to devour fiction on the Sabbath. Conceive this corruption going on at the same time in many manses, as it doubtless did, and you have laid bare the genesis of the Higher Criticism, the sensuous worship and the lax doctrine which have since overflowed like a deluge. We stand amazed at the reckless unwatchfulness of professed Christians who do as Dr. Nicoll's parents did. Doubtless the solution of the problem of the children's Sabbath day is apt to be difficult, but the regime of the novel is emphatically how not to do it. But it is without doubt the way to introduce into the susceptible nature of youth an influence that will eat as doth a canker, and to interpose an effectual check to the powers of the world to come.

The Abandonment of Nations—The devouring idea in both hemispheres just now (27th September), is the international yacht contest. The populations of Britain and America are holding their breath while the two absurd racing boats are heading for the goal. Money enough to endow a college has been lavished on the freak. All the press writers and telegraph offices are busy, but no one seems to recollect that the whole thing is an exhibition of gigantic childishness.

Heaven.

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“How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!”—PSALM lxxxiv. 1.

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ANCIENT of days, to whom all times are NOW,
 Before whose glory seraphims do bow
 Their blushing cheeks, and veil their blemish'd faces,
 That, uncontain'd at once dost fill all places;
 How glorious, O how far beyond the height
 Of puzzled quills, or the obtruse conceit
 Of flesh and blood, or the too flat reports
 Of mortal tongues, are Thy expressless courts!
 Whose glory to paint forth with greater art,
 Ravish my fancy, and inspire my heart,
 Excuse my bold attempt, and pardon me
 For showing sense, what faith alone should see.
 Ten thousand millions, and ten thousand more
 Of angel-measur'd leagues, from the eastern shore
 Of dungeon earth, His glorious palace stands,
 Before whose pearly gates ten thousand bands
 Of armed Angels wait to entertain
 Those purged souls, for which the Lamb was slain;
 Whose guiltless death, and voluntary yielding
 Of whose giv'n life, gave the brave court her building.
 Her streets with burnish'd gold are paved round;
 Stars lie like pebbles scatter'd on the ground;
 Pearl mixed with onyx, and the jasper stone,
 Made gravell'd causeways to be trampled on.
 There shines no sun by day, no moon by night;
 The palace glory is, the palace light:
 There is no time to measure motion by,
 Their time is swallow'd in eternity:
 Wry-mouth'd disdain, and corner-hunting lust,
 And two-fac'd fraud, and beetle-brow'd distrust,
 Soul-boiling rage, and trouble-state sedition,
 And giddy doubt, and goggle-ey'd suspicion,
 And lumpish sorrow, and degen'rous fear,
 Are banish'd thence, and death's a stranger there:
 But simple love, and sempiternal joys,
 Whose sweetness never gluts, nor fulness cloy;
 Where face to face our ravish'd eye shall see
 Great ELOHIM, that glorious One in Three,
 And Three in One, and seeing Him shall bless Him,
 And blessing, love Him; and in love possess Him,
 Here stay, my soul, and ravish'd in relation,
 The words being spent, spend now in contemplation.

FRANCIS QUARLES.