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Thanksgiving.

IT need scarcely be said by way of preface that thanksgiving to God for His goodness is a religious exercise of the first importance. The Scriptures, by precept and example, point it out as an essential feature of true godliness. There may, indeed, exist a certain natural gratitude where there is no vital Christianity, but it is absolutely clear that there is no vital Christianity where the spirit of thanksgiving is absent.

Thanksgiving is the constant exercise of all perfect, intelligent creatures. The angels who never fell and the glorified saints before the throne, sing perpetually the praises of God. They give Him thanks for His goodness. They ascribe honour and glory and praise unto His name for His own intrinsic excellency, and for His wonderful works to His unworthy creatures. Had man continued in his original state of innocence, he would have been largely engaged in the exercise of thanksgiving. God was the author of his being, the sustainer of his life, the rich and bountiful provider of all his comforts, natural and spiritual. Constant thanks would therefore have been due to the Lord for His kindness, and thus the praise of God would have constituted one of man's chief employments in the happy state of undefiled innocence.

Thanksgiving is the duty of fallen man. His obligations did not cease by the fall, though he lost the power to fulfil them. Thanksgiving is his duty, though it be not his exercise. No one can give thanks in a spiritual manner but one who is born again. There is, however, a natural thanksgiving which we believe the Lord recognises and honours. Just for example as He acknowledged the legal repentance of Ahab, and of the inhabitants of Nineveh, so He has respect to the natural thanksgivings of an individual or a nation. He honours exercises of this kind with the bestowal of temporal blessings, and so they are to be valued in their own place.

Let us notice some of the reasons for thanksgiving which unregenerate men have. They ought—though they do it not—to praise the Lord that they are not in hell. Sin deserves God's wrath and curse, and, if natural men knew it, they would praise

the Most High that He has not executed the just sentence of eternal death upon them. They have reason to give thanks for all the temporal benefits they enjoy. These are many—life, health, food, raiment, fruitful seasons, and other good things. It also ought to heighten their praise to consider that all these benefits are mercies, undeserved favours from the hand of God. We deserve by nature not one drop of cold water nor one crumb of bread. Our sin merits the loss of every, even the smallest, earthly comfort, and the gain of every kind of misery. And lastly, they have reason to give thanks for all the outward spiritual privileges with which they are favoured. Among these are an open Bible, a preached gospel, godly friends and scriptural ordinances, and, more particularly, the warnings and invitations of the gospel, and the common monitions of God's Spirit in their consciences. All these privileges are of priceless value, and afford abundant grounds for thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is the very special duty of those who are new creatures in Christ Jesus. They, far beyond others, have reason to praise the Lord. All are by nature unrenewed in heart and children of wrath, and so the people of God require to give thanks for the same reasons as have been already mentioned in connection with the unregenerate. Indeed, it is they alone who do give thanks in any spiritual measure for the mercy of not being cast into the place of woe, for the natural benefits of this life, and for the external privileges of the Church of Christ. Often they may be afraid they have no other things to praise the Lord for. But there *are* other things, things that accompany salvation, that afford reason to them of ceaseless praise.

They ought to give thanks for the covenant of grace between the Father and the Son on behalf of lost sinners of our race, the love of the Father in the gift of the Son, the glorious work of redemption which the Son accomplished by His obedience and blood, and the grace and power of the Holy Spirit in applying that redemption to the souls of the elect as poor needy sinners. Very specially does the gift of Christ as Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, King, and Husband of the Church, stand forth as a cause of adoring praise to the people of God. The Apostle Paul exclaims, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." Further, they have reason to give thanks not only for the precious things of redemption in reference to the Church as a whole, but also for their own personal individual interest in them. This is a point at which they may often come to a stand. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is one thing, the assurance of faith, another. Many of the Lord's people do not enjoy the full assurance of faith, or if they do enjoy it, it is but at special times in their experience. Assurance, like faith itself, admits of degrees. Sometimes it is strong and lively, at other times it is not discernible at all. However, it is very desirable that those who fear the Lord should seek and obtain an assurance of their

personal interest in Christ. There is a great deal of high assurance at the present day that has no solid foundation, and that is only a delusion and a snare, but a sound spiritual assurance is not to be despised, but counted an unspeakable blessing. To those who get it, it affords additional ground of praise and thanksgiving. The Son of God loved each one of His own individually and gave Himself for them individually. This was the basis of the Apostle's wonderful words, "Who loved me and gave himself for me." And surely if any poor soul is led by the Holy Ghost into such an assurance of his interest in Christ as is expressed in these words of Paul, that soul will feel occasion for eternal praise to the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. And should we, who profess the name of Christ, be satisfied without some distinct spiritual exercises on this glorious head, so as to be brought by the Lord himself into the exercise of individual thanksgiving for a personal interest in the love of God the Father, in Christ and His eternal redemption, and in the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the soul?

There are other reasons for thanksgiving on the part of those who fear the Lord, reasons connected with the public cause of Christ. He has not left Himself without a witness in dark and troublous times, and He has promised that there is a day coming when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. These precious things are also occasions of praise.

Lastly, let us observe some of the kinds of response the call to thanksgiving receives.

Among the unconverted, there are multitudes worse than the ass or the ox; they do not shew even the least natural gratitude for the benefits they enjoy; they are under the complete mastery of hardness and atheism of heart; they may, or may not, attend the means of grace, but in any case they are wholly insensible that they are indebted to God for any good thing. They imagine there is no reason why they should not participate in all the bounties of Providence, and appear to feel that a distinct injustice has been done them, if they are crossed or disappointed in any of their expectations. Others again have some pleasing emotions of gratitude when they reflect upon how many good things they enjoy, but the feelings are only natural, they do not possess the real essentials of a true spirit of thanksgiving to God. The gratitude is not spiritual; it lacks at least two things, depth and height. It lacks depth; there does not lie at the basis of it an adequate sense of dependence upon God, and of personal ill-desert. The unregenerate man at his best does not think he deserves no good thing whatsoever, and that all his comforts are pure undeserved mercies. It lacks height; it does not reach heaven; it does not embrace a spiritual and comprehensive conception of God; it involves only a natural and limited notion of

Him. His infinite greatness, burning holiness, and matchless grace in Christ Jesus are not apprehended by the natural man in his best frames. Thus there is not the thanksgiving that is spiritually acceptable with God.

The people of God are often times not sufficiently responsive to the command to thanksgiving. They may be apt to dwell more on their miseries than their mercies. Certainly the light, easy "I thank thee," of the Pharisee, the Most High does not ask for; it exists to a most nauseous extent in the general religion of the present time. There is unspeakably more real gratitude in the painful cry of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In fact, for true spiritual thanksgiving there must be, as we have already remarked, a basis of felt sinfulness and unworthiness in the soul. And it will be in proportion that this sense of personal unworthiness is deepened that we will be filled with adoring wonder and praise at the goodness and mercy of God in Christ to us hell-deserving rebels. There is certainly good reason for sorrow and complaint when we think of our own corruption, hardness of heart, worldliness of spirit, but if our sorrow is of the right stamp it will lead us with these evils to the throne of grace, and from the throne of grace we may hope to return with a new song of praise unto the Lord. Constant poring upon the evils of the heart without recourse to the throne of grace will certainly produce a murmuring, complaining spirit that only leaves the soul worse than it found it. And further, let it be observed that in the darkest times of trial, the poor believer has reason for thanksgiving, and may get by the grace of God the spirit and exercise of it. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." His heaviest strokes to His people, however trying to flesh and blood, are strokes of love. He has promised that all things shall work together for their good. The Lord by His servant Paul says, "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—(1 Thess. v. 16-18).

Communion.—The Lord's Supper will (D.V.) be dispensed in the hall, Wallace Street, Dumbarton, on the first Sabbath of January, services also being held on the usual week-days.

Ordination in the North.—The Rev. Dugald S. Cameron, probationer, has accepted a call to the charge of Halkirk and Helmsdale. The Northern Presbytery met in the Church at Halkirk, on Friday, the 22nd November. The Rev. Donald Beaton, Wick, presided and preached from 2 Corinthians v. 20, and thereafter Mr. Cameron was set apart and ordained to the work of the ministry by the laying-on of the hands of the Presbytery. The Rev. George Mackay, Stornoway, suitably addressed pastor and people. There was a large attendance.

Notes of Sermon

BY THE LATE REV. CHRISTOPHER MUNRO, STRATHY.

PREACHED AT KILMUIR, SKYE, ON 17th MAY, 1867.

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"Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him."—JOHN ix. 35-38.  
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IN this chapter we have an interesting and instructive narrative of a man on whom a miracle was wrought by Christ, and such a miracle as was never performed previously, among the Jews. There were dead persons restored to life in the time of the prophets. Naaman the Syrian was cured of leprosy in a miraculous manner, and Hezekiah, the king of Judah, was healed in the same manner. Christ himself had restored sight to many who had lost it, but the peculiarity of this miracle was, that the man was born blind. The manner in which the cure was performed is narrated by John, and the discussion of which it was the occasion is also recorded with sufficient minuteness.

Christ's opponents among the Jews did not at first believe the truth of what the man stated concerning his cure. It was considered so great a wonder, that his friends brought him to the Pharisees; what was their motive in doing so is not told. It might be to show them, what was considered by all, a remarkable proof of supernatural power, and to ascertain their opinion, as the leaders of the people, of the miracle and Him who performed it. Or it might be to inform them and prove to them that Christ wrought a miracle on the Sabbath day, which they considered as a breach of the law, and so a circumstance that afforded them an occasion of accusing Him, and gave them grounds to apprehend and condemn Him. For according to the ceremonial law, death was the penalty of breaking the law of the Sabbath, or the fourth commandment. Some of them said that He was not of God, because He did what they considered a sin against the law. Others of them were not of this mind, and said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? The hostile party, we are told, would not then believe that he was blind and had received his sight, till they called his parents, and examined them as to the truth of the story. And we see that they go about it with prudence and judgment. They asked them: "Is this your son? Was he born blind? And how does he now see? or by what means has his sight been restored?" These were all proper questions, and fitted to bring the truth in the matter to light. They were experts at cross-examination, but they failed in forming an impartial judgment.

The parents told them that the person before them was their son, but declined to state how he had received his sight, and referred for information on this point to himself, who was come to years of discretion, and so could give the most satisfactory account of this himself. They call him again, and enjoin him to give God the glory of his cure and to consider Jesus a sinner, and so as one who deserved no credit in the affair. On this he did not directly express his opinion, but maintained the fact of His opening his eyes. They therefore asked him again—perhaps with the view of casting discredit on the cure by finding his testimony now, different from what he gave at the first—like a cunning and skilful lawyer, who by cross-questioning tries to confuse a witness and make him contradict himself. If this were their intention, they failed, for his second account coincides with his first. The result of their interview was that they cast him out, and excommunicated him from the church.

Jesus heard of this ; which lets us know that He did not forget this man, that He kept an eye after him, and felt an interest in him as one of His sheep, and as one who bore witness for Him against His enemies. And when He heard of it, He went in search of him and found him. He knew his case and wished to speak comfort to him, and to carry on the work He had evidently commenced in his soul. Having found him, He asked him if he believed on the Son of God? It is not likely that the man, born blind, had heard before this interview that He who cured him was known by this name. We may infer from his silence when examined by the Pharisees, as well as from the question put by him on this occasion, that his opinions concerning Jesus did not advance beyond what he then confessed, namely, that He was a prophet sent by God, and who spoke and wrought in His name. And as to his convictions, he was so steadfast, that he, a poor ignorant man, was not deterred by the position and learning of the Pharisees from venturing on a discussion with them, and from maintaining his opinion in opposition to their plausible insinuations and violent attacks on the character of Christ. And not only this, but he also was ready to suffer persecution for His sake, and endure the loss of what was reckoned of supreme importance by the Jews, I mean, a place in the commonwealth of Israel. This step they durst not as yet take with regard to Jesus, no doubt from fear of the people, as one cause or motive, but what they were afraid to do to Him, they did without hesitation to the disciple, showing that they wanted not the will, but the courage to deal in the same way with the Master. The man's firmness and faithfulness show that he was now under some more powerful influences than any carnal and worldly motives. He was convinced that Jesus was not a sinner or a bad man, as they alleged, but a man who was a prophet and with whom God was. He was not, then, like any of the nine lepers, that did not seem to care for Christ who healed them, but like

many others who had been healed, not only in body but in mind, whose minds were renewed, and whose understandings were opened by Him at the same time, and therefore who were found faithful adherents to His cause and to His doctrine. No doubt the trials he had to endure, deepened his convictions and had been the occasion of expanding his mind and heart in the knowledge of and in love to the truth that was implanted in his soul. Every question asked him made him examine the grounds of his convictions more and more, and so showed him the necessity of adhering at all hazards to the truth. His own prejudices as a Jew, his respect to the leaders of the people had to be overcome in making the stand recorded, or in bearing the testimony he gave on behalf of Jesus, but conviction of the truth relaxed the hold these might have of his mind, and enabled him to brush them all aside, and to stand forth alone to witness a good confession.

It was not enough, however, to believe that Christ was a prophet. This was true, and that no prophet was equal to Him, not even Moses, Elijah, etc., but it was not the whole truth. There are many in this day who allow His title to be a prophet, but go no further, such as Mahometans and Socinians. But this confession was not sufficient for Christ, and were He nothing more than a prophet, surely this confession would have satisfied Him who was meek and lowly in spirit, who did not cry, and whose voice was not heard in the streets. But it did not satisfy Him, and therefore He must have known Himself to be more than a prophet, and so He asked this man if he believed on the Son of God? This was a more difficult question to answer than any asked of him by the Pharisees. The man did not know who it was that was designated by this name, and believing that Jesus was a prophet, and therefore was likely to be able to give correct information on the matter, he asked who He was that he might believe on Him. The man wanted to know Him, and to obtain proof of His being the Son of God, and on this condition he expressed himself ready to believe on Him. He was thus imbued with honesty and desire after knowledge, and with that simplicity necessary for the reception of the truth in the love thereof.

The Saviour's answer to his question is in the following terms: "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." As soon as he heard this, he said, "Lord, I believe." The statement made by Jesus is to this effect: "Thou knowest me who met thee and gave thee thy sight. I am the person who opened thine eyes. Art not thou satisfied as to this? for although thou couldst not see me when I spread the clay on thine eyes, yet on returning from the pool of Siloam, didst thou not see me then, and wast thou not informed by trustworthy witnesses that I had been he who cured thee?" "Yes, I am perfectly satisfied to thy being the man who cured me." "I then, who talk with thee, am the Son of God." The blind man's answer was not spoken,

and his profession of faith was not made from a blind impulse, that is, without any sufficient grounds for his belief. He first believed that Christ was a prophet sent from God ; of this he had proof enough in his being healed from blindness by Him in a miraculous manner, which he, like Nicodemus, was persuaded He could not do, except God was with Him. He now declares unto the man, that He is the Son of God, and in Christ's giving this character to Himself the blind man believed He spoke the truth ; for it could not be that He, with whom God was so evidently, would deceive any by making an untrue statement, or could be guilty of arrogating to Himself a title that did not belong to Him, and that would be blasphemy in any mere man to do.

This declaration all at once threw light on what was very likely hitherto incomprehensible to him. For, no doubt, he must have been revolving in his own mind many questions concerning Him who healed him, such as His kindness to him, a poor blind beggar whom he passed sitting beside the way seeking alms, and His having, without any solicitation, exerted His extraordinary power to relieve him from a calamity under which he had laboured from his birth, and that had reduced him to poverty, and shut him up in perpetual darkness from which he had never hoped to be relieved. Many a one, who had the ability to bestow alms on him, passed him without giving any, or giving very little, though earnestly pleaded with by one whose lot was peculiarly pitiable. Here he had abundant opportunities to study and know the character of his fellowmen, few of whom he ever found really touched by his lot and ready to express sympathy with him and to endeavour to comfort him by their words as well as relieve him by their means. Some he knew to be selfish and churlish ; some were giving him from a desire to be seen of men and so blowing trumpets before them, and notwithstanding all their noise and fuss, giving very little, and that little given not from any pity towards him, but from a desire to get a name among men ; others, perhaps, throwing him a piece of money with a light frivolous spirit, by which they seemed to make a mock of his misery, whom he would no doubt consider a vain, heartless class of people. Others, again, he found to pass by him and pay no attention to his plaintive voice. His experience would, no doubt, lead him to the conclusion that there was very little real love and humanity among men, but abundance of selfishness, coldness, pride, and folly. But now on a certain day some passer-by comes near, who had neither gold nor silver to give, and who spoke to him in accents of tenderness, meekness, and kindness that he never observed in any voice he ever heard, and who proposed to do something for him that would restore his eyes, or rather would impart sight to eyes that never had any. A person who could do this had something better to impart than gold or silver, something that exalted him above the rich and the wise among men ; and yet no man ever met him so humble, so kind, so benevolent, and

that felt for him as he did. His kind manner, his condescension in making clay and putting it on his eyes, and the precious result thereof must at once have raised him in his estimation above all men he met or heard of. For among all the wonders of which he had heard, he did not hear of any born blind restored to sight. And now what he hears him say clears up the whole mystery ; he finds in it what explains the miracle and the whole of his conduct towards him. He believes then that this person is the Son of God, and falls down and worships Him, that is, acknowledges Him as God, as the creator and preserver, acknowledges Him as his own preserver and thanks Him as the author of all his mercies, and expresses his obligations to Him for the mercy shown him in receiving his sight and especially in being blessed with the knowledge of Him which flesh and blood cannot give, in fact, the knowledge of Him as a Saviour come to save the lost, and in whom now he finds salvation, for he that believeth in the Son hath eternal life. No wonder then though he worshipped Him, and looked upon it as a blessed day when Jesus came his way, and dealt mercifully with him. It was to him the beginning of days and years, and a day to be remembered.

In this man's history we have much that is calculated to teach and instruct us. His condition as a poor blind man may be taken to represent the sinner's state. His blindness represents the sinner's ignorance and darkness of mind as to the things that belong to his peace. This ignorance is frequently represented in the Bible under the image of blindness. The blind see nothing ; the natural man knows not the things of God's Spirit ; they are foolishness unto him. He lives as if there were no God. He consents to His existence, it may be, but he feels no fear, he has no love, and exercises no trust towards God, and never thinks of regulating his conduct according to His revealed will. This man was poor and a beggar. The sinner is poor as to his state before God ; he lost his righteousness and holiness, and all title to eternal life. He is like one born to a rich inheritance and noble titles, but who has forfeited all his rights by treason against his sovereign and is come to be a beggar. Shame and disgrace are attached to beggary, especially when it has sprung from one's own imprudence, which is especially true here. And in the sinner's case, there is one element that renders his condition more pitiable, namely, his ignorance thereof. "Thou sayest, I am rich . . . and knowest not that thou art poor, blind, naked, and miserable." Here we also see Christ's grace and power to save. He effectually cured the poor man's blindness, which required divine power for which nothing is too hard. The power that gave this man, who was born blind, his sight, can save the sinner, can change his nature and heal him from all diseases, from all the effects of his sins.

We learn here the necessity of faith, and what one must believe in the first place concerning Jesus of Nazareth, namely, that He is the Son of God. The question put by Christ is one that in a

certain sense He asks of all. His asking the question means or implies that man is naturally destitute of this faith. This man was equally destitute with others. He did not know who was the Son of God, and consequently could not have faith in Him till He heard of Him. There were two things which produced faith, Christ's power exerted not only in his body but in his soul by the Holy Spirit, and Christ's testimony regarding Himself. We have then the exercise and the fruit of faith, the former in receiving Christ, and the latter in worshipping Him.

Have you then believed on the Son of God? Many here have not, and some, I fear, never asked themselves the question, whether they have or not. There are others quite at ease in their state of ignorance; they know not their state; they see not their need of faith; they think not of their sin in being without it, of their sin in not believing, of their guilt and danger in making light of Christ. Consider your need, what you really want, and your state requires. Be not satisfied with head knowledge, however much you may have. Be not satisfied with mere emotional impressions, with a name, with a profession. Remember that you need what Christ taught this man, namely, faith and knowledge. The want of this is the cause, in some sense at least, why many, who begin to profess His name and that with a fair promise, fall away and bring disgrace on their profession and come short of the end of faith. You may say that Peter fell. Yes, but he did not make a shipwreck of his faith; he was soon restored, and then his faith and love shone forth more brightly than ever. Be found in Christ's way, in the use of the appointed means. In these He promises to be till the end of the world; in these He passes by. Follow then the example of another blind man who cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." He is now passing, He can now hear you, He can now shew mercy to souls blinded by sin, to souls who never saw the light of the Sun of Righteousness, who know not the things that belong to their salvation, and so are in the way that leads to death. If you are sensible of this being your condition, cry to Him daily, give Him no rest, till it may please Him to shew mercy to you.

Did you ever in right earnestness deal with this question, as one on the answer to which you felt your all for eternity depended, depended whether you would be saved or not, whether you would obtain divine favour or not, whether you would be to the glory of His grace or not? If so, it is the most important of all questions with you, if it be yet without an answer. Here you have an example full of instruction to you. You all know this man obtained faith, namely, by Christ revealing Himself to him. If you have been enabled to believe, then you must be a worshipper of Christ. Are you so? Is He your Lord? Does He receive the homage of your heart, of your will and understanding? Is His authority felt by your conscience, and does His love constrain you to obey Him? Are you so convinced of His divinity and supremacy

as the Lord of your conscience, as to feel that you are under obligation of sacrificing all for His sake? This man suffered loss for Christ, ere he knew Him fully, and believed on Him as the Son of God. "I fear I am not so enlightened, that I have not such faith, hope and love to Christ, as would enable me to suffer loss." Are you convinced that He is worthy of it, and that to deny Him would be a very aggravated sin, and that you could not do so without being guilty of such a sin? If so, this is a great step towards arriving at that degree of faith and light which would enable you by His grace to go through such a trial. Learn then the need in which you stand of growing in this knowledge, and of grace to follow Him. If you know Him, remember the end of this knowledge, namely, that you commit your soul to Him to be saved, that you may obey and worship Him as your God.

Meeting of Synod.

THE half-yearly meeting of Synod was held in Glasgow on Tuesday, 12th November, in the hall of St. Jude's Church. There were present from the Northern Presbytery Revs. John R. Mackay, George Mackay, Neil Macintyre, Alexander Macrae, Ewen Macqueen, ministers, and from the Southern Presbytery Revs. Neil Cameron, James S. Sinclair, Alexander Stewart, John Robertson, and John Macleod, ministers, with Messrs. Allan Maciachlan, Angus Macdougall, and John Auld, elders.

The Rev. James S. Sinclair, retiring Moderator, preached from Exodus iii. 2, and thereafter constituted the Synod with prayer. After roll call and the reading of the minutes, an officer of court was appointed and the Moderator intimated that as his year of office had now expired it fell to him to thank the brethren for the kindness he had experienced at their hands during his tenure of the chair, and it lay with the Synod to appoint his successor. Accordingly the Rev. Neil Macintyre, Glendale, was unanimously chosen as Moderator for the year 1901-2. He took the chair and thanked the court for the honour conferred on him. It was decided to leave over till the evening the appointment of a committee to draw up a memorial for the Synod records of the Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig. The usual committee on bills and overtures was appointed, and the court adjourned to meet again at 6.30 in the evening.

When the Synod sat again the Moderator began with devotional exercises, and after the calling of the roll and the reading of the minutes of the first meeting, the report of the committee on bills and overtures was presented and adopted. The Rev. John R. Mackay then moved, and the Rev. N. Cameron seconded, the following deliverance on the national duty at the present time:—"The Synod taking into consideration the war in which we as a nation have been now so long engaged and the

bloodshed and desolation with which it has been accompanied, regret that on the part of our rulers there has been a steady resolve to ignore the Governor among the nations, inasmuch as they have failed to call upon the people to observe a day of humiliation and prayer to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God by confessing sin and praying for His blessing. In view of these things they would call respectfully on our rulers to remedy this, their omission, and to appoint at an early date a day of national prayer that the judgments of God in a prolonged and harassing war may be removed."

It was agreed that copies of this deliverance should be sent to the leaders of the two Houses of Parliament and to the Colonial Secretary. In event of the Government taking no such action as is above indicated before the middle of January, it was agreed that the Presbyteries should decide on a day to be kept by us as a church to entreat God's favour and deprecate His judgments on our land.

The Clerk then submitted to the Synod a communication of an interesting nature from Canada. It ran as follows:—To the Moderator and Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Gentlemen,—We, the undersigned representatives of several groups of Presbyterians scattered through the western part of the province of Ontario, holding the same views, professing the same faith, and contending for the same pure worship which characterised the Church of Scotland in its best days and now contended for by you, beg to address you and present to you our case as regards gospel ordinances, of which we may say we are entirely destitute at the present time. Although there are churches and ministers all around us, yet with these we cannot conscientiously associate and worship; we, therefore, earnestly ask you to recognise us as part of your mission field and take us under your care and providence. If you can give us the services of a wise and good man during the summer season, say four, six, or eight weeks, in visiting round, we will pay all travelling expenses and whatever the Synod may see right to lay upon us for such services so given. We do not want a penny of the Synod's funds and will do in the future as we have done in the past—owe no man anything but to love one another. Hoping to have a favourable hearing and answer, we subscribe ourselves yours in Christ.—D. Mactavish, Alexander Mackenzie, Hugh Graham, Donald Mackenzie, Hugh Mackenzie, William Matheson, John Cameron, Colin Macdonald, John Morrison, Murdoch Mackay, Alexander Mackenzie, George Forrest, Donald Mackenzie, Hugh Scott, Alexander Finlayson, William Scott, William Finlayson, Roderick Macdonald, Daniel Clark, Angus Mackay, Murdo Macleod, Ewen Bisset, Alexander Fraser, Donald A. Matheson, John Bisset, William P. Matheson, Duncan Macmillan, Murdoch Matheson, George Macleod, Roderick J. Mackenzie, William Ross, Donald W. Mackenzie, H. D. Ross, Alexander Macrae,

Alexander Macmillan, Murdoch Macrae, Eben. Leslie, John Finlayson, David Mackenzie, R. W. Matheson, Duncan Macleish, Kenneth Cameron, Archibald Macleish, W. J. Morrison, John Fraser, William A. Ross, D. M. Ross, John R. Ross, George Baird.

Several members expressed the great pleasure and interest with which they had listened to the petition. The prayer of the petition was granted, and a committee, consisting of Revs. John R. Mackay, Neil Cameron, and Neil Macintyre, was appointed to do what they could in sending a minister for two or three months next summer and in seeing to his place being filled during his absence.

A fraternal letter was then read from the Associate Synod of North America:—

THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The Associate Presbyterian Synod of North America, at its last meeting, listened with interest to your fraternal letter bearing date 21st February, 1900. In this day, when the love of many is waxing cold, when iniquity abounds, when there is a general tendency to laxity of principle, a disposition to depart from the historic faith of the Church of Christ, it becomes the friends of Spiritual Reformation faith, by correspondence and every legitimate way, to encourage one another's hearts and strengthen one another's hands in defence of "the faith once delivered to the saints."

We rejoice to know that in so many points of doctrine, discipline, and worship you are one with us. Like you, we use the inspired Psalmody exclusively in the worship of God, and without instrumental accompaniment, and insist upon a close adherence to the Word of God in all matters of faith and practice. We are called in this part of the world to testify against a multitude of errors and inventions, manifestly Romish and worldly in origin. We deplore the corrupt tendencies of the times, and the readiness of the church to adopt unauthorised days and unscriptural methods. We view with alarm the disposition so manifest in Presbyterian bodies to lay aside the Calvinistic faith and yield distinctive principles. We would not, however, indulge the pessimistic spirit. God's promises to His faithful people are sure. It is the duty of God's people to watch against these manifold temptations, and uphold the banner which God has given to be displayed because of truth. While we, a very small remnant, record God's goodness in continuing us as the representatives of Secession principles in this country, we gratefully recognise the fact that in the various branches of the Church, Christ has His faithful ones who are seeking to honour the King and His truth, and on this Centenary of our Synod we extend our greetings; and "in the name of our God do wish you to be blessed."

We are glad that you have stated so clearly in your letter your

position on the prominent doctrines of the Headship of Christ, Atonement and Inspiration. As to the first doctrine we adhere to the teaching of the Westminster Confession; that Christ is the head of the church, which is His body. The church is His spiritual kingdom, which He has redeemed and which He governs by His spiritual law. In order to subserve the interests of this spiritual kingdom, the Mediator has delegated to Him an authority over all persons and things (Matt. xxviii. 18). Among these "all things" are the nations of the earth. In the same character in which Christ redeemed His people He also governs them and all things which affect their spiritual interests. Wherever Christ's law comes, therefore, men should recognise its authority. This general government of Christ of all things is saving to none but the church, which is His redeemed body. Civil government, while subject to Christ, is not a meditorial institution. God ordained it for natural ends, and has made it subservient to the interests of the church. The nation should recognise the Divine authority; yet, because Christ's kingdom is spiritual, the civil magistrate cannot compel his subjects to recognise that authority. Recognition of Christ's laws are not enforced by civil pains and penalties. Civil government should recognise the moral law of God, which simply defines man's duty to his Sovereign in all relationships in life, and the civil magistrate is bound to restrain any who, on plea of conscience, would interfere with God-given rights of others. The terms "Voluntaryism," "Erastianism," and "Establishment," which are of such vital interest in your country, do not find place here on account of our different form of government. This difference of environment may account for the impression which may find harbour in the minds of our brethren across the sea that we are indifferent, even antagonistic to the influence of Christ's law in civil matters. We close this subject for the present with a quotation or two from unrepealed acts of Synod, as follows:—

"It ought not to be said that we ever denied that Christ, as Mediator, governs this world by God's appointment, if by his governing the world be meant his ordering, disposing and overruling all things to the good of his body, the church."

"But while we maintain for the honour of his Godhead that his essential administration can neither be transferred or laid aside for a single moment, we also assert that the Lord Jesus Christ has a dominion over all things as Mediator."

We hold to the doctrine of a limited atonement; maintaining that "election, redemption, intercession and eternal salvation are inseparable and of equal extent." "Our Lord Jesus Christ was a representative and surety for the elect only, he died for them only, and for none else in any respect; and all for whom he died shall be infallibly saved." (Associate Testimony, Part II, Article 9, Sections 1 and 4).

A considerable space in our Standards is devoted to the

notice of the suretyship and satisfaction of Christ and the extent of redemption. We deem these quotations sufficient, however, to assure you that we hold to the same view with yourselves on this vital subject.

In your statement concerning inspiration you have given expression to our views also. We believe that the original languages of the Scripture were verbally inspired and that the Bible is to be received as the Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice. We deplore the unhallowed efforts of so-called Higher Criticism to break down historic faith in the Word of God. We, however, honor and welcome reverent scholarship, and rejoice in the modern discoveries of science, and the progress of research which is throwing additional light on the wonderful revelation which God has given. Modern discoveries, instead of contradicting the Bible record, are confirming it. As God has preserved His Word through all the trials of the past, we believe His Word shall for ever endure and shall come out from these furnaces as pure gold. God will put to confusion all attempts to overthrow the integrity of His Word. Let the faithful ones rally to its defence and honor it by a consecrated life according to its guidance.

We venture to express the hope, dear brethren, that we may have the privilege of hearing from you further words of cheer.

Yours in Christ,

A. M. MALCOM,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
Eau Claire, Pa.,		
R. T. WYLIE,		
Newark, N.J.,		

A committee, consisting of Revs. James S. Sinclair, A. Stewart, and the Clerk, was appointed to draw up a reply to be submitted to next Synod and then forwarded.

The Revs. J. R. Mackay, N. Cameron, and D. Macfarlane were appointed a committee to draw up a tribute to the memory of the Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig, for insertion in the Synod's Record. This tribute, when adopted by the Synod, is to be sent to Mrs. Macdonald.

The interim financial report was submitted and salaries were continued at the usual rate. The finance committee was instructed to allot the building fund in the usual way. The annual allowance to Mr. John B. Radasi was raised to £39. The account for extra judicial expenses in the Macknight case was laid before the Synod, amounting to over £120. The Treasurer was commissioned to settle one portion of this account, to have the rest audited and then settle it.

The Synod then made some arrangements about congregations and settled some small details, and then a reply was read from the Secretary for Scotland to the Synod's address to the King:—

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.

The Synod decided to meet again on Tuesday, 8th July, at Inverness. The meeting was closed with singing Psalm 122—last three stanzas—and the benediction.

Standing at Prayer.*

BY THE REV. H. C. B. BAZELY, B.C.L.

THERE is apparently a desire manifested just now by some ministers and congregations in the Presbyterian Churches to change the long-established posture of *standing* during prayer, for that which is customary in Episcopalian Churches, viz., kneeling. Of course, a change of this sort is not to be objected to simply because it is a change—we are not so rigidly conservative as to deny that a change is sometimes expedient, or even necessary—but those who wish to introduce it may fairly be asked to state, as we believe they have not yet done, their reasons for desiring to alter a usage which has prevailed for many generations.

We purpose, in anticipation of a statement of these reasons, to bring to the notice of our readers some considerations which seem to us to vindicate forcibly the retention of the posture of *standing*—a posture which was universally practised in our Presbyterian Churches till twenty or thirty years ago.

1. Two postures during prayer are recommended by precept and example in Holy Scripture—namely, *standing* and *kneeling*. For instance, when Jehoshaphat set his face to seek the help of the Lord against his confederate enemies, he *stood* in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, and prayed, while all Judah, who had gathered themselves together at his summons, *stood* with him before the Lord, with their little ones,

* This paper is taken from Hick's "Life of Henry Bazely," well known as the Oxford Evangelist. The story of Bazely's religious life is one of the deepest interest. Son of a High Church clergyman of the Church of England, he was led in the providence of God to renounce Episcopalianism, and became a strong Presbyterian. He was strongly opposed to instrumental music and hymn singing in public worship. He laboured for many years as an evangelist in Oxford. Out of his own private means he built a Church there, that he might be enabled to conduct the public worship of God according to its true scriptural form. This Church can only be used by those who keep by the old ways in conducting public worship. It has been unused since Mr. Bazely's death in 1883.—D. B.

their wives, and their children. (2 Chron. xx. 5-13.) So in the time of Ezra, the Levites *stood* upon the stairs and cried unto the Lord, while the seed of Israel, who had separated themselves from the strange children, *stood* and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. (Neh. ix. 2-4.) In the New Testament the publican is represented as *standing* while he offered his humble and acceptable petition, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." (Luke xviii. 13.) Moreover, Christ has distinctly recognised this posture as one for general adoption in His rule as to the spirit which must be cherished by us in prayer. "And when ye *stand* praying, forgive if ye have ought against any." (Mark xi. 25.) Kneeling, on the other hand, is yet more frequently referred to. Ezra fell upon his knees and spread out his hands unto the Lord when he prayed with confession of sins. (Ezra ix. 37.) Solomon knelt during some part of the prayer which he offered at the dedication of the temple. (1 Kings viii. 54.) In the early days of the Christian Church, Stephen knelt in his last prayer (Acts vii. 60); Peter knelt when he besought God for the life of Dorcas (Acts ix. 40); Paul knelt when he prayed with the Ephesian presbyters (Acts xx. 36). It is perfectly plain, from these instances, that both postures—*standing* and *kneeling*—are acceptable to God. And if this be the case, it surely cannot be right to neglect the use of either of them altogether. Now, Presbyterians have herein followed more closely than some other Christians the guidance of Holy Scripture. They have adopted the posture of kneeling as the more frequent posture, the ordinary posture in family worship and at their private devotions; whereas in congregational worship they have been accustomed *to stand*.

Moreover, when we remember that it was the almost universal custom in the Church during the first few centuries of the Christian era *to stand* in public prayer, it certainly seems peculiarly appropriate that this very ancient usage should be retained by us. No doubt the practise of the early Church is not, in all respects, worthy of imitation, for corruptions of the simple apostolical order soon crept in; but when an ancient practice is quite in harmony, as this is, with scriptural precept and example, it has some legitimate claim to our regard. Justin Martyr tells us that after Holy Scripture had been read and the minister preached, "*they all rose together and prayed.*" Augustine writes, "We pray *standing*, which is a sign of the resurrection." The Council of Nicea (325) enjoins that prayers be offered to God standing.

We need hardly point out that there is not a vestige of authority for sitting. The only text we have ever seen quoted in favour of sitting is 2 Sam. vii. 18, where David is said to have "*sat* before the Lord." But the word *yashar* may be translated "remained" or "tarried," as in Gen. xxiv. 55. Moreover, the custom of *sitting* cannot be deduced from Exod. xvii. 12, where Moses is compelled to sit from simple exhaustion. Bingham, the great authority on

Church antiquity says, "Sitting had never any allowance in the practice of the ancient Church. . . . The primitive Christians did never use or take sitting for a posture of devotion, . . . because it looked more like a heathenish practice than a Christian."

We are all well aware that one of the chief charges brought by the advocates of prescribed liturgies against free prayer is that the people cannot readily join in it. We know that the charge is unfounded, but we cannot profess to be greatly surprised at it when we remember the irreverent appearance of not a few in most congregations during public prayer. We have never seen any one remain seated while leading the devotions of others, and we are very sure that the sitting members of a congregation would be amazed, and even scandalised, if their minister was to continue seated in the pulpit while offering the prayers of the Church.

It has been argued that laying stress on the posture at prayer is apt to lead us into formalism, but it is a notorious fact that those who advocate kneeling and sitting are the very parties who are seeking to assimilate our simple Presbyterian worship to the more elaborate Episcopalian order, and that they are the very parties who are introducing hymns, instruments of music, and other unscriptural innovations into our worship. While we ought never to forget that God looks not on the outward appearance, but the heart, still we would earnestly contend for the order and decency in worship enjoined by the Apostle Paul, and for the due external expression of that reverence and godly fear which is to be rendered unto God in the assembly of His saints. We are confident that the Apostle Paul would say to the sitters and loungers at public prayer, "Judge in yourselves is it comely to pray to God in such a posture? Doth not even nature teach you that you ought not to approach the throne of the King Eternal in an attitude which you would not dare to adopt in the presence of an earthly monarch? But if any seem to be contentions, we have no such custom, neither the churches of Christ."

Specimens of the Glasgow Pulpit.—The following are the contents of two placards announcing the pulpit topics handled by two Glasgow preachers on a recent Sabbath:—Tron Parish Church, "The Ethics of Courtship." Renfield Street U. F. Church, Young People's Sermon, by Rev. A. F. Forrest, Subject—"Marriage—a Love Idyll." The degree of degradation from the high mark which a Gospel minister should aim at implied in these announcements is painful to contemplate. Surely ministers and congregations who can calmly take part in such a depravation of the pulpit have never seen the glory of the Lord nor the excellency of our God.

Thoughts on the Exercise of Social Prayer.

A LETTER BY THE REV. JOHN NEWTON.

SIR,

I ACCOUNT it a great mercy, that, at this time, when iniquity so generally abounds, there is a number, I hope a growing number, whose eyes affect their hearts, and who are stirred up to unite in prayer for the spreading of gospel-knowledge, and a blessing upon our sinful land. Meetings for social prayer are frequent in different parts of the kingdom, and amongst various denominations of Christians. As the Lord has promised, that when He prepares the heart to pray, He will graciously incline His ear to hear, who can tell but He may yet be entreated for us, and avert the heavy and justly-deserved judgments which seem to hang over us?

It is much to be desired, that our hearts might be so affected with a sense of divine things, and so closely engaged when we are worshipping God, that it might not be in the power of little circumstances to interrupt and perplex us, and to make us think the service wearisome, and the time which we employ in it tedious. But as your infirmities are many and great, and the enemy of our souls is watchful to discompose us, if care is not taken by those who lead in social prayer, the exercise which is approved by the judgment, may become a burden and an occasion of sin. Complaints of this kind are frequent, and might perhaps be easily rectified, if the persons chiefly concerned were spoken to in love. But as they are usually the last who hear of it, it may perhaps be of service to communicate a few remarks on a subject of such general concern.

The chief fault of some good prayers is, that they are too long; not that I think we should pray by the clock, and limit ourselves precisely to a certain number of minutes; but it is the better of the two, that the hearers should wish the prayer had been longer, than spend half or a considerable part of the time in wishing it was over. This is frequently owing to an unnecessary enlargement upon every circumstance that offers, as well as to the repetition of the same things. If we have been copious in pleading for spiritual blessings, it may be best to be brief and summary in the article of intercession for others; or if the frame of our spirits, or the circumstances of affairs, lead us to be more large and particular in laying the cases of others before the Lord, respect should be had to this intention in the former part of the prayer. There are, doubtless, seasons when the Lord is pleased to favour those who pray with a peculiar liberty; they speak because they feel; they have a wrestling spirit, and hardly know how to leave off. When this is the case, they who join with them are seldom wearied, though the prayer should be protracted something beyond the usual limits. But I believe it sometimes happens, both in praying and in

preaching, that we are apt to spin out our time to the greatest length, when we have, in reality, the least to say. Long prayers should in general be avoided, especially where several persons are to pray successively ; or else even spiritual hearers will be unable to keep up their attention. And here I would just notice an impropriety we sometimes meet with, that when a person gives expectation that he is just going to conclude his prayer, something not thought of in its proper place occurring that instant to his mind, leads him as it were to begin again. But unless it is a matter of singular importance, it would be better omitted for that time.

The prayers of some good men are more like preaching than praying. They rather express the Lord's mind to the people, than the desires of the people to the Lord. Indeed this can hardly be called prayer. It might, in another place, stand for a part of a good sermon ; but will afford little help to those who desire to pray with their hearts. Prayer should be sententious, and made up of breathings to the Lord, either of confession, petition, or praise. It should be, not only scriptural and evangelical, but experimental, a simple and unstudied expression of the wants and feelings of the soul. It will be so if the heart is lively and affected in the duty ; it must be so if the edification of others is the point in view.

Several books have been written to assist in the gift and exercise of prayer, as by Dr Watts and others ; and many useful hints may be borrowed from them ; but a too close attention to the methods and transitions therein recommended gives an air of study and formality, and offends against that simplicity which is so essentially necessary to a good prayer, that no degree of acquired abilities can compensate for the want of it. It is possible to learn to pray mechanically, and by rule ; but it is hardly possible to do so with acceptance, and benefit to others. When the several parts of invocation, adoration, confession, petition, &c., follow each other in a stated order, the hearer's mind generally goes before the speaker's voice, and we can form a tolerable conjecture what is to come next. On this account we often find, that unlettered people, who have had little or no help from books, or rather have not been fettered by them, can pray with an unction and savour in an unpremeditated way, while the prayers of persons of much superior abilities, perhaps even of ministers themselves, are, though accurate and regular, so dry and starched, that they afford little either of pleasure or profit to a spiritual mind. The spirit of prayer is the truth and token of the spirit of adoption. The studied addresses with which some approach the throne of grace, remind us of a stranger's coming to a great man's door ; he knocks and waits, sends in his name, and goes through a course of ceremony before he gains admittance ; while a child of the family uses no ceremony at all, but enters freely when he pleases, because he knows he is at home. It is true we ought always to draw near the

Lord with great humiliation of spirit, and a sense of our unworthiness. But this spirit is not always best expressed or promoted by a pompous enumeration of the names and titles of the God with whom we have to do, or by fixing in our minds before hand, the exact order in which we propose to arrange the several parts of our prayer. Some attention to method may be proper, for the prevention of repetitions ; and plain people may be a little defective in it sometimes ; but this defect will not be half so tiresome and disagreeable as a studied and artificial exactness.

Many, perhaps most people, who pray in public, have some favourite word or expression which recurs too often in their prayers, and is frequently used as a mere expletive, having no necessary connection with the sense of what they are speaking. The most disagreeable of these is, ~~when~~ the name of the blessed God, with the addition of perhaps one or more epithets, as Great, Glorious, Holy, Almighty, &c., is introduced so often, and without necessity, as seems, neither to indicate a due reverence in the person who uses it, or suited to excite reverence in those who hear. I will not say that this is taking the name of God in vain, in the usual sense of the phrase ; it is, however, a great impropriety, and should be guarded against. It would be well if they who use redundant expressions, had a friend to give them a caution, as they might, with a little care, be retrenched ; and hardly any person can be sensible of the little peculiarities he may inadvertently adopt, unless he is told of it.

There are several things likewise respecting the voice and manner of prayer, which a person may, with due care, correct in himself, and which, if generally corrected, would make meetings for prayer more pleasant than they sometimes are. These I shall mention by pairs, as the happy and agreeable way is a medium between two inconvenient extremes.

Very loud speaking is a fault, when the size of the place, and the number of hearers do not render it necessary. The end of speaking is to be heard ; and, when that end is attained, a greater elevation of the voice is frequently hurtful to the speaker, and is more likely to confuse a hearer than to fix his attention. I do not deny that allowance must be made for constitution, and the warmth of the passions, which dispose some persons to speak louder than others. Yet such will do well to restrain themselves as much as they can. It may seem indeed to indicate great earnestness, and that the heart is much affected ; yet it is often but false fire. It may be thought speaking with power ; but a person who is favoured with the Lord's presence may pray with power in a moderate voice ; and there may be very little power of the Spirit, though the voice may be heard in the street and neighbourhood.

The other extreme, of speaking too low, is not so frequent ; but if we are not heard, we might as well altogether hold our peace. It exhausts the spirits, and wearies the attention, to be listening for a length of time to a very low voice. Some words or sentences

will be lost, which will render what is heard less intelligible and agreeable. If the speaker can be heard by the person farthest distant from him the rest will hear of course.

The tone of the voice is likewise to be regarded. Some have a tone in prayer, so very different from their usual way of speaking, that their nearest friends, if not accustomed to them, could hardly know them by their voice. Sometimes the tone is changed, perhaps more than once, so that if our eyes did not give us more certain information than our ears, we might think two or three persons had been speaking by turns. It is pity that when we approve what is spoken, we should be so easily disconcerted by an awkwardness of delivery; yet so it often is, and probably so it will be, in the present weak and imperfect state of human nature. It is more to be lamented than wondered at, that sincere Christians are sometimes forced to confess, "He is a good man, and his prayers, as to their substance, are spiritual and judicious; but there is something so displeasing in his manner, that I am always uneasy when I hear him."

Contrary to this, and still more offensive, is a custom that some have of talking to the Lord in prayer. It is their natural voice, indeed, but it is that expression of it which they use upon the most familiar and trivial occasions. The human voice is capable of so many inflexions and variations, that it can adapt itself to the different sensations of our mind, as joy, sorrow, fear, desire, &c. If a man was pleading for his life, or expressing his thanks to the king for a pardon, common sense and decency would teach him a suitableness of manner; and any one who could not understand his language, might know, by the sound of his words, that he was not making a bargain, or telling a story. How much more, when we speak to the King of kings, should the consideration of His glory, and our own vileness, and of the important concerns we are engaged in before Him, impress us with an air of seriousness and reverence, and prevent us from speaking to Him as if He was altogether such a one as ourselves? The liberty to which we are called by the gospel, does not at all encourage such a pertness and familiarity as would be unbecoming to use towards a fellow-worm who was a little advanced above us in worldly dignity.

I shall be glad if these hints may be of any service to those who desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and who wish that whatever has a tendency to damp the spirit of devotion, either in themselves or in others, might be avoided. It is a point of delicacy and difficulty to tell any one what we wish could be altered in his manner of prayer, but it can give no just offence to ask a friend, if he has read a letter on this subject, in "A Collection of Twenty-six Letters," published in 1775.

I am, &c.

"I ONCE," said Mr. Romaine, "uttered the Lord's prayer, without a wandering thought, and it was the worst prayer I ever offered. I was on this account as proud as the devil."

Outlines of Sermons.

BY THE LATE REV. JOHN SINCLAIR, BRUAN, CAITHNESS.
PREACHED ON 11TH AND 25TH AUGUST, 1839.

(Continued from Vol. V., page 424.)

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"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."--JOHN iii. 3.  
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WE mentioned four things:—

I.—The necessity of the new birth.

II.—The nature of it.

III.—The marks of it.

IV.—The certain results of having or wanting it.

III.—The marks. These are only from the Word, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The Word is infallibly certain; it decides every case as clearly as at the day of judgment. If our eyes were opened we might by the Word know things to a certainty. "I know in whom I have believed." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The Word is the only rule of knowing. "These things have I written . . . that ye may know."

Then there is the duty, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." The neglect of this duty is a great loss. (1) It dishonours God. It loses an end of His giving the Word, namely, to be a rule. In them that are not born again, this neglect keeps them away from Him that He might have the glory of saving them. In them that are born again, the neglect keeps them from their rest in the Lord in every duty, and from further degrees of faith. (2) It pleases the enemy. It pleases him by this means to lead blindfold to hell those who do not know where they are and are not born again. A blind company with Satan at their head. It pleases him to see the children of God, without assurance of calling and election, walking as slaves. (3) It injures the wicked. Their neglect of examining themselves by the Word injures them. Would Satan have so many, if they knew it? (4) It injures the upright. They lose the comfort of assurance. "My beloved is mine and I am his." They lose their strength for duty. "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength." They lose strength in the performance of duty, and strength against temptation.

The causes of the neglect of giving diligence to make one's calling and election sure are:—(1) A deceived heart. It turns many aside so that they cannot deliver their souls. (2) Sloth. Diligence is commanded, all diligence. Loss arises from taking some means and neglecting others, taking public means and not private. Two difficulties in the way of making one's calling and election sure. (1) The indistinctness of grace in the heart. The

flesh wars against the Spirit, so that the heart is like a book full of blots, like a liquor full of mixture. There is first the need of being cleansed from every known sin. (2) The want of the Spirit. He only can seal assurance. He can make the true light shine. Hence, though we could decide clearly by the Word, yet no one gets any benefit without the Spirit. A hypocrite cannot be awakened nor a believer comforted without the shining of the Spirit.

1. The first mark is—they do not commit sin. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."—(1 John iii. 9.) (1) They do not sin *habitually*. A new habit of soul is given, and so a principle against sin. But if sin prevail, the Word and the rod are sent, as Nathan and the pestilence in the case of David. Do Word and rod reprove us when we sin, or are we let go? Do they discover a particular sin or sins? If we are not sure what sin we have been guilty of, are we saying to the Lord, "Show me?" Are we as anxious to know our sin, as to be recovered from the consequences of it? Are we led, not to duties only, but to the atoning blood? Though temptation return, does the Word come with it? Is sin now more hated? It is a distinguishing mark of divine love and favour to be treated as a son. (2) They do not sin *wilfully*. "What I would not, that do I." There is a contest in the heart; not so much with the sins of the world as with more hidden sins. There is a contest in the members, which leads to diligence in prayer and in the use of the means of grace. There is mourning for sin. "O wretched man that I am!" Why? Because they cannot attain to spiritual liberty, to godly exercise, etc. There is application to the Saviour for deliverance. They look for sanctification as well as justification "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

2. The second mark is—they do righteousness. They are not only turned from sin, but to the exercise of holy duties. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."—(1 John ii. 29.) Hence this is another step in the evidence. The first mark is sufficient, but in this there is a new evidence. It is not only a turning from Satan, but a turning unto God. "No man can serve two masters." (1) Their doing righteousness is from a *new principle*. They are taught that of themselves they cannot cherish a good thought, but that their "sufficiency is of God." When the Holy Spirit begins, He carries on the good work, and they feel they need this. Formerly they professed to ask the Spirit but neither felt nor knew His influence, but now "Woe to any other covering." And so when any performance is ended, they are not satisfied unless the Spirit was there. The angels did not please the disciples when Christ "they saw not." If the Spirit is our regenerator, we feel our need of Him ever after for the performance of duty. (2) They have a *new rule*. "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting."—(Psalm cxix. 144.) The holy law is the only rule, and

to that they are turned. "Order my steps in thy word." Their heart is cast in the mould of the Word. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto all thy commandments." They are ashamed of every other rule, even of their own thoughts. They have a desire that their steps be ordered in the Word. They are not at ease in worldly matters without the Word, and when they are otherwise, the Word will be reproving them, as it did Josiah even in reading the book of the law. (3) They live to a *new end*. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Formerly they sought a righteousness of their own by the deeds of the law, but now they make use of the means in order to reach another's righteousness. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy;" to find not duties only, but God in them. That is a lost duty in which God is not.

Some questions—(1) Is your worker God? Can you work without Him? If you do not find Him in a duty, is the duty put to the debtor or creditor side of the account? The supply of the Spirit is required. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Is that hard on you? (2) Is the Word your rule? If so, you will not be easy when the Word does not come. That duty, which is done without the Word, will be heavy and trying. You will be seeking the Word; if it does not come, the duty will not be easy; if it does come, you will find the law exceeding broad, not easily fulfilled, and your performance will need cleansing. (3) Do you seek God's glory? If so, you will feel that a hankering after applause is a burden, and has a marring influence. You will be burdened with self rising, when you find within you as Bernard felt, "O well done Bernard." When the finding of God, and the discovery of the love of applause and self are reckoned with, there will not be much left for the creature to rest on in himself.

3. The third mark is—they overcome the world. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It is not the world as God's creature that the love of is forbidden. "Every creature of God is good." From the highest mansion in glory to the lowest pile of grass, all is good, if used according to His Word, and for the purpose for which He gives it. We hear many people cry, "O the weary world!" Now, this is not from grace. I am not sure if I have ever heard gracious persons say so; generally it has been hypocrites, such are disposed to cast blame on creatures outside themselves. But sin brought into the world what should not be loved. The devil, the prince, the god of this world, wicked men, and dispositions in our hearts to use lawful things unlawfully, to abuse instead of to use—these are not to be loved.

(1) They overcome the god of this world. "Ye have overcome the wicked one." In the day of conversion, the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered. They were

carried captive at his will either in carelessness or sin; but they are awakened, and all bands fall off—at the bidding of the Mighty One of Jacob. “The strong man” is bound, captivity is led captive. The enemy is bound and cast out, and has many a struggle to get in again. When they are delivered from captivity, then the chained red dragon turns and follows them at every step, tempting to this and that, but they are strong and overcome him. How do they overcome him? By the Word of God: by the promise, and faith resting on it and saying, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.” The threatening and the promise are “the sword of the Spirit.” Christ has Satan under his feet, and will put him under theirs. Paul says he is “carnal, sold under sin,” not under Satan. He was “not ignorant of his devices.” Satan’s sudden and violent temptations and suggestions in the heart are the worst to believers. The poor unregenerate sinner has none to go to as a conqueror of Satan. He will not go to Christ, and therefore overcomes not. Satan cannot touch believers without permission, and they cry and are delivered from their fierce enemy.

(2) They overcome the men of the world. They overcome their threats. So, “we ought to obey God rather than men.” It is fearful when men can be threatened to do anything. “We are not careful to obey thee.” Such was the attitude of Daniel and others in Babylon. It is not consistent with Scripture to be influenced by the threatenings of men. Peter fell once for fear, but was a noble champion for Christ ever after. They also overcome the bribes of the world. All the treasures of Egypt could not bribe Moses.

(3) They overcome the doctrines of the world.—(1 John iv. 4.) False prophets are gone out, as many as unregenerate men and women. They cry, “Peace, you need not trouble so much.” But the new born cannot be satisfied with that. The old worldly religion will not do; “There is no fear, go on, be good, peace, peace.” This will not do. “They are of the world and speak of the world.”

(4) They overcome the company of the world. “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” Moses flees; the disciples went to their own company. They hear God dishonoured in worldly society, and the divine nature in them rises against this. They separate, not merely for their own party, but for the cause of truth. “Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.” “They sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land.” They not only speak against these, but they mourn and pray. This is very searching; it is not easy to claim the mark. Their own minds are hurt by worldly company. The Spirit is dried in their hearts in an hour, and is not recovered in many hours, when they go without cause into the company of the world. Yet observe, they do not break any relative duty, but rather increase their attention to these duties.

August 25th.—Now, they overcome, not in their own strength, but in that of Christ. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." It is in virtue of Christ's overcoming that they overcome. (1) He overcame the devil in the wilderness. He overcame the temptation to make bread—all things pertaining to the lust of the flesh. He overcame the temptation to fall down and worship Satan—all things pertaining to the lust of the eye. He overcame the temptation to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple—all things pertaining to the pride of life. Christ stood in the room of the elect. Look then to a tempted Saviour. He overcame; and if you are an elect person, He will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. He dragged the devil a poor captive at His chariot wheels. (2) He overcame the wicked men of the world. He overcame them in their doctrines. He overcame the doctrine of Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees—all false doctrines. He laid a foundation that no elect person might be snared. He overcame them in their companies. He companied with sinners, but went to them for their good only. He overcame them in their threatenings, such as those of Herod, Pilate, soldiers and others. He overcame them in their allurements. They would have made Him a king, but He refused. (3) He conquered what was in His own people. He had no sin in Himself, but He suffered for all their sin; and thus having satisfied justice, He made way for exerting His almighty power to destroy sin, the work of the devil. He suffered for original sin. He was bruised for their iniquities; He was "made sin," and hence His blood cleanseth from all sin. He was bruised for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. He suffered for actual transgressions. He was wounded for them. He obtained peace by His chastisement, so as to get strength for His people to war with sin, and He got stripes by which they are healed of their wounds.

Again, they overcome by Christ's intercession. "Keep them from the evil." He never ceases pleading for them, and gets whatever His lips crave. He engages almighty power in their behalf. Hence they get most unexpected deliverances. He pleads the merits of His own blood. It "speaketh better things than that of Abel." He pleads their necessities too. "They are in the world." He sends the Spirit to lift a standard—the Word conveying His blood—against the enemy: and thus the Holy Ghost enables them to take up the standard—the very same as He has in heaven. He works the faith, by which they overcome the world, namely, by believing that Jesus is the Christ. Thus it is Christ's victory that is their victory.

We have mentioned the first thing in the world which they overcome; that is the devil. This is a mark of the new birth, because none ever overcame him but by Christ and His Spirit; and they that have Christ have life, in other words, have the new birth. We said they overcome him as a captive-leader. The world are

"taken captive by him at his will;" but "the prey is taken from the mighty and the lawful captive is delivered." They overcome him as a strong man armed. He is bound and spoiled; his armour is taken from him, and his goods are not left in peace. They overcome him as a prince, as a ruler, his laws are broken, his tribute is refused, and his service is abandoned. They overcome him as a god. He is refused worship. He offers them the world; and Luther-like, nay, Christ-like, they refuse to accept it.

Now, let us ask—(1) Have *we* been delivered from captivity? If so, we shall be taught to say, "Give me not to mine enemy's will;" we shall be afraid of falling away again into his hands. "Blessed is the man who feareth always." If we have been delivered, the enemy shall be after us. "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." Where the devil does not lead, he follows. "The enemy has pursued my soul." He is spoken of as a lion, a wolf, a bull, a dog, etc. If we have been delivered from captivity, we are also taught to say, "I am carnal, sold under sin;" the old nature is a burden. We feel carnal in every duty, reading, praying, attending on ordinances, and such like. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." The evil is mourned. (2) Have we been freed from "the strong man armed?" If so, his armour is spoiled from us. Our peace and security in a state of nature is spoiled. We are made to know that we are children of wrath by nature, and are anxious to get out of it. "Create in me a clean heart." Our unbelief of threatenings is broken: whatever we do with the promise or not, we believe the threatenings. We are delivered from a seared conscience.

(*To be continued.*)

"Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament."

BY PROFESSOR GEO. ADAM SMITH, U.F. COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

A CRITIQUE.

IT may be doubted whether the friends of the Bible, by the attention they have paid to these noisy champions of the "Higher Criticism," and the labour and learning they have bestowed upon refutations of their reckless theories have not done them too much honour. Elaborate treatises in defence of the faith are right and necessary in their place, but it is to be noted that the effective antidote to this poison of modern unbelief does not lie in formal efforts of logic, history or metaphysics. One beam of heavenly light shining upon a text of holy writ will re-establish in the mind of one who is shaken a conviction of the truth of the whole scheme of Revelation, and will shew up

the "Higher Criticism" in all its nakedness as a lying vanity. Let it dawn, for example, on a man's understanding that the wondrous scene on the road to Damascus, recorded in 9th chapter of Acts, is a fact (and the God of Heaven is able suddenly to convey such a conviction into the mind even of the most confirmed unbeliever), and the whole fabric of the "Higher Criticism" will vanish like a nightmare. As a dream, when one awaketh so does the Christian, the instant he gets leave to apprehend Christ as a living Saviour, despise the image of this godless learning.

It is then seen how blasphemous and infatuated it is to dispute the veracity of the book of Genesis and the facts of the history of the patriarchs, when He that liveth and was dead proclaims from Heaven that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is not the God of the dead but of the living, much more is He not the God of persons who never existed.

Adolph Saphir, the eminent London Presbyterian minister, who in his youth was converted from Judaism to the faith of Christ, has told us that one telling circumstance in his conversion was his perception of the fact that the Christ of Bethany and the upper room was the God of Abraham. That majestic but most condescending One who said, "Let not your heart be troubled," was revealed to him as the same familiar holy Presence that walked with Enoch, and that spoke to Jacob saying, "I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar."

The root of this profane criticism is really Atheism, disbelief in a living personal God. A God who created the universe at first by a miracle of power, who has come into human history many a time, who revealed Himself visibly and audibly to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who by a miracle of grace was incarnate in the fulness of time, who walked in Jewry for thirty-three years, speaking, acting, suffering as is written of Him, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, was buried and raised from the dead the third day, who now sits in heavenly places able to hear prayer, able to send down the Holy Ghost as the quickener, enlightener, and consoler of lost sinners—it is the glory of this God these critics are darkening, whose very being they in their hearts are denying.

An unlearned Christian may not be able to declare the grounds of his conviction in a logical formal way, but he has nevertheless a vivid persuasion that a generation of men who spend their lives dissecting the Scripture narratives and resolving the histories of prophets and patriarchs into a feeble tissue of myths and folk lore, however such men may wear the livery and draw the wages of Christian teachers, however they may intersperse their disquisitions with expressions of reverence towards the name of Christ; they have nevertheless neither seen Him nor known Him. "These things will they do," says Christ, "because they have not known the Father nor me."

One circumstance which may serve for matter of condemnation to the whole scheme of the "Higher Criticism" is the fact that

the learning and zeal which characterize its exponents are uniformly the hand maidens of an erroneous theology. The "Higher Criticism" of Professor Geo. Adam Smith's present book is glaringly allied with the falsest and most heterodox ideas on the fundamental points of the faith.

When a man finds himself at war with the universal Church it is time for him to pause and consider whether he be not far out of the way. There is, however, no footstep of such a spirit discernible in the professor. He calmly announces the rawest and most upsetting novelties of the German school, and never apologises for the callous contempt thus shewn to the cherished beliefs of good men in all ages and for the flat contradiction given to the obvious teaching of apostles and evangelists.

We noticed formerly the professor's distempered view of Jeremiah as the suffering servant depicted in the fifty-third of Isaiah. A further exposition of his views of Old Testament typology will confirm the suspicion that his tenets on the central doctrine of the Atonement are deeply infected with Socinian error. The whole gist of his chapter on the "Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament," is to show that the true Christology of the Old Testament is to be found in the self-sacrificing, elevated lives and deeds of saints and prophets, and not at all in the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy. Jeremiah was a type of Christ because he had love for his sinful countrymen, while he sternly condemned their sins. Jeremiah bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of his sinful brethren, and Christ's experience as a sin-bearer was the same in kind with Jeremiah, but, of course, greatly higher in degree. The idea of the Paschal lamb and the other Levitical sacrifices having any divine authority as types and emblems of the coming Atonement, is one which the professor can barely tolerate.

The following are a few significant extracts from the before-mentioned chapter—"The battlefield (of Deborah's song) was the Gogtha of early Israel. It was there that Zebulun and Naphtali laid down their lives for the brethren"—

"It is because Christian divines have dwelt too much on the Old Testament system of sacrifices and too little upon the figures of Jeremiah, the suffering remnant and the Servant of the Lord; too much upon the animal types of the Cross and too little upon the human forerunners of Christ: that their explanations of the vicarious character of the passion and death of the Redeemer have so often been mechanical and repulsive. Certainly in our day, when animal sacrifices have so long ceased to speak to the imagination and conscience of men, it is the direst blunder a preacher may commit to dwell upon them except for the barest of exegetical purposes. If we are to get our fellows to believe in the redemptive virtue of Christ's Cross, it will be by proving to them that vicarious suffering and its ethical virtue are no arbitrary enactments of God, but natural to life and inevitable wherever sin and holiness, guilt and love, encounter and contend.

'Non est dolor nisi de amore amisso, quanto profundior erat amor tanto altius tangit dolor.' And in this we shall succeed most readily by proving, as we can do from the history which we have been traversing, that the figure of a Sufferer, holy and undefiled, by whose stripes we are healed, by whose bearing of our iniquities we are justified, was desired and confidently expected by men, not because Heaven had arbitrarily proclaimed it, but out of their own experiences of life and death, the very elements of which provided them with their marvellous picture of Him."

This assertion that the sufferings of Jeremiah and other Old Testament saints are on the same plane with the atoning sufferings of Christ is indicative of some thing far wrong in the professor's creed.

And as he thus exalts Jeremiah and other Old Testament heroes to a place in the scheme of Christology which God never authorised, so on the other hand he depresses the heaven devised Messianic types of the Levitical law to a place of unimportance, almost of contempt, which grates upon the instincts of a reverent mind.

For the professor, the Mosaic economy is a thing of no authority—no venerableness. It holds the same place in his esteem as the history of the creation and the flood. These, he suggests, are mere variations of the legendary traditions of Babylon. In like manner the rites and ceremonies of the Levitical law are part and parcel of the Semitic customs that obtained from Cyprus to South Arabia, and their origin is lost in the vague uncertain past.

His words are:—"Again, the ritual of Israel is full of exact analogies to the ritual of Semitic sanctuaries from Cyprus to Southern Arabia. The sacrifice of certain animals at certain seasons of the year; the smearing of lintels and other objects with blood; the anointing of pillars in honour of the Deity; the presence of human sacrifices with as much infrequency and sense of the awful crisis that demands them as elsewhere in the Semitic world; the worship of images by Jacob's family, by David, and at the sanctuaries of the Northern Kingdom; the discovery of the Deity's will through dreams, in ecstasy or by lot; the attestation of the Divine word by physical signs accompanying it; circumcision; the law of blood-revenge and its mitigation by the rights of sanctuary; the sacrifice of spoil of war to the Deity: all these things have not only for the most part the same names as in other Semitic languages, but—except for a higher moral character which, however, only sometimes distinguishes them—they are the same as among other Semites, in intention and details of execution."

These speculations are conceived in a spirit of cool contempt for the inspired teaching of Scripture, and the venerable testimony of the Church in all ages.

Another example of the Professor's profound erroneousness, and his abandonment of the true evangelical position is found in

the license which he gives to the preacher to expound beautiful fables to his hearers, and to expect good results from such preaching. In his chapter on "The historical basis in the Old Testament,"—a chapter containing much poison—he expresses himself thus concerning the Scripture narrative of Eden and the Flood—"Here," says he, "it is evident that we do not have a transcript of actual history in the narrower sense of that word."

"Critics are now generally agreed that the traditions reached Israel at an early age, and that, along with other elements of Babylonian legend and mythology, they underwent considerable modification and gradually became, when perhaps all memory of their true origin was lost, part of the folk-lore of Canaan. The process probably extended through many centuries before the authors of these chapters of Genesis used them for a higher purpose. But this absence of history from the chapters, this fact that their framework is woven from the raw material of myth and legend, cannot discredit the profound moral and religious truths with which they are charged, any more than the cosmogony of his time, which Milton employs, impairs by one whit our spiritual indebtedness to 'Paradise Lost.'"

Again he says regarding the narratives of the Patriarchs:—"On the present evidence, it is impossible to be sure of more than that they contain a substratum of actual personal history. But who wants to be sure of more? Who needs to be sure of more? If there be a preacher who thinks that the priceless value of these narratives to his work depends on the belief that they are all literal history, let him hold that belief if he can, and confidently use them. Or if he cannot believe that Genesis is literal history, and yet thinks it must needs be, in order to be used as God's Word, let him seek his texts elsewhere: his field is wide and inexhaustible.

"Than these extremes there is, however, a nobler way: and the honest student who is ready to accept the evidence and example of Scripture itself will surely find this. He will see that the sacred writers aimed at something higher than the bare reproductions of primitive history—in itself an impossible task; that, possessed by the experience of God and the human heart, which subsequent ages of the Divine education had delivered to them, they read all that into the traditions of the remote past; and so achieved the creation of types of character essentially historical, not only in this, that they portray with wonderful fidelity the tempers, aspirations and experiences of Israel and her neighbours, but because they discover human nature, as it is in every race of mankind, and clearly tell of the reality of God, as they themselves had been inspired by His Spirit to find Him. To the sacred authors of these stories we cannot refuse a license of dramatic and ethical expansion which we, more consciously, permit in our own preaching, and which every powerful preacher of the traditional school has fearlessly employed. As preachers,

we cannot refuse to follow the narratives of Genesis till we refuse to follow the parables of Jesus. If criticism, with the help of archæology, has failed to establish the literal truth of these stories as personal biographies, it has on the other hand displayed their utter fidelity to the characters of the peoples they reflect, and to the facts of the world and the Divine guidance in which these peoples developed. The power of the Patriarchal narratives on the heart, the imagination, the faith of men can never die: it is immortal with truthfulness to the realities of human nature and of God's education of mankind."

In answer to these unsavoury fancies of the professor, it may be said, "Ye do err not knowing the Scripture nor the power of God." The Church built in a supernatural persuasion of the truth of the Bible has subsisted for six thousand years. The experience of each true member of that Church is a moral miracle which has to be accounted for. It may be that Professor Smith is wiser than the whole General Assembly of the first born, but at all events if they are questioned regarding the relation which the Book bears to their experience, each one of this cloud of witnesses will testify that all the power of the Book lies in its truthfulness. A Bible of beautiful fables, of impressive fictions, never could have stilled the fears and broken the power of depravity in Augustine, Luther or any of the saints, and the God who revealed Himself to them was too holy and faithful a God to be the patron of such a tissue of fabrication as the critics are feigning the Scriptures to be. It may be noted that the spirit of the "Higher Criticism" is perfectly destructive of the frame of mind which Christ has specified as essential to salvation. "Except ye receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child, ye shall in no wise enter therein." Seeing this frame of mind is so imperative in the Christian, there must be something answerable to it in the object which is presented for acceptance. The only reasonable foundation for such implicit humility and receptivity of mind in the children of the Kingdom is the perfect unmarred veracity and genuineness of the Book of the Kingdom.

We have finished our attempt to review this learned effort of modern unbelief. Even by a limited presentation of the case the professor is seen to be flatly at variance with the testimony of Christ and the Apostles, the experience of the Church down to the present hour, and the patent facts of general history. On these accounts, we think it is sufficiently clear that his book is nothing else but a self-condemned falsity.

J. M'N.

A MARTYR was asked, "Whether he did not love his wife and children, who stood weeping by him?" "Love them? Yes," said he: "if all the world were gold, and at my disposal, I would give it for the satisfaction of living with them, though it were in prison. Yet, in comparison of Christ, I love them not."

Sealltuinn Mu'ncuairt.

AIG am an Dealachaidh ged a bha eadar-dhealachadh ann an iomadh ni am measg Eaglaisean cleireil na duthcha so is gann nach robh iad uile a leantuinn an aon doigh aoraidh. 'Sann o'n uair sin a thainig na rudan ur a stigh ann an rathad laoidhean neo-dheachdta agus innealan ciuil anns an Eaglais Steidhte fein chaneil ach mu dha fhichead bliadhna o thoisich iad air innealan ciuil a thoirt a stigh agus chi sinn an diugh mar a mheudaich agus a dh'fhas an gluasad so air falbh o ghloinead aoraidh ann an Albainn. 'Se ni a tha freumhaichte gu domhain ann an nadur truailidh, daoine a bhi 'gan toileachadh fein agus a bhi an duil an ni a tha cordadh ri 'n cail fein gu bheil sin taitneach do'n Tighearna. Mar so ann an aon rathad, agus ann an rathad eile tha iad a truailleadh seirbhis naomh an Righ Shiorruidh; tha iad 'ga truailleadh le nithean a thoirt a stigh nach eil a reir nan sgriobhuirean agus aig a cheart am le nithean fhagail a mach a tha na sgriobtuirean ag iarraidh. 'Se sin o'n a chordas ceol ris a chluais nadurra tha innealan 'gan cleachdadh a bha ceaduichte fo'nt-Seann Tiommadh a chionn gu'n robh iad orduichte; o'n a tha eas-cordadh eadar na Sailm agus an inntinn fheolmhor tha na Sailm ann an iomadh aite 'gan dunadh a mach agus tha obair dhaoine a' faghail aite roimh obair Dhe. Tha mac an duine gle choltach ris na caoraich an fhad-sa co dhiubh 'nuair a bhriseas aon duibh a mach troimh bhearn tha cach buailteach a bhi 'ga leantuinn. Tha am fasan a riaghladh ann an creidimh agus aoradh cho cinnteach 'sa tha e riaghladh am an eudach. Tha torr do na ministearan oga agus cha dean ni an gnothuch dhoibh ach a bhi cho faisg air doighean Shasuinn 's a gheibh iad. Tha cuid dhe na seana mhinistear e an agus tha iad mar gum biodh tachus air an cinn air son ard easbuig. Eadar an da sheorsa dhiubh cha'n iongantach ged a tha na seann chlachan criche air an atharrachadh. Thug sinn an aire o chionn ghoirid do'n troimh cheile a bha ann an cleir Dhundeada anns an Eaglais Steidhte a thaobh cuis Cnoc an-t-sabhail. 'Se is coltaiche gun teid a chuis sin air beulaobh an Ard-sheanaidh ciod air bith a' chrìoch a bhios ann. Tha i air a togail gus an Seanadh mar tha. Ged is math a tha claonaidhean an la an diugh a toilltinn a bhi air an smashdachadh is olc a thig e do dhaoine nach eil iad fein a cumail ris an Riagh-ailt Aoraidh duine a dhiteadh air son a bhi ciontadh do'n aon ni riutha fein.

Ach a thaobh a ghluasaid an car na Roimh chi sinn mar a tha coimhthionalan thall 's a bhos mar gum biodh iad air a chaothach airson innealan ciuil. Duine o America nach mor a's fearr is urrainnear a radh mu 'dheighinn ach gun do thrus e moran do'n t-saoghal tha e a sgahadh a chiud air feadh na rioghachd a truailleadh aoradh a chruitheir agus tha an ginealach cho dall gun bhreithneachadh 's gu bheil cinniuil an t-sluaigh an so agus an sud agus am boineid 'nan laimh a sireadh cuid dhe a stòras ach am bi

iad cho fad air toiseach ri an coimhearsnaich. Is math a thubhairt an sean fhocal, "Far am bheil am pobull dall ni an gille cam ministear." Chaneil fhios nach rachamaid ro fhada ann a bhi toirt creideas do mhoran do na ministearan sin a bhi cam fein. Oir tha suil a bharrachd aig an duine cham air an duine dhall mur eil suil an fhoghluim aca cha'n aithne dhuinn ciod e an coir a tha aig moran diubh air an t-sluagh a tha 'gan leanmhuinn. Is cianail ri smuaineachadh na tha do ghillean eutrom neo-iomp-aichte a dol a dh' ionnsuidh na ministreileachd. Cha'n iongantach na h-Eaglaisean a bhi cho mor nam fasaichean spioradail. 'Se an t-iongantas gu bheil eaglaisean idir ann agus slùagh 'gan taghal. Ach muinntir aig am bheil cluasan tachusach carnaidh iad suas luchd-teagaisg a reir an gne fein.

Chaneil fhios againn o am an Ath-leasachaidh an do thachair ann an Albainn an ni a thachair o chionn ghoirid nuair a chaidh ministear Cleireil a null do Eaglais na Roimh. Nan rachadh beagan eile comhla ris do na fir 'a tha gabhail orra fein a bhi 'nan sagartan bhiodh e ni b'onoraich dhoibh na fanachd far am bheil iad. Cha'n 'e gu bheil e 'na dhleasdanas do dhuine beo taobh a mhearachd a ghabhail ach ma tha daoine coguiseach cha'n aidich iad aon ni 'nuair is e ni eile a tha iad a creidsinn, agus mar sin dh'fheudamaid a radh gu bheil ministearan Cleireil anns an aite nach buin doibh nuair a tha beachdan sagartail a lionadh an inntinn. Ann an gnothuichean cumanta an t-saoghail tha e air iarraidh air daoine a bhi earbsach agus uiread do chreideas a bhi aig an coimhearsnaich dhoibh 's gu'n creid iad am focal co dhiubh. Tha muinntir ma ta air mhi-cheill cho mor ann an cuisean an anama 's gu'n earb iad iad fein ri daoineibh air son an teagasg aig am bheil am beatha uile 'na breig. Ach cha n'eil an so ach roinn do'n ni a tha an t-Abstol ag radh gu'n do dhall dia an t-saoghail inntinn na dream nach eil 'nan creidich air eagal gu'n deabraicheadh solus soisgeil Chriosd a stigh annta. The daoine saoghalta ann a dh' innseas do'n fhirean a h-uile ceum is coir dha a ghabhail ach cha ghabh iad fein na ceumanna sinleis cho suarach 's a tha iad air an ni air am bheil tomhas do fhios aca bheir iad gnus—moran diubh-do chinn-iuil a tha iad fein cinnteach gur e cinn-iuil dhall nan dall a th' annta.

Ach ma tha cunnart ann an la a thaobh dorchadas na Roimh cha lugha na sin an cunnart a tha ann a thaobh reuson feolmhor an duine. 'Se slighe leathann a tha treorachadh a chum sgrios; is mor an t-astar a reir coltais a th'ann eadar diadhachd reuspin agus teagasg a Phapa ach duine a tha fo bhuaidh aon no aon diubh 'sann gus an aon chrich a thig e. Ma 's urrainn neach comharan na h-aimsir a leughadh tha a h-uile coltas ann gu bheil oidche dhorch roimh 'n Eaglais Aointe leis mar a tha i toirt gnus do luchd teagasg nam mearachd. Tha na paipearan naigheachd ag innseadh dhuinn gu'n deachaidh Dr. Dods a thaghadh a bhi 'na cheann-suidhe air an ath Ard-Sheanadh aca. 'Se guth a mhoir-chuid do'n luchd-taghaidh a dh'ardaich e gus an inbhe so.

Gluaisidh gach aon taobh luchd an uile is togaidh iad an ceann an uair a chuirear suas gu h-ard na daoine a's suarach a t'ann. Eadar an gabh e ris an urram so no nach gabh tha a bhuidheann anns am bheil e a deanamh soilleir an inntinn dhe'm bheil iad a thaobh deachdadh nan sgriobtuirean nuair a bheir iad an t-aite suidhe a's airde 'nam measg do dhuine cho fuasgailte 'na bheachdan ris-san.

An ceart uair ma ta tha gluasad am measg cuid anns an Eaglais Aointe an aglaidh Professor Smith ann an Glasachu agus co air bith a bhios beo gus an ath-Ard-sheanadh cha'n eil e 'mi-choitach nach faic iad dearbhadh air a chur anns a' ghnòthuch, ciod e cho fad 's a tha an Eaglais sin gu bhi ceadachadh beachdan am measg an ard-luchd-teagaisg aice a tha reubadh sgriobtuirean an t-Seann Tiomnaidh. Ma 'se agus fu'm fagar an duine so 'na dhreuchd ciod air bith an t-aideachadh a ni an t-Ard-Sheanadh air deachdadh an t-Seann Tiomnaidh cha bhi anns an aideachadh sin ach fag Iudais 'nuair a tha e a brath a Mhaighister-beannachd 'nam beul ach mallachd 'san taobh a stigh.

Ma bha feum riamh air ath-bheothachadh spioradail anns an duthaich so 'sann an diugh a tha feum air. Tha feum aig Eaglaisean Chrìosd am measg nan Cinneach air beatha o na mairbh-ni a tha air a ghealltuinn an daimh ris na geugan nadurra a bhi air an suidheachadh a rithis 'nan crann olaidh fein. An trath so ann am meadhon nam bliadhnachan mu'n tig na laithean beannuichte sin chaneil againn ach a bhi 'g urnuigh. "Ann am meadhon nam bliadhnacha dean aithnichte ann an corruich" (a tha sinn a toilltinn) "cuimhuich trocair" (ni nach eil sinn a toilltinn).

J. M.

Obituary Notice.

THE LATE MISS MARGARET MACPHERSON.

ALTHOUGH it is somewhat late to refer to the death of Miss Margaret Macpherson, which took place at her home, Kyleakin, Skye, on the 4th of July of this year, we consider that there were circumstances connected with her life which render it appropriate that some notice of her removal, and of the loss the friends of truth have sustained thereby, should appear in this magazine. She was well known to many of our readers as a warm-hearted Christian friend, whose greatest delight in this world appeared to be to minister to the necessities of the Lord's people. Margaret was a native of the parish of Sleat, Skye, where she was born in May, 1866. In early life she became a follower of the Lord, and of His people. For several years she maintained in a quiet way, in an obscure sphere, a walk becoming her Christian profession, but the Lord has His own purposes concerning the ways and means through which His elect shall attain in this world to that measure of the knowledge which is eternal life, to which they are predestinated. And we are of the mind, that in respect

of very many of the Lord's people, it might easily be seen, that the ordeal, through which they had to pass in connection with maintaining a pure testimony for the truth in this country a few years ago, was the means of establishing them in faith and love, to an extent to which they had not attained before. And possibly some in humble spheres of life might have more to endure in this way than others who were more openly identified with the cause, and might also, in no less degree, be partakers of the grace here spoken of. We consider that the subject of this sketch is a case in point. It was not without enduring a good deal of obloquy, and not without some self-sacrifice, that, occupying as she did a difficult position in 1893, she at that time threw in her lot with the Free Presbyterians of Gairloch, a people then everywhere spoken against. But that decision was not, we think, without its gracious reward.

Shortly after this event she was overtaken with a severe illness, which threatened to terminate in fatal consumption. But the Lord raised her up, and for some years gave her ampler opportunities than she could have looked for, to minister to the wants of the Lord's servants and people. But even then she was no stranger to severe conflicts, and temptations of the adversary. Her life was a constant warfare, albeit, it was pleasantly relieved with occasional glimpses that assured her that her's would be an eternal triumph at last. To a degree greater than many believers, she might join with the Psalmist, and say: "If it had not been the Lord was on our side, the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul." Her end came unexpectedly. After only sixteen days' illness and severe suffering, borne with Christian meekness, she finished her course here below, on the date already mentioned. On the Sabbath following her decease, the Rev. Neil Cameron, whose servant she was during the last five years of her life, made a suitable and touching reference, in St. Jude's, Glasgow, to the loss he and the church had sustained through this dispensation.

J. R. M.

Notes and Comments.

Church Bazaars.—The following letter which appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* in reference to a United Free Church Bazaar speaks for itself, though in our opinion the speaking might be stronger than it is.

"GLASGOW, 20th November, 1901.

"SIR,—Your readers will observe that a three-days' bazaar is to be held this week towards the erection of a United Free Church at Shawlands. In the elaborate circular issued by the committee we are informed that 'The Players will appear in a comedietta,' that there will be a 'display of Indian club swinging by lady champion of the West of Scotland,' and that 'the distinguished London palmist, Miss Craufurd Tait,' will hold 'consultations daily during the hours of the bazaar—fee, 2s. 6d.' We are

assured by the Church Committee that 'the science of palmistry . . . is a faithful and reliable delineation of the character, habits, tastes, and personal history, &c.' 'Don't miss this splendid opportunity of having your hand read scientifically,' the committee add. Our Lord Provost and Dr. Ross Taylor (who are to take part) may not now think it necessary to consult a palmist, but I hope your reporter will not fail to take down any words of encouragement they may offer to young Councillors and prospective Moderators, in calling their attention to this unique opportunity. I presume Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Corbett, Dr. Wells, and Dr. Adamson, when they expressed their willingness to take part, were not made aware of all the arrangements, but I venture to say that if the distinguished representatives of the United Free Church who are advertised for the opening ceremonies told the Bazaar Committee that before they took any part in the proceedings Miss Craufurd Tait must receive her fee, and be sent back to London, it would do more for the cause of Christ in this city than a good many special missions. Has it come to this, that the United Free Church is so anxious to erect buildings to the glory of God that she does not much care what means are used to raise the necessary funds? I observe that, although this is one of the church-planting charges, Dr. Howie is to take no part in the proceedings on any of the three days. Will Dr. Howie go a step farther, and call the attention of his Presbytery to those undignified—to use no stronger word—methods of advancing the cause of Christ? This is not the only case in which United Free Church bazaars have had similar unedifying accompaniments.—

I am, &c.,

H. M. WORKER."

An Outbreak of Crime.—The past month has been marked as a strange time of crimes and outrages. At the beginning of the month, Mr. Henry Ross, a Glasgow merchant, was shot in his warehouse by Mitchell, a disaffected servant of the firm. The victim expired on the spot and the assailant instantly shot himself dead. Mitchell was a church-going man and respectably connected. It seems he was thwarted in his schemes of advancement in business, and so he deliberately planned the outrage by way of revenge. Within the last few days one revelation after another of depravity has shocked the public mind. A gentleman was lured by a swindling advertisement to treat with a scoundrel who inveigled him into a room in a Glasgow hotel, and there attempted to murder him. The assailant, who was worsted in the encounter and tried to escape by a desperate leap from a window, now lies disabled in the infirmary. The motive here also was the lust of gain. Mr. Taylor, the victim, was known to have a large sum of money in his possession in view of business arrangements with the supposed advertiser, and the plot, which was deep and deliberate, included him and another victim in its range. A bank robbery in

Liverpool of £170,000 also comes into the record, and a double murder and attempted suicide by a young married woman in Edinburgh, who killed her two children and then attacked herself, completes the black list.

The Scots Worthies.—Copies of the new edition of this work may be had, as formerly intimated, from the Rev. Dr. Kerr, 19 Queen Square, Glasgow, 3/- post free to the United Kingdom, 3/6 to the Colonies.

Literary Notice.

WHY I LEFT THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND. By John M. M. Charleson, sometime Minister of Thornliebank. Glasgow : William Hodge & Co.

This is Mr. Charleson's account of the mental process by which he came to reject the principles of the Church of Scotland and accept those of the Council of Trent.

The author's inclination towards a ritualistic religion probably dates from an early period of his history. A bias towards a sensuous unspiritual way of worshipping God is native to the human heart, and in the corrupt Free Church to which Mr. Charleson originally belonged he would find much to encourage and little to contradict his native bent. Some years ago, in order to a settlement in his religious views, Mr. Charleson tells us he gave himself to a fresh study of the words and acts of Christ as exhibited in the first three Gospels. "To do this effectively I resolved to enter upon the work as if I had known nothing previously of Christianity, and to view the sayings and actions of our Lord in their ascertainable historical setting, and in the plain and direct grammatical meaning of the words, and especially to omit nothing, however tempted I might be to do so." This idea of approaching the New Testament with a mind perfectly open and unbiassed is very fine, but the author's way of carrying it out, is, we think, the worst imaginable. It appears that all the while he was affecting to study the words of Christ as a childlike enquirer, as yet quite unresolved in the Papal controversy, he was diligently developing his favourite ritualism in the worship of his church at Thornliebank. Mr. Charleson is either too simple or too dishonest to see that his profession of studying the Bible as a non-partizan, either of the Church of Scotland or the Church of Rome, is, on these terms, a mere mockery. As a result of the author's New Testament researches, the chief points that emerged were these:—

"(1) The sacrificial nature of the Holy Sacrament: as, *e.g.*, 'This is My Body, which is given *for you*.' Between the taking of the bread into His holy hands and the saying of the words, '*This is My Body*,' there have intervened acts of Blessing and of Fraction, both belonging to the ritual of Sacrifice. Similarly He said regarding the Cup: 'This is My Blood of the new covenant,

which *is being shed* for you and for many *unto the remission of sins*' (Matt. xxvi. 26-28). Who can fathom the mystery of correspondence by which are conjoined in a certain unity the Sacrament and the Death of Christ, in order to effect the same ends, viz., deliverance of man from sin, and impartation to him of Divine-Human Food!

"(2) The anointing of the sick with oil by men whom the Lord had specially appointed (Mark vi. 13).

"(3) The Ordination of an Apostolic body with powers of ruling and teaching, which were to continue '*to the end of the world*' (Mark iii. 13-15; Matt. xxviii. 16-20).

"(4) The building of the Church *upon St. Peter*, who received the supreme power of the keys (Matt. xvi. 18, 19).

"(5) Our Lord's injunction to '*hear the Church*' (Matt. xviii. 17, 18), and to hearken to the Apostles as to Himself (Luke x. 16).

"(6) The tremendous power given by our Lord to His Apostles to remit and retain sin, *to bind and loose men with a power that held good for heaven as well as earth* (Matt. xviii. 18).

"(7) Indications of the *mysterious and veiled glory of the Blessed Virgin* (Luke i. 26-28, 41-44, 46-55; ii. 35, 51), though the Gospels were written, not to narrate her life, but that of her Divine Son.

"All these things were very astonishing. It was evident that they were contrary to Protestantism of every type and shade. It was equally evident that only one Church in all the world *had steadfastly preserved these principles from the beginning until now.*"

It is not needful to argue out the questions raised by Mr. Charleson's reading of the synoptic Gospels. Such a procedure would involve the restating of the old familiar well-discussed commonplaces of our Protestant faith.

By way of summary reply to Mr. Charleson, we may say that this is now the twentieth century of the Christian era, and much has happened since the Apostles first began to evangelise Europe. In particular, an object lesson on an extensive scale has been given as to the scope and tendency of that theory of Christianity which Mr. Charleson has espoused. When that theory was ripe it brought forth Mediæval Popery, the yoke under which Europe groaned for centuries, until God sent deliverance. The Reformation is too great a fact to be ignored by any honest seeker after truth. But Mr. Charleson's scheme, as far as we can see, is built upon a frivolous, irrational contempt of the Reformation. "The Baptism of John; was it from heaven or of men?" was a question dishonestly shunned by the Pharisees who crucified Christ. The Reformation, originating in life and light sent down from Heaven, is also a movement which demands to be reckoned with, and Mr. Charleson can be sure that his cheap and easy dismissal of that unique and powerful event is a patent proof of the underlying viciousness of his whole theory, and it too well proves that, despite his emotional and religious fervour, he is being led to ruin by a spirit of falsehood and error.