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Free Presbyterian Magazine

And MONTHLY RECORD.

VOL. VI.

MARCH, 1902.

NO. II.

Romish Inroads and Protestant Effort.

THIS subject is not a new one to our readers, but it is one that calls for increasing attention at the present time. It is no mistake to say that the advance of Romanism in the country steadily, though in some respects quietly, proceeds; and that, unless there is a general Protestant awakening which will resolutely resist its inroads, it will soon have the place of pre-eminence. Than this no greater calamity could befall us as a nation.

It must be cordially acknowledged that the country owes no little debt to Mr. John Kensit, London, for his courageous efforts, past and present, against the evil. These efforts have served to arouse Protestant feeling and activity, with the result that some of the forms of Romish worship in some churches have been put down. There has also been a banding together more closely and enthusiastically of Protestant people against Romanism. But, notwithstanding these favourable features, what is to be said of the general state of the situation? It is to be feared it remains very much the same. The bishops may make slight concessions for the purpose of soothing the angry feelings of Protestants, but the main body of the system which they appear determined to protect and encourage continues untouched. Can it be believed by our readers that there is hardly a piece of doctrine or worship in the Church of Rome but is also found within the pale of the Church of England? We mention some of these evil things—the sacrifice of the Mass, belief in Purgatory, prayers for the dead, transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the veritable body and blood of Christ, prayers to the Virgin Mary, the abominable confessional, celibacy, penances, baptismal regeneration, the setting up of convents and monasteries, a secret belief by some in the supremacy of the Pope. No doubt the constitution of the English Church is not so free from blemish as we would like to see it; but surely things have come to a terrible pass when nearly every member of “the Beast” has found its way into a Protestant Church, and that one of the State Churches of the greatest Protestant nation in the world.

In another place we give a report of an enthusiastic Protestant

demonstration that was recently held in London, and some information may be found in it as to the present state of matters. It may not be out of place here, however, to touch on a few special points, some of which are alluded to in the speeches at the demonstration, that call for serious consideration, prayer, and effort at the present crisis.

First, there is the attempt to alter the King's Protestant Declaration. We may be sure that the papists will use every means in their power to get that Declaration wholly done away with. Romanism is not only one of the greatest enemies of man's spiritual interests, but of his civil interests also, and unless the electors of the country will refuse to send any man to Parliament who is not a thorough Protestant, they will find out their mistake when it is too late. When the priest comes for the widow's cow as payment for saying mass, it will then be vain to make an outcry. The day may not be so far distant as many blindly think.

A second point to be noted is the recent decision in the Canon Gore case. A number of Protestant gentlemen appeared at a special diet called for objections and tendered protests against the appointment of Canon Gore to the bishopric of Worcester on account of his erroneous views of doctrine published in several books. The Vicar-General ruled out the protests as invalid, but the objectors appealed to the law courts for a decision. That decision has now been issued by the Lord Chief Justice in his own name and that of other judges. It is to the effect that the ecclesiastical court can take notice only of objections bearing upon errors in the steps of formal procedure in connection with the ordination of the bishop, but it cannot take any notice of objections to his doctrinal views, inasmuch as he has been already nominated by the Crown. The law of England, therefore, puts the whole power as to the election of a bishop and his fitness for office into the hands of the king; it is he that must decide these very important points. Practically, however, the burden falls upon the Prime Minister, who makes the recommendation of particular persons to office. Everything then in this matter of great importance depends upon the character and views of the Prime Minister of the country. Need we hardly say that this order of things appears to us entirely subversive of Scriptural order. Every office-bearer in the Church of Christ should have an inward spiritual call to office, and also an outward call from the Church itself, but not from any civil authority. Here is just where the Erastianism of the Church of England comes in; and if the evangelical party in the Church have submitted their necks in the past to this un-Christian yoke, they may find it grievous enough before all is done. Truly it is time that a third reformation was begun, when a clean sweep would be made of all Erastian, Popish and Ritualistic rubbish out of the Church of England.

A third thing that is fitted to arouse much alarm, is the recent incursion of Jesuits into the country. Several orders of this

most pernicious class of papists have come from France to England and Scotland. The French authorities have made a rule that all institutions, religious as well as civil, must be open to enquiry and examination as to their business affairs; the Jesuits have refused, as might be expected, to submit to this regulation, and so have decamped to a freer clime. They have found an asylum in our beloved country. Freedom is truly a noble thing, and Britain has been honoured as the standard bearer of freedom wherever her name is known. But, alas, there is a spurious freedom, a foul liberty that is not of God, but of the devil, and that will prove the ruin of the sons of freedom unless they awake to its malign character. It is no Christian charity to harbour the workers of iniquity; to give place and scope to the men who will do all in their power to rase the very foundations of Church and State, of religious and civil liberty in our country. O Great Britain, thy false charity will soon rob thee of all thy greatness, unless God in mercy intervene! There are laws on the statute book, however, that would secure the expulsion of the Jesuits and other papists from the land; and it should be our earnest effort to get, if possible, these laws put into execution.

A fourth circumstance that calls for notice is "a requiem service for the soul of the late Queen Victoria, which was sung in the Church of St. Matthew, Westminster, on the morning of the 4th February." This is a flagrant example of praying for the dead, and clear it is that the practice has got a very serious hold of the country, and has become very popular in high circles, when ministers of the English Church would have the audacity to introduce it in connection with so exalted a person as Queen Victoria. We can hardly free the King from having given this service, at least, his tacit approval; we do not think the performers would otherwise have proceeded with it. Is this then the time to relax the Protestant Declaration when the Sovereign is condoning Romish practices? We are pleased to see by the report that there were several Protestants who spoke out at the end of the service, and said, "This is rank blasphemy, a blasphemous insult to the memory of Queen Victoria;" "This is the house of Baal." Good it is that there are a few in England who seem alive to the signs of the times. May the Most High increase their number, and make them valiant for the truth upon the earth!

In conclusion, we express our deep sorrow at the great apathy that obtains in Scotland in this vital matter of Protestantism. No country suffered more for it in the past; and why should she be so indifferent now? Just because the pulpits have poured forth a flood of poisonous doctrine that has stupified the minds of the people and made them think that all kinds of religion are equally good, and that error is quite a harmless thing. May those who seek the good of Jerusalem be stirred up to cry mightily to the Lord for a day of awakening and enlightening power! Nothing else will meet the case.

A Sermon

BY THE EMINENT ROBERT ROLLOCK, FIRST PRINCIPAL OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH. DIED IN 1599.

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 "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil," etc.—MATT. xv. 21-28.  
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IN this text which we have read,—well-beloved in the Lord Jesus,—we have a wonder that the Lord wrought on a woman, a Canaanite, a Gentile, of a cursed generation, the generation of Canaan. The wonder is, the healing of a woman's daughter that was possessed and sore and miserably vexed with a devil. The woman having the occasion to meet with the Lord through His coming to these parts where she abode, she slippeth not the occasion, but seeketh mercy and grace; she findeth at the first great hardness and difficulty to get mercy; but at last, overcometh all by her faith, and getteth mercy.

Now to go through this history so shortly and plainly as the Lord shall give the grace. This woman is called a Canaanite; that is, descended of that old and rotten stock of Canaan, that was destinate for wrath and destruction, (Genesis ix. 25). Look to her estate—she is come of a cursed race, she is lying in sin and security of sin. This is the estate of every one of us—we lie in sin. Conceived in sin, and born in sin, we feel not the sin and that deadly sleep of security is worse than the sin we lie in. There is none of us better by nature than this woman was. Then, when she is thus lying in sin and security, the Lord from the heaven sendeth her a wakening and a sharp wakening; for the judgments of God are like so many messengers from heaven to waken us. In the example of the woman we see that the Lord's children must be wakened; and oftentimes our first wakening is very sharp, doleful and fearful, as it is with one that is wakened in the rage of a fever. Yet there is grace here. Well is the man that is wakened, though the wakening were never so sore and sharp, for the multitude of the world die in security, and never waken till the fire of hell waken them. Well is thee, and thou be wakened, albeit it should be with never so heavy a judgment; yea, though thy daughter or thyself, should be possessed with a devil.

Now when this poor woman is thus wakened, and is wrestling under the heavy hand of God, the Lord casteth an eye towards her (for no doubt, howbeit she was one of the race of cursed Canaan, yet she was chosen to eternal life), and of very purpose He casteth Himself into these parts where she was. Whatever other errand He had, there is no question but He had a particular

respect to her, that she might have the occasion to come to Him, and this was a great grace. When we are wakened out of security, then the mediciner hath his time, and this is a greater grace. It is a great grace to be wakened, but it is a greater grace to find a mediciner to cure thy disease ; for, as multitudes die in security, so also multitudes die in pain, torment and desperation after they are wakened. Well, she hearing tell that He was come to these parts, and that He was such a man, "a wonderful man," as the prophet Esay calleth Him, "who cured all sorts of diseases, who restored sight to the blind, limbs to the lame, cleansed the leprous, and raised up the dead," she is moved to seek grace and mercy at Him. Had not the Lord prevented her, and come down thither and sought her to draw her to Him, there had never been such a thing, that she had sought for Him. All thy misery, albeit it were never so great, will never draw thee to Him, except He seek thee first, and draw thine heart unto Him.

Well now to come forward : When she seeketh Him, she findeth Him and getteth His bodily presence. Christ and His disciples were walking together after His accustomed manner. At the first meeting, saith the text, "The woman crieth : " He is apparently going before, and the woman followeth after, and crieth ; misery constraineth her to cry. And if the Lord lay His hand upon thee, He will compel thee to howl and cry. O that power and might that is in the Lord over His creature !

But I doubt not, considering the words and communication that the Lord hath with this poor, miserable, and sinful woman, but it was that spirit of adoption that opened her mouth so wide to cry upon Him so, "O thou son of David, have mercy on me." What crieth she ? Mark her words : she crieth, "Have mercy upon me." How many of Jerusalem cried after this manner ? A heathen, a Canaanite, crieth this way : misery compelleth her to cry. But what maketh her to cry "Mercy ?" We will rail and blaspheme God when we are in misery ; but what caused her to cry "Mercy ?" No question, the conscience of her demerits caused her to cry "Mercy." She felt herself to be worthy of all that misery wherewith she was burthened. The voice of a miserable sinner that feeleth misery is, "O Lord have mercy upon me : " but lo, how she styleth Him, "O Lord, the son of David." These were the common styles, indeed, of the Lord in this life : He was called of the multitude "Lord," and, "The son of David." But certainly I am of this mind, that this woman took these styles otherwise than the common multitude. The very eye of her soul was opened to see Jesus Christ to be the Lord, and to be the Son of God manifested in the flesh, of the seed of David—howbeit, I will not attribute unto her a distinct and clear knowledge of both His natures in one person, and of His offices.

Then, Brethren, ye see two grounds of her petition : The first is, a lordship, and power, and dominion in Him of whom she sought mercy ; the next is, a pity, a mercy in Him of whom she sought

mercy. She sought mercy at a merciful face, grace at a gracious face. Look that thy prayer be well grounded on the Lord ; when thou openest thy mouth to seek mercy at that Lord, look that thou acknowledge that there is a power in that Lord to give thee every thing that thou standest in need of. And, chiefly, look that thou acknowledge that there is an infinite passing mercy in that Lord, surmounting all thy sins, and then shalt thou pray from the heart with confidence and liberty ; otherwise thou mayest well seek mercy from the teeth outward, but never with thine heart. Then she letteth Him see a good cause wherefore she sought mercy : " Lord I have need of a physician, for I am sick." What sickness is sorer to a poor body than this, to be rent both in soul and body with a devil ? " Lord, my poor daughter is tormented with a devil." As in thy prayer thou must have a sight of the infinite power of thy God, of the mercy of thy God, so scorn Him not with a senseless heart : no, if thou gettest not a sense and feeling of thy misery, of thy trouble, and vexation in thine heart, call not upon the name of the Lord. It is true, indeed, the Lord sees and knows thy misery as well as thyself, albeit thou speak not a word unto Him of thy misery ; yet, for all that, the Lord takes pleasure to hear thy misery out of thine own mouth. He will not only have thee to feel and groan in thy heart for it, but He will have thee to utter it unto Him with thy tongue also, if opportunity serve ; He will have thee to make it known unto Him, as if He knew it not ; He will have thee to bring up thy misery from the ground of thy heart, and as thou feelest it in the sadness of thy heart, so to utter it in thy voice ; for the Lord delights to hear miserable bodies speaking of their misery.

Now to go forward. When she hath made her petition, see the meeting. The text saith, at the first He answered her not a word, but goeth forward with the disciples, and letteth her follow on, crying, " O Lord, have mercy upon me," not once or twice, but the cry goeth never out of her head. This is wonderful. He that prevented her with grace, and gave her grace to seek Him, will not make her one word answer, but goeth His way, and will not speak unto her. Yea, thou wilt find that He who prevented thee with grace, and sought thee or ever thou soughtest Him, and gave thee grace to cry and pray, " Have mercy, O God !" yet He will seem to misknow thee, and make thee none answer. Thou wilt cry, in sickness, " Mercy," but wilt thou always find mercy ? No, no ; thou wilt cry in other troubles, " Mercy," and His Spirit, no question, will intercede for thee, and yet for a time He will make thee none answer. What meaneth this ? why doeth He so ? Now when He hath given thee grace to cry for mercy, a thirst and a hunger for grace,—" Blessed are they that hunger and thirst,"—when He hath given thee this first grace, He will let thee cry a great while to try thy constancy. We never get a spiritual grace in this life, but with the grace we get always a trial ; and when He giveth us grace to cry, He will try if we will cry on ; and to speak the truth, brethren, all our life here is but a trial of the graces of

God, which He hath given us. We get not our heaven here, but a faith to look afar off unto it, a hunger, a thirst, a desire of it; and with our thirst, a trial of our faith, a trial of our hope, of our desire to see if we will stand in it. "And then," saith Peter, "in the life to come, the trial of thy faith, and hope, and patience being ended,"—what shall follow?—"Praise, and honour, and glory when Jesus shall appear." (1 Pet. i. 7.) Thou shalt be filled with satiety and fulness of joy—thy hunger and thirst shall be satisfied as soon as ever thou seest thy Redeemer.

Now to proceed: the disciples that followed the Lord they are troubled with the cry of the woman, and say to the Lord, "Either give her one answer or other, and let her go her way." Surely, I think, this suit of the disciples was not so much for any desire they had that He should help her, as to be quit of her crying, because they were deafened with her. So, then, the Papists need not upon this to ground their intercession of the saints in heaven for us that remain here on earth; for this ground is as weak as their doctrine of intercession is. And she directeth not her speech to the apostles here, to Peter, James or John, that they should intercede for her, but to the Lord himself: she speaketh to none of them, but she passeth and speaketh to the Lord immediately. So should we leave all the saints, and with confidence go to the Lord himself. The disciples are deafened and troubled with her crying: the Lord himself letteth her cry on, and this is a token that He is not wearied with her crying. Well, then, thou findest a comfort here when thou criest night and day: He never wearieth with thee: He saith not "Thou troublest me:" all thy cries, sighs, and sobs are pleasant to Him. Men will be weary sometimes with thy crying, as we read that unjust judge was importuned by the just suit of the poor woman, and dispatcheth her away, and saith, "Thou troublest and irkest me night and day," (Luke xviii. 1.) But the true righteous Judge is never wearied with thee; when He letteth thee cry out, He will not answer with a grudge, as the judge did, but cheerfully. The Lord that loveth a cheerful giver He himself giveth cheerfully. What meaneth that joy that the faithful find in their hearts, accompanying the benefit that cometh from Him, but that the Lord giveth his benefits cheerfully? For if the Lord gave them not thee cheerfully, but in anger and wrath, and threw them to thee as to a reprobate, thou wouldst never have joy in the receiving of them. There is not such a thing as a reprobate can have joy in the giver, or ever have his mouth open with true thanksgiving to the Lord to say once, "I thank thee." Why? Because the Lord giveth him not his benefits in love, but in anger. So this is a sure token when thou findest joy in thine heart, and a contentation in thy prayer, and a purpose to be thankful, that the Lord giveth thee cheerfully, and heareth thee joyfully; and if thou canst get but a joyful look of thy God, thou mayest be assured that it proceedeth of mercy. When He looketh so unto thee He doeth not as earthly kings, or any earthly creature used

to do, for they can keep a fair countenance and yet have little goodwill in their hearts. Well, the woman crieth, and the disciples cry: the Lord must answer once, but He maketh an answer little to her contentment:—"I am not sent," saith He, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. What have I to do with that poor woman? She is not one of my sheep; she is of a cursed generation of the Canaanites, ordained to destruction and wrath." In a word, He debarreth her from grace, He closeth the gates of heaven upon her teeth; for when He saith He is not sent to her, He shutteth her out of heaven. We ought to mark this well, for we are Canaanites, that is to say Gentiles. It is true, indeed, the Lord coming down from the heaven, and manifesting himself in the flesh, He had His commission first and principally to the Jews, and not to the Gentiles,—not to Scotland—nor England, nor Germany, nor France, chiefly and principally. As Christ said to Jerusalem, "Oh! that thou couldst see the day of thy visitation" (Luke xix. 41). He was sent with commission to the Gentiles, but in case of the contumacy and rebellion of the Jews; as if the Lord had said unto Him, "Go thy way unto my own people, whom I have chosen from among all the nations of the earth, and see if thou canst win them: go no further." And if the Jews had not been rebellious and disobedient, we had never gotten mercy and grace. Look Romans xi. 11. The fall of the Jews was the raising up of the Gentiles, and the diminution of the Jews was the riches of the Gentiles. "How got ye grace?" saith He. By their contumacy and rebellion. So Christ, sending out His disciples to preach, biddeth them go, not unto the Gentiles, or unto the Samaritans their next neighbours, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5.). And Paul, in a preaching before both the Jews and Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46), "The word of God," saith he, "behoved first to be preached unto you, the promise belonging unto you: But, because ye will not receive the word, and have made yourselves unworthy of life everlasting; therefore, I will turn and preach to the Gentiles;" and so he bade the Jews good-night, and turned him to the Gentiles. And the text saith, that then the Gentiles rejoiced exceedingly.

So we were strangers from heaven, and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. And we learn, in the example of this woman, that our entry to grace, and to heaven, was very hard and difficult. And as our entry to grace was hard, so if we fall from grace, our re-entry to grace shall be far harder. And if thou fall once from grace, hardly shalt thou get grace again. A Gentile that falleth once from grace, and treadeth under his feet the blood of Jesus, shall never be renewed with grace again. And I say to thee, O Scotland, if thou fallest from grace, look never for grace again. Look to the cities amongst the Gentiles that fell from grace, look Corinth, look Phillippi, look the Galatians, &c. Got they ever grace again? No: so if Scotland fall from grace, it will be a wonder if ever it get grace again. The wrath of God shall be poured forth

upon every one, from the greatest to the smallest. For if He received not the Jews, His own people, into grace, after that they were once fallen from it, shall He take thee up again, a Gentile, a vile dog, in respect of them? And yet our men in this country care not to cast themselves and their whole land into hell, and into everlasting abjection from grace with all hope of recovery.

So this is a hard answer, she findeth no grace at all. They that follow Jesus Christ, and seek for grace, will find in their way a sore trial. Men think that heaven is but a common benefit, and that it is easy to a man to come thither: but albeit thou be a king, an emperor, or monarch, thou wilt find a hard entry therein. Will thy kingdom or thy lordship bring thee to heaven? No: if thou sleep on in careless security, thou shalt never see heaven. So if there were no more but this example of this Gentilish woman, it teaches us, that it is hard to win heaven, and that the gates of heaven at the first shall be shut upon our teeth. What is the cause of this? Thou art further from Christ, and from grace, from heaven, and from the joy of heaven, a thousand times more than the natural earth is from the natural heaven. Thou art a Canaanite, come of a cursed generation. What ado hath a Canaanite with heaven; so unworthy a thing, with so worthy a thing? The Lord, before He opened the gates of heaven unto her, He would let her understand, that she had nothing to do with heaven. And I say unto thee, that the Lord, ere ever He give thee grace, He will have thee knowing by tentations and trials, that thou art a Canaanite, descended of a cursed and reprobate generation, and unworthy that ever thou shouldst see heaven, or have ado with heaven. And if He bring thee not to this sight and this fear, I give thee thy doom, thou shalt never see heaven.

Now mark, He hath closed the doors of heaven upon her. And, certainly, this answer might have caused her to have gone away with shame and confusion. But for all this temptation, she continueth still, she crieth still, and hopeth for mercy. Hold upon mercy, hope still, believe on still, and that hope shall never make thee ashamed. She hath cried for mercy, the gates of heaven are shut against her. What doeth she? Goeth she her way? No, no; she tarrieth still, and knocketh. And if thou knewest what heaven were, and what hell were, thou wouldst be loath to leave heaven. Oh! the torments that remain for them that fall into hell! So she knocketh, and falleth down upon her face, and adareth, and saith, "O Son of David, have mercy on me." This adoring was not only for the casting the devil out of her daughter. No, no; she sought everlasting life at the hands of the Lord, and that healing of her daughter was an earnest-penny of that life. This was the mind of the woman, no question. It is said in the Scripture, "Seek and ye shall find, ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7.) If the seeking fail ye, yet tarry still, and knock. And if it had not been

the Lord's will that a sinner, when he findeth heaven's gates closed upon him, should tarry still, and knock, would He have bidden him knock? It were a presumptuous thing for a beggar to knock at one of our doors. But seeing the Lord hath expressly commanded thee to knock, then knock on boldly. And if thou go away with the first answer, or the first nay-saying, thou wast never truly hungry nor thirsty, and it is a token that thou countest little of the grace of God. If thou knewest how precious a thing the grace of God and Jesus Christ were, and what heaven were, and what hell were, thou wouldst never cease knocking, day nor night, all the days of thy life. For if thou go away proudly, and tarriest not upon God's answer, but speak presumptuously, and say, "If He will not give me grace, let Him hold it to Himself," as blasphemous men will say; then he will shoot thee into hell. For if thou wert a king of all the world, thou shalt never get thine head in at heaven gates, except thou knock. Lord, if the world knew how hard a thing it is to get entry there! Men think that they will come easily and sleeping to heaven, albeit they take their pleasure and pastime. But they deceive themselves, there must be much striving and fighting ere they get heaven. Before that heaven could be opened, it behoved Jesus Christ to shed His precious blood.

Now, brethren, ye may say unto me, alas, who can knock? Who is able to come there? No, thou hast no power once to lift up thine hand to knock at that gate, except that the Lord put out His hand and hold thee up even in the mean time when He is holding thee back. So wonderful is the Lord's working with His own, He will be holding them aback with the one hand, and He will be pulling them in to Him as fast with the other hand. When He will be dissuading He will persuade, when He forbiddeth to approach unto Him, He inwardly allureth men to come unto Him.

Now, will ye hear the Lord's answer? If the first answer was hard, this is as hard and rough; for with an angry countenance, no doubt, He answereth; "It is not lawful," saith He, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs." It is even as much as if He had taken her by the shoulders, and thrust her out. First He saith, "Thou art but a dog, a Gentile, and this that thou seekest is a precious thing—the bread of life—this appertaineth only to the children of God; shall I take that, and give it unto a dog?" As if He had said, "Go thy way, dog, thou shalt not get such a precious benefit as thou requirest."

Then we see here, because she was a Gentile, therefore He calleth her a dog. Suppose thou be a King, (I pray thee be not too proud in thine own conceit), and yet a Gentile—*ergo**, by nature a dog. He will cast a kingdom, an empire, a monarchy to a man, as one will cast a bone into the mouth of a dog, but all is nothing in respect of one drop of grace, and the hope of the kingdom of heaven. Albeit thou be a beggar, and yet gettest but

* In consequence of being a Gentile, thou art by nature, &c.

one drop of grace through Jesus Christ, any hope of the kingdom of heaven, any beginning of regeneration. then thou has gotten a greater grace, a more precious thing than Caesar, that got all the world. There is no comparison betwixt the meanest spiritual and heavenly gift, and betwixt the greatest temporal and earthly thing.

Now I note again the hardness to win to the kingdom of heaven. Would ye not think it a marvellous thing to turn a dog into the Son of God? It is as great a wonder to see a Gentile to be called to heaven, as to make dogs and stones the sons of God. Now know, that before thou gettest access to heaven, although thou wert a king, thou must be humbled in thine own conceit, thou must know thine own estate and condition, thou must think thyself as vile and contemptible as a very dog by nature, as this woman was brought to say; otherwise thou shalt never get heaven.

Then, brethren, if the entry to the kingdom of heaven be so hard, if thou like a dog return to vomit, or as a sow to the puddle, as Peter sayeth (2 Peter ii. 22,) after thou art washen with the blood of that immaculate Lamb, then it is a wonder if ever thou get grace to re-enter again. Now hear the poor woman's answer; she granteth all:—"It is very true thou sayest. I am but a dog, a vile and an unworthy wretch, and that bread of heaven is a precious thing, I am not worthy that it should be casten unto me. Yet" (saith she), "the whelps do eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. If thou wilt not shew me this grace to eat bread with the children yet let me eat the parings and crumbs under the table." Ere ever the Lord bestowed grace and eternal life upon thee, He will have thee to accompt thyself unworthy of any grace; yea, He will have thee to accompt as vilely of thyself as of a dog, albeit thou hadst never so many great prerogatives otherways in the world. Ere thou get that life, thy conscience will accuse thee to be unworthy of such a life, and such a joy as the Lord ordained for His own. She skipped before, now she thrumbleth* and thrusteth in at the gates of heaven, and goeth like a violent woman—not indeed pressing like a sturdy beggar, to be in whether the Lord would or not; but by humility and acknowledging of her own unworthiness, in all submission, coming—as it were, creeping like a silly whelp under the table; that is "the violence that is done to the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xi. 12). She taketh up heaven by violence, in all submission and humility. And if thou be once but a whelp under the table of God, in the house of God to gather up the crumbs of that plentiful table, thou art called to a greater honour than if thou wert made king of all the world. "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God than to be king of all the world."

Now, brethren, when she is thronging in, He is loath to put her out again. No;† He saith, "O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou desirest; thy faith hath won the victory." From whence had this poor woman all this perseverance, and this con-

* *i.e.* Pusheth. † He will not put her out again.

tinuance and this constancy, but from Him? And yet He standeth wondering at His own graces. The Lord,—behold His doing,—when He hath given thee grace and perseverance, when thou comest to heaven, He will wonder at thee; and there is the end of all thy perseverance, a fair crown of glory.

And what more doeth He? That same moment, that force that was in the word, that proceeded out of the mouth of Jesus, extended itself to the woman's daughter, and healeth her, and casteth the devil out of her. Now she sought only to creep in as a whelp under the table to eat the crumbs, and now the Lord setteth her up at the table to sit with Him in glory; as Christ Himself sayeth, "I say to thee," saith He, "many shall come out of the east, and out of the west, into mine house, into the kingdom of heaven, and sit down at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (Matt. viii. 11.) And from whence are we come? Even out of the furthestmost point of the west. And, O Scotland, believe in Jesus, seek earnestly grace at Him, and wait patiently, when He trieth thee, and thou shalt find that thou shalt be set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in glory. We are the sons of God indeed, but it appeareth not yet what we shall be; but one day it shall appear, when we shall be crowned with the crown of glory. The Lord work this faith and earnest desire of grace in us for Jesus Christ's sake! To whom be all glory, honour and praise, for ever and ever. So be it.

Protestant Demonstration in London.

A GREAT united Protestant Demonstration was held in the Royal Albert Hall, South Kensington, on Tuesday evening, the 4th February. The purpose of the meeting was "to uphold and maintain the Protestantism of the nation, and to demand the suppression of the Mass and the Confessional in the Established Church." The vast area of the hall, capable of holding several thousands, was crowded in every part. Admission was by ticket only, and it was intimated that over 2,000 applications for tickets, made late, could not be complied with. In an official list of noblemen and others, described as "present at the meeting" or in avowed "sympathy with the object of the demonstration," the names were mentioned of the Duke of Hamilton, the Marquis of Ely, the Marquis of Ormonde, Lords Carysforth, Egmont, Erne, Gosford, Middleton, Powerscourt, Avebury, Brabourne, Grimthorpe, Kinnaird, Llangattock, Overtoun, Rossmore, St. Oswald, Sinclair, Stratheden and Campbell, and Wimborne. The House of Commons was represented by Sir C. E. H. Vincent, Sir E. W. Greene, Sir B. W. Foster, Sir W. B. Gurdon, Sir J. H. Haslett, Mr. J. W. Mellor, K.C., and over a score of other M.P.'s, both Liberal and Conservative, including several Welsh members. Some 35

societies, comprising the Church Association, the National Protestant Church Union, the Loyal Orange Institution, and the Protestant Alliance, were represented on the London Committee of the United Protestant Societies, which convened the successful gathering, the fervour of whose Protestantism and unanimity in its defence was strikingly apparent throughout the proceedings.

Viscount Middleton, who presided, and was received with loud cheers, said: they were met that night to reaffirm their hearty adhesion to those principles of religious liberty which were first formulated in the sixteenth century, and which found their final consummation in the Revolution of 1688—(cheers)—an upheaval which secured for the people an open Bible and ushered man into the presence of his Maker without any intermediary between God and man, save the one Great Mediator. The Revolution of 1688 did more than this. It threw off once for all the shackles of Romish superstition, and granted to us for the future freedom of thought, freedom of action, freedom to worship God according to our own consciences, and all the benefits that had followed in their train. They met that night for three special purposes. First, they desired to protest against the placing in positions of public trust and of public influence any but those who were utterly loyal to the principles of the Reformation; any of those who either openly avowed or tacitly confessed their desire for corporate reunion with Rome. How impossible that was he need not there say. Secondly, they protested against any attempt being made to minimise the Royal Declaration as to the views and convictions of the Sovereign—in other words, the Coronation Oath. (Cheers.) He was one of those who, until last year, thought it was possible that some modification of the terms of the Oath might be made, but what took place in the Committee of the House of Lords last year disabused him altogether of any such impression. (Cheers.) Thirdly, they were met to protest earnestly against the introduction into this realm of any of the objects of celibate and militant orders of the Roman Catholic Church, who said they had been driven from their own country by persecution, and hence had resorted to that land which had always opened its doors to the oppressed and the persecuted. Now, was that the fact? ("No.") He was afraid it was not. There was no doubt that England had never closed the door upon any who were persecuted or oppressed, but what were the facts of the case? Was it not the truth that from almost every Roman Catholic country in which they had established themselves, sooner or later these militant orders had had to take their leave? And why? Because they were subject to no authority save that of their own superiors. (Cheers.) They had definite aims and objects in view, which they pursued regardless of the laws of the country in which they were settled, regardless even of the authorities of their own faith—for they admitted no allegiance to bishops or superior ecclesiastics of their own Church, and acknowledged only the head of their own community, who,

he believed, always resided in Rome. Let them hand down this glorious inheritance unimpaired in all its noble proportions, and undimmed in the brightness of its lustre, to their children and their children's children. (Enthusiastic cheers.)

Mr. H. Miller, secretary of the meeting, read communications expressive of regret at their inability to attend and of sympathy with the objects of the gathering from Mr. W. Johnston, M.P. (who was engaged in the East Down contest), and the Bishop of Sodor and Man. Letters regretting absence were, Mr. Miller added, received from sixteen peers and twenty-two members of the House of Commons.

Lord Kinnaird moved—"That the steady growth of the Mass and the Confessional within the Church of England is mainly due to the abuse of patronage by the Government and by the Episcopate, and especially to the action of certain of the Bishops, who seek to substitute their own personal rulings for the ascertained and well-known law of the land, as laid down by the King's judges." In moving this resolution his lordship expressed his conviction that a conspiracy existed in this country to substitute for our Protestant faith a religion without muscle, backbone, or principle. (Cheers.) That great demonstration was evidence that they did not intend their Protestant inheritance to be taken from them. (Cheers.) While England welcomed all oppressed peoples they would not allow those people to alter our constitution in any way. (Hear, hear.) He alluded with satisfaction to the fact that a similar resolution to that which he proposed had been unanimously carried at great meetings in Bristol, Brighton, and elsewhere. Adverting to the growth of the Mass and the Confessional in the Established Church, he said they must see that the laws of our Protestant Church were maintained without interfering with the individual or right to private judgment. They would, too, have the co-operation of their Nonconformist brethren in maintaining the Protestant inheritance of the Church of England. The United Committee convening that meeting had done great good in bringing together the leaders of the Evangelical Churches in this land. A national crisis required to be met by a national movement, and the movement must proceed from the laity. Evangelistic work was rendered more difficult by the Ritualistic and materialistic forms of faith that were being propagated so insidiously. He exhorted them to do their utmost to maintain unimpaired the great Protestant inheritance that had been handed down to them. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. Cuff, ex-President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, who seconded the motion, said the Government had dabbled with all sorts of ecclesiastical matters, and had undertaken to father and mother the national schools and a great deal of the education of the country. They had granted large sums of money for educational purposes, and he submitted that they must have known when they granted those amounts for

national schools that they were helping by hundreds the men who were teaching those Romish doctrines against which they were met to protest. (Cheers.) He charged the Government with flouting and shelving every side of the Protestant question, and declining to meet it honestly. This was not a question of a Tory or a Radical Government merely—it was a question of Protestantism on one side and of Roman Catholicism on the other. Though a Nonconformist by conviction, he stood by his brethren of the Church of England in their protest against turning the old Protestant Church of England into a Roman Catholic concern. (Loud cheers.) In this there were hundreds of thousands of his Nonconformist brethren behind him. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then put, and carried with unanimity and enthusiasm.

Lord Overtoun proposed—"That loyalty to the free Constitution of Great Britain renders it needful that the Sovereign should give a personal pledge of his rejection of the distinctive errors of the Church of Rome. This meeting, therefore, pledges itself to resist any attempt to tamper with or in any way weaken the plain meaning of the Royal Declaration, recognising, as it does, that the Revolution of 1688, to which we owe the existing Declaration, was the natural sequel to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and forms at once its complement and its safeguard."

Mr. Luke White, M.P., said, as a Nonconformist, he gladly seconded the resolution. The House of Lords Committee endeavoured to attain two objects—one to make the Declaration less offensive to Roman Catholics, and the other to maintain the efficacy of the Declaration. It was found that the twofold object could not be attained. The Roman Catholics did not confine their objection to the mere form, but to the purpose of the Declaration. (Hear, hear.) Lord Salisbury, in the House of Lords, said they did not want the words withdrawn without the removal of the clause referring to the succession. We must consider the circumstances that made it necessary for our forefathers to make the Declaration in strong and unmistakable language. It was for us to maintain the Declaration unimpaired. (Cheers.)

Prebendary Webb Peploe, who was cheered, said it was the duty of the nation to maintain its glorious inheritance for the sake of those who had gone before and for posterity. (Cheers.) They claimed that it should remain intact. They would uphold it, therefore, because it was efficient as it stood. If altered it would be inefficient. Would the alterations proposed in the Bill of last year have satisfied those whom it concerned? ("No.") Cardinal Vaughan declared boldly that the Declaration was a blasphemy against God, because it touched the creed of the Roman Catholics. Their answer to Roman Catholics was that if any king changed his faith, then let him change his position. (Loud cheers.) They had had enough of Roman Catholic monarchs in the past, and there was no place for them in Buckingham

Palace or elsewhere. (Cheers.) It was said to be a hardship that the King should have made the Declaration. As Supreme Governor of the Church of England, was it hard that he should declare his faith? What was fair for the clergy in subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles was fair for the King. (Cheers.) It was a necessity not of blasphemy, but a necessity of charity, that the King should declare what was the faith of every Protestant churchman. It was right for the Sovereign, remembering the dangers of the past, that he should tell the world that he looked upon the opposite doctrine as idolatrous. What if the King had had to curse Roman Catholics as they had cursed Protestants? Let them safeguard their inheritance. If any change should be proposed it must not be until the whole nation had been appealed to and a new Parliament elected. (Cheers.)

The resolution was carried amidst cheers.

Mr. Benjamin Nicholson moved—"That the inaction of successive Governments in allowing the open violation of the law, which expressly provided for the exclusion of monks and Jesuits from residing in this country, and in refusing to provide for the impartial inspection of nunneries, is unstatesmanlike, seeing that the experience of all civilized countries has shown that the existence in any country of such communities is pernicious to society, and a danger to all good government." The past history of the Jesuits, he said, fully justified action in preventing the further incursion of monks into this country. It was questionable whether we had not tolerated their presence too long. (Cheers.) Did they want persons in this country who were obliged to obey the general of their order without any regard to the laws of the country in which they resided? ("No.") The Jesuits took part in the Armada, and were at the bottom of the Gunpowder Plot. Protestants felt certain that they were now plotting against the liberties of the people of England. Had the times changed with Rome? ("No.") He thought it was high time the Government enforced the laws against Roman Catholics. Owing to the malpractices of the Jesuits they had been turned out of nearly every country in Europe. He hoped the liberties of the people would be safeguarded. (Cheers.)

Rev. W. R. Mowll urged the people to recollect the importance of preserving and utilising the word "Protestant." (Cheers.) It was a word that the Jesuits and Ritualists hated. The present and former Governments ought to be ashamed of themselves for permitting nunneries to exist without inspection. Prisons were inspected by magistrates. They demanded, as a people, that those conventual institutions, more than 800 in number, should be visited. (Cheers.) If the Chairman could be appointed as inspector, would he take the speaker with him as assistant? (Laughter.) It was an awful condition of slavery that existed, and up to now they had not had a Government of sufficient pluck to inspect them. They were abominably conducted. The girls

were sweated, and could barely exist on the supply of food they got. He denounced the conventual system as utterly un-English. They held that home life was the essence of the national life. Never would those poor girls be allowed outside those walls. This was going on in liberty-loving England. ("Shame.") Some of the finest characters were shut up in those living prisons. The system he condemned was unreasonable as well as unnatural. It was absolutely unscriptural, and had not the support of one passage of God's Word. (Cheers.) The Jesuits were responsible for a large proportion of the troubles we suffered at present. The people must be their own parliament in this matter, and must see that the Word was preached. It was that alone which would uplift the nation and destroy the power of Jesuitry. (Cheers.)

The meeting dispersed after singing the Doxology.

The Religious Observance of Easter.

IN recent years there has been a remarkable tendency in Scotland towards the observance of the old church festivals of Christmas and Easter. This is, no doubt, due to the influence of English customs and the regrettable ignorance of Reformation principles. There is now no Paul in our land to warn us of the bewitchery of Rome and exhort us to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. It is almost needless to say that the Reformers had very good reasons for rejecting these church festivals, and we should be extremely chary of giving them the slightest countenance.

Easter, as most are aware, is an annual festival held in commemoration of Christ's resurrection. It is regarded as the most important festival of the church year. The name is once mentioned in the New Testament—Acts xii. 4. It so happens, however, that had the translators been consistent, they would have translated the word (*to pascha*) "passover," as they have done in other places. The reference is to the Jewish passover, and not to what is known as Easter in modern times. In fact, the very name Easter shows that it has other than a Christian origin. It is derived, as Dr. Skeat points out, from *Eastre*, an Anglo-Saxon goddess, whose festivities were held at the vernal equinox (about 21st March). Hislop, in his interesting and instructive work, the "Two Babylons," maintains the name has some connection with Astarte, who is mentioned in the Bible as the Queen of Heaven. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that he has pointed out a number of very striking coincidences, which point strongly to the heathen origin of many customs in connection with Easter. The period of forty days fasting known as Lent, which precedes Easter, is still observed by the Yezidis, or pagan devil-worshippers of Koordistan, who seem to have inherited it from their old

masters, the Babylonians. The pagans of Mexico, too, had such a fast in early spring as Humboldt informs us. In Egypt, likewise, according to Wilkinson, there was also a feast of forty days in commemoration of Osiris, the great mediatorial god. From these instances and from others which might be quoted, it seems evident that this period of fasting was prevalent among the heathen. And the Church of Rome pursuing her usual policy, which has proved so disastrous to a pure Christianity, conciliated the pagans to a certain extent by introducing many of their feasts and customs into the Christian Church. It is admitted, of course, that the Church of Rome points to the forty days' fast in the wilderness, when Christ was tempted of Satan, in support of Lent, but it requires a fairly powerful imagination to make that fast immediately precede His resurrection. Lent had no existence in the early Church. "It ought to be known," says Cassianus, writing in the 5th century, "that the observance of the forty days had no existence so long as the perfection of that primitive church remained inviolate" (Giesler, vol. ii., p. 42).

Again, the hot cross buns of Good Friday and the coloured Easter eggs all indicate a heathen origin. The buns are relics of the worship of the Chaldean goddess Astarte, "the queen of heaven." It is to this custom that Jeremiah refers when he says, "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven" (vii. 18). The egg had a sacred significance among the Druids, and was regarded as the symbol of their order. In ancient times eggs were used in the religious rites of the Egyptians and the Greeks, and were hung up in their temples. Hyginus tells us, in his "*Fabulae*," of the wonderful Babylonian egg "of wondrous size, which is said to have fallen from heaven into the river Euphrates. The fishes rolled it to the bank, where the doves having settled upon it and hatched it, out came Venus, who was afterwards called the goddess of Syria"—*i.e.*, Astarte. Hence the egg became one of the chosen symbols of her worship.

A higher ground for the observance of Easter, however, may be claimed inasmuch as Easter is observed in place of the old Jewish institution of the Passover. But such a contention is untenable, inasmuch as that institution is represented in New Testament times by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. When the appeal is made to church history, the case falls through for want of evidence. "This much already laid down," says Socrates, one of the earliest church historians, "may seem a sufficient treatise to prove that the celebration of the feast of Easter began everywhere more by custom than by any commandment either of Christ or His Apostles" (Hist. Ecc. v. 22). Canon Venables is no less explicit in his article on Easter in the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*." "There is no trace of the celebration of Easter," he says, "as a Christian festival in the New Testament or in the writings of the apostolic fathers. The sanctity of special times or

places was an idea quite alien from the early Christian mind, too profoundly absorbed in the events themselves to think of their external accidents." Such a testimony ought to be of some weight coming from a Church of England dignitary. The absence of the observance of Easter in the New Testament and in the apostolic fathers is quite sufficient reason that the modern Church should take no notice of it.

To those who remain unconvinced and who plead the old excuse, what harm can there be in observing a day in commemoration of Christ's resurrection, all that can be said is that, if its observance was so important, it would be commanded in the New Testament. Its absence from the New Testament is the most damaging evidence that can be brought against it. The Church has a day set apart by apostolic usage in commemoration of the blessed truth that Christ rose from the grave, and if Christians are anxious to hold this truth in memory as they should, they have fifty-two Sabbaths in the year to do so. Better this than to compromise our Christianity by commemorating such an event on a day that has a very questionable origin, to say the least of it, and which is trammelled with ceremonies of a decidedly heathen origin.

D. B.

The late Captain Ross, Wick.

IT is with feelings of deep sorrow that we record this month the death of the much-respected Captain Robert Ross, which took place at his house, 6 Beaufoy Street, Pulteneytown, Wick, on Sabbath morning, the 2nd February. The deceased had reached the venerable age of nearly 91 years. He was endowed with an excellent physical constitution, and during his long and active life, seldom knew what a day's sickness was. Not until he was five years over the three-score-and-ten did he retire from a seafaring life, and even then he was fresh and vigorous in health. Within the last year or two, however, the manly form that had withstood many a blast on the stormy ocean began to droop, old age began to impress the marks of decay upon it; though up to the middle of October last, he was able to go in and out very much as usual. Shortly after this, however, he was completely laid aside, and gradually got weaker and weaker, until he gently passed into the haven of eternal rest on the date mentioned. Our departed friend, it may be said without exaggeration, was a living epistle of Christ, known and read of all men—a man greatly beloved in life and now deeply lamented in death. His was a Christian character of rare worth, and his removal is a great loss not only to his own immediate relations and friends, but to the Church at large. A few particulars in regard to his life and character may be of interest to our readers.

Robert Ross was born in Scourie, in the parish of Eddrachilis, Sutherlandshire, on the 11th of June, 1811. His father was Hugh Ross, a pious man, and an elder in the Church of Scotland of that day. He had a family of five sons; the subject of this sketch was the fourth and last surviving. The third son, it may be stated, was Alexander Ross who died a few years ago at Tarbet, Scourie, at a very advanced age, and who was a well known figure at communion gatherings in the north. Robert, as a boy, was like others, full of all the vivacity and frolic of youth. He came under religious impressions, however, at the early age of 14. These impressions set him to prayer and reading the Bible, but they did not issue in saving conversion, according to his own testimony, until he was between 20 and 21 years. During this preliminary period he built his hope of salvation on the works of the law, and thought he was sure of heaven on account of his diligence in religious duties. But eventually the Lord visited him in a day of special power, swept away the false foundation on which he was resting, and showed him that he was a lost sinner on the brink of an undone eternity. It was in this frame of mind when he was brought to see his true position in the sight of God and was trembling on the border of destruction, that the Lord revealed Himself to him as the Saviour of that which was lost, in some such precious words as these, "Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Robert was now taken from the fearful pit and the miry clay; his feet were planted on the rock, Christ Jesus, and his soul was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In this happy frame of mind he continued for a considerable time, but as he was often heard to say, he had many ups and downs afterwards. He had discoveries of the corruption of his nature that he knew nothing of at his first outset in the Christian course.

Robert, as a youth, was marked by the same independence of mind as characterised him in later years. The minister of Scourie in those early days was a preacher somewhat after the "moderate" type. Robert's father and other good people, nevertheless, regularly attended the church; but he refused to do so, preferring to go to a retired place in the rocks with his Bible and good books. He did not, however, undervalue the office of the ministry. Having heard reports of eminent preachers of the gospel in other parts of the country, he felt a strong desire to visit these places and hear these preachers. This desire was the main impulse that prompted him to go to sea. He came in a fishing boat to the town of Wick on a fishing occasion, during the time that the Rev. Archibald Cook was minister at Bruan (1823-36). Many walked from Wick to Bruan, a distance of 8 miles, every Sabbath to hear Mr. Cook, and young Robert Ross was found among them. He heard also at this early period "the great Mr. Gunn" of Watten, the Rev. John Munro, Halkirk, the Rev. Finlay Cook, Reay, and other eminent ministers; but of all the preachers of the gospel that

ever he listened to, then or since, the Rev. Archibald Cook left the deepest impression on him. We have heard him say that sometimes after hearing a powerful and searching sermon from Mr. Cook, he would be so much overwhelmed in mind that he would be thinking he would not go back again to hear him, but that, before the following Sabbath came, he was as desirous of going back as ever. One of the prominent features in Mr. Cook's preaching was a constant desire to humble the sinner in self-abasement, and to exalt the free and sovereign grace of God, and the impress of this spiritual teaching was deeply marked on our friend's views of Christian truth. At a subsequent date, when Mr. Cook was in Daviot, Captain Ross, who happened to be for a time in Inverness, regularly walked to Daviot to hear him. He ever cherished a profound regard for Mr. Cook's memory.

In 1846 Captain Ross took up his residence permanently in Wick. He then married Janet Sinclair, a pious young woman, who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth under Mr. Archibald Cook's ministry. She was a bright example of living Christianity, and at a ripe age predeceased her husband in 1892. As a shipmaster, Captain Ross was well and favourably known to the shipping community of Wick. He was a seaman of exceptional courage and ability. His Christian fortitude shone forth in the stormiest sea. Nothing seemed to daunt him, and when other brave sailors were tremulous with fear, he was calm and unmoved. His anchor was within the veil; he endured "as seeing him who is invisible;" God was his refuge and his strength, a very present help in trouble; and therefore he did not fear though the waters roared and were troubled and the mountains did shake with the swelling thereof. His undaunted courage commanded the admiration of his men, and his honest kindness of heart endeared him to them. They saw there was something uncommon about the man, and if they did not understand the deepseated religion of his heart, they at least learned to respect his manly character. The most reckless sailor admired Captain Robert Ross. At this point we must refer to his reverence for the Sabbath. Mariners are exposed to special temptations, and one of these is to make little or no distinction between the Lord's day and ordinary week days. But our honoured friend, as became a vital Christian, resisted the temptation, and maintained a tender regard for the holy day no matter where he was. A rather striking incident in this connection may here be related. Captain Ross was, on one occasion, at a distant port; his ship was destined for home, and everything was ready for the sea; but the Sabbath was not far off, and so he determined not to sail until Monday morning. Another captain, whose ship was alongside and who was preparing to sail for Wick also, asked him whether he did not think of setting out for home, but he replied that he would not move now until the Sabbath was past. "O well," said the

other, "we can be telling your friends that you are coming after us." "You can do that," replied Captain Ross. But what was the actual result? Though the other captain had at least a day and a half's sailing of advantage, Captain Ross was in port before him, contrary winds interfering with the other's progress on the Sabbath. The lesson from this circumstance is obvious. No one was ever the loser by a firm regard for the sanctity of the Lord's day. Captain Ross sold his vessel and retired from the sea in 1886. Though 75 years of age, he was still hale and hearty, and took a special pleasure in visiting his friends here and there in the county.

As already related, our friend was somewhat of a religious dissenter in his youth. This, we have to add, he continued to be more or less through life. Though an admirer of the fathers of the Disruption in 1843, and a staunch upholder of the principles for which they contended, he was never quite satisfied with the Free Church. He was a strong believer in the Establishment principle, and he could not brook any tendency to weaken the Church's hold of that principle. He also abhorred every form of Arminianism, and any leaven of this kind was obnoxious to him. Elements of the character described existing in a religious body which professed the sound doctrines of the Confession, were fitted to alienate him from her. However, he never hesitated to countenance and support those in the Church who were distinctly loyal to her principles and preached the gospel in its purity and fulness. For such men as Drs. Kennedy and Begg he entertained a high regard. It need hardly be said further that when the Rev. Messrs. Macfarlane and Macdonald raised a testimony for the truth in 1893, he cordially supported them, and rejoiced at the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church. We have heard him say, "I was never so well satisfied with any Church as with this."

During the last ten years or so of his life he appeared a good deal in public in connection with Church matters, and had no hesitation in taking part at religious meetings and conducting them as occasion offered. He became well known in this respect at the Pulteneytown Academy and throughout Caithness. His lectures and exercises were highly enjoyed by the people, and were much valued for their spiritual and edifying character. It may be thought a rather remarkable circumstance that this worthy man did not communicate at the Lord's table until he was about 88 years of age. The fact that he was not satisfied with the ecclesiastical course of the Free Church no doubt contributed to prevent him from entering into fellowship with her. Latterly, however, his difficulty was as to spiritual light and special grace for the solemn and holy exercise of partaking of "the communion of the body and blood of Christ." But when he felt this difficulty removed he went forward on a sacramental occasion at Wick, and the sight of the aged and beloved Christian proceeding for the first time to the Lord's table, moved many in the congregation to tears.

It now remains for us to briefly summarise the salient features in the character of our departed friend. He was a living Christian. His religion did not consist in a mere round of duties, but in seeking after and enjoying communications out of the fulness that is in Christ. "Leave us not content with forms without life or power from heaven," was a frequent petition of his. He was a man of great integrity of principle, circumspect and conscientious in all the duties of life. He could not bear anything like dishonesty, vain show or hypocrisy. He was distinguished for the utmost kindness and sympathetic tenderness of heart. Somewhat reserved in manner and sometimes blunt in speech, he was withal one of the most warm-hearted men. He entered with deep feeling into all the changing experiences of his fellow-creatures. He rejoiced with them in their prosperity and sorrowed with them in their adversity. To those in soul trouble no one could be more tender and sympathetic. In the young of his acquaintance he took an affectionate and fatherly interest. He was also remarkable for his submission to the sovereign will of God in all things. He had his own share of trouble and sorrow in this life, but it is no exaggeration to say that no one ever heard a complaining word out of his lips. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" was his song in the night of adversity. In this grace of devout submission to the will of God, he outshone almost every Christian we have had the privilege to see. He seemed to have got such a sight of the infinite glory of God and of his own utter unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, that it was a constant wonder to him how much goodness he was receiving at the hand of the Most High. He felt there was no room for complaint at any time. And yet this uncomplaining disposition did not prevent him from sympathising most tenderly with others in their afflictions whether great or small. Such then are some of the features of a beautiful Christian character in which the graces of the Spirit met in rare harmony and proportion.

In his latter days, Captain Ross spent a good deal of his time in visiting his friends and in reading at home. He was conversant with many of the old divines, and with writers in recent times that possessed a like spirit and doctrine. He did not confine himself to Presbyterian writers, but read with pleasure and profit the sermons and discourses of spiritual preachers belonging to the Baptist and other denominations. He had a special delight in the sermons of the late eminent Mr. J. C. Philpot of the Particular Baptists; and he also appreciated highly the books of some evangelical ministers in the Church of England.

We cannot omit mentioning that he was predeceased not only by his wife, as already stated, but also by his only son, Captain Hugh Ross, and one of his daughters, Mrs. Watt, Lybster, both of whom were witnesses for the truth in their day, and were cut off in the prime of life in 1891. Captain Hugh suffered not a

little in his maritime career for his faithful adherence to the sanctity of the Sabbath.

We now conclude our sketch. On the Sabbath on which the venerable Captain passed away, the Rev. Donald Beaton made an affecting reference in the Academy to the great loss the congregation and the church had sustained, as also did Mr. Campbell, missionary, with whom the deceased had been intimately associated for the last twenty years at Wick. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

J. S. S.

Uaill ann an Crann=Ceusaibh Chrìosd.

LEIS AN URR. IAIN MACLABHRAINN.

(Continued from page 398.)

BHA a bhreith air thalamh ann an staid dhiblidh; ach bha e air a luaidh le Alelulia feachd neamh ann an airde nan speur. Bha' aite-comhnuidh ro shuarach; ach bha aoidhean o dhuthchaibh cein air an stiuradh le reul da ionnsuidh. Cha robh Prionnsa eile riamh a dh'ionnsuidh an robh aoidhean air an treorachadh air an doigh ud. Cha robh luchd frithealaidh cho mor-chuiseach aige 's a bh'aig rìghrean eile: ach bha aireamh lionmhor do dhaoine euslainteach 'ga leantuinn ag iarraidh agus a faotainn leigheis cuirp agus anama; ni anns an robh barrach de fhìor-mhoralachd na ged bhiodh moran phrionnsachan a frithealadh air. Thug e air na balbhain a bha ga leantuinn a bhi seinn a chliu, na bacaich gu bhi leum le aoibhneas, na bodhair gu bhi cluinntinn a bhriathran iongantach, agus na doill gu bhi faicinn a ghloir. Cha robh freiceadan no coisridh ghreadhnach do sheirbheisich aige; ach mar dh'aidich an Ceannard-ceud aig an robh seirbheisich agus saighdearan fo smachd;—bha slainte agus euslaint, beatha agus bas fo ughdaras. Bha eadhoin a ghaoth agus an doinion nach urrainear a riaghladh le cumhachd talmhaidh umhail dha; agus air 'iarrtas, b'egin d'on bhas agus do'n uaigh an creich a thoirt suas dha. Cha robh brat-urlair riomhach riamh fo 'chosan; ach 'n uair a choisich e air an fhainge, chum na h-uisgeachan suas e. Chur an t-iomlan de'n chruitheachd, ach daoine peacach amhainn, onoir air mar an cruithfhear. Cha robh ionmhas aige; ach 'n uair bha feum aige air airgoid chuir a mhuir d'a ionnsuidh e ann am beul eisg. Cha robh saibhlean no achaidhean arbhuir aige; ach 'n uair a runaich e curim a thoirt seachad, chomhdaich e le beagan bhuilionnan bord saobhair pailt airson mhilltean—cuirm nach tugadh riamh a leithid le aon de uile rìghrean na talmhainn. Triomh na nithibh ud, agus ioma ni eile de'n nadur cheudna, bha gloir an Fhir-shaoraidh a deal-

radh a mach eadhoin 'n a irioslachadh, anns gach ceum fa leth d'a bheatha.

Ni mo bha 'ghloir tur-fholaicht aig am a bhais. Cha robh e air a leantuinn chum na h-uaigh le leithid de choisir-bhroin, no de loiseam fhaoin le'm bheil ard- uaislean air an adhlacadh. Ach thaisbein tuar na cruithachd a bron airson bas a h-ughdair; bha na neamhan agus an talamh 'n an luchd caoidh; chomhdaich a ghrian i fein le eideadh broin; agus ged nach robh luchd aiteachaidh na talmhainn air am mor-ghluasad, chrìochnaich an talamh fein fo'n eallich eagalaich. Cha robh iad ach tearc am measg nan Iudhach a reub an culaidhean; ach cha robh na creagan air cho beag umhail; oir sgain iadsan an cridheachan. Cha rodh uaigh aige dha fein; ach dh'fhosgail uaigh neach eile dha. Dh'fhaodadh an uaigh agus am bas a bhi bosdail as leth a leithid a dh'fhear àiteachaidh; ach cha b'ann mar iochdaran a fhuair iad an taobh a stigh d'an crìochan e; ach mar namhaid agus mar uachdaran. Sud far an do chaill rìgh nan uamhas a ghath; air an treas la, thug Prionnsa na beatha buaidh air, oir chreach e am bas agus an uaigh. Ach buinidh na nithe so do ardachadh Chrìosd. Tha na nithbh a dh'ainmicheadh roimhe so a taisbeanadh glòir 'irioslachaidh; ach is robh bheag dhiu a th'air an nochdadh anns na dh'ainmich sinn.

Oir is e glòir crann-ceusaigh Chrìosd d'an cubhaidh dhuinn gu sonruichte ard-urram altrum glòir buadhan neochrìochnach Dhe air an taisbeanadh ann an obair na Saorsa; no mar tha e air a chur leis an Abstol,—“glòir Dhe ann an gnais Iosa Crìosd” (2 Cor. iv. 6), agus “Esan eadhoin air a cheusadh” (1 Cor. ii. 2).

Tha gach cuspair eile air an deanadh glormhor a reir an tomhais anns am bheil buadhan Dhe air am foillseachadh leo. Is e sin a tha deanadh uil'oiribh a chruthachaidh cho glormhor. “Cuiridh na neamhan an ceill glòir Dhe agus nochdaidh na speuran gnìomh a lamh.” Agus tha sinne gun lethsgèul airson cho beag 's a tha sinn ag oidhirpeachadh a bhi beachdachadh air buadhan Dhe anna;—uachdaranachd uile-chumbhachdach agus a ghliocas do-rann-suichte, agus gu h-àraidh a mhaithas neochrìochnach.

Cha n eil ann an toraidhean maitheas Dhe ann an oiribh a chruthachaidh, ach fabharan aimsireil; ach tha na fabharan a th'air an cosnadh dhuinn le crann-ceusaigh Chrìosd 'n am beannachdan siorruidh. Ged tha oiribh a chruthachaidh a nochdadh gu'm bheil Dia math ann fein; tha iad mar an ceudna nochdadh gu'm bheil e ceart, agus gu'm bheil e feargach ruinne airson ar peacaidhean. Ni mo am bheil iad a seoladh dhuinn rathad tre am faod sinn a bhi air ar deanamh reid ris. Tha iad a cur an ceill glòir a chruithfhear; ach mar an ceudna cur an ceill a laghana, agus na fiachan fo'm bheil sinne gu umhlachd a thoirt dhoibh. Tha ar coguisean ag innseadh dhuinn gu'n do dhearmaid sinn na fiachan ud; gu'n do bhrìst sinn an lagh; agus air an aobhar sin gu'm bheil sinn buailteach do dhiomb Ughdair an lagha. Tha oiribh

Dhe, anns am bheil a ghloir air a foillseachadh a dearbhadh gum, bheil beatha 'n a dheagh-ghean; agus air an laimh eile gu'm bheil bas agus leirsgríos 'n a chorruich: Tha laghanna naduir ann an tomhas eigin gar cur cheana fo a dhiomb. Tha so ri fhaicinn o na tha de thrioblaidean na beatha so agus de phianntaibh a bhais ag eiridh o aobharan nadurra. Air gach laimh tha oibribh Dhe ag agradh dioghaltais airson na comhstri a th'aige ruinn as leth bristeadh a lagha. Tha laghanna naduir a toirt beatha car uine d'ar corpaibh anfhann; ach tha bheatha sin air a deanadh searbh tre iomadh amhghar; agus gu bhi aig a cheann mu dheireadh air am bruanadh agus air an tionndadh gu duslach.

Mar sin, tha aghaidh naduir glormhor innte fein; ach dhuinne tha i air a dorchachadh le gruaim eagalach. Tha i nochdadh do n eucorach gloir a Bhreitheamh;—gloir an Ard-uachdarain do'n cheannairceach ciontach a bhrosnuich a chorruich. Cha'n ann mar so a bheirar solas no saorsa do'n cheannairceach, no a bheirar e gu bhi deanadh uaill agus gloir. Uime sin, tha naimhdean a chroinn'cheusaidh, leis nach aill eolas a ghabhail air Dia air seol sam bith eile ach tre oibribh naduir, cho fad as o bhi a deanadh uaill ann an dochas ri Dia a mhealtuinn air neamh, agus gu'm faighear iad iad a cur cul ris gach dochas d'a thaobh, agus mar is trice, ag aicheadh gu'm bheil a leithid sin do shonus idir ri fhaotainn. Tha ar coguisean ag innseadh dhuinn gu'm bheil sinn 'n ar ceannaircich an aghaidh Dhe; ach cha n eil nadur a nochdadh dhuinn cionnus is comasach dhuinn a dheagh-ghean a chosnadh; cionnus, fo uachdaranachd air dheagh-orduchadh mar tha riaghladh Dhe, a dh'fhaodas am Breitheamh cothramach agus Ughdar an lagha bhi air a ghlorachadh; agus an ceannairceach air a leigeadh fa sgaoil; no cionnus idir is urrainn am Breitheamh a bhi air a ghlorachadh agus a ceannairceach air a ghlorachadh mar an ceudna.

Ged tha cainnt naduir soilleir ard-ghuthach ann a bhi cur an ceill gloir a Chruithfhir, tha i dorchach agus ioma-lubach mu thimchioll a ruintean a thaobh chreutairean ciontach. Cha toir i aon chuid lanchinnt neo-theagmhach gu'm bheil ar staid eudochasach, no idir bunait chinnteach d'ar dochas. Ma tha sinn 'n ar cuspairean deagh-ghean, cia uaithe cho liugha trioblaid? Ma tha sinn 'n ar ceannaircich gun dochas, cia uaithe cho liugha fabhar? Tha nadur a foillseachadh gloir Dhe agus ar maslaidh-ne; Ach mu shlighe gu dol as, tha i balbh agus tosdach. Tha nadur a toirt iomadh aobhar brosnuchaidh gu bhi miannachadh as deigh Dhe; ach cha'n eil i nochdadh dhuinn cionnus a ruigeas sinn air na miannaibh sin a shasachadh.

Ach anns a cheann-theagaisg tha againn cuspair a tha toirt sgeul air nithibh is fearr; oir tha e seoladh dhuinn, cha n e "gu'n iarramaid, a dh'fheuchainn an tarladh dhuinn le min-rannsachadh gu'm faigheamaid e" (Griomh. xvii. 27) ach gu'n iarramaid air chor agus gu'm faighear leinn e gu cinnteach.

Tha an teagasg so do-chreidsinn leis an inntinn theolmhor!—

Gu'm biodh barrachd de ghloir Dhe air a thaisbeanadh ann an gnuis Chrìosd agus esan air a cheusadh, na chithear an aghaidh nan speur agus na talmhainn!

Gnuis Chrìosd!—anns nach leir do'n inntin fheolmhor ni sam bith ach cradh agus masladh; an aghaidh bhruite, reubta ud, dearg le fuil, comhdaichte le tarcuis, air bocadh le buillean agus aog-neulach le bas;—b'e sud an cuspair mu dheireadh anns an iarradh an inntin fheolmhor sealladh fhaotainn air gloir Dhe na beatha;—aghaidh air a comhdach le uamhas a bhais! Is e a b'annsa leis an inntinn fheolmhor sealltuinn air an aghaidh ud 'n uair bha i air a cruthatharrachadh, agus a dealradh mar a ghrian 'n a lan neart. Dhealraich gloir na Diadhachd air mhodh ro-shoilleir ann an gnuis Chrìosd air beinn a chruthatharrachaidh; ach gu ro mhor ni bu dealraiche air beinn Chalbhari.

Bha an cruthatharrachadh so ni bu ghlormhoire gu mor na'n cruthatharrachadh ud eile. Ged bhiodh gach solus a th'anns an t-saoghal, anns a ghrein agus anns na reultan, air an tional comhla 'n an aon mheall soluis, cha bhiodh anna ach dorchadas an coimeas ri gloir a chuspair so, a bha reir coslas o'n leth a muigh cho cianail agus cho dorch. Oir is e tha an so, mar deir an t-Abstol,—“Air bhi dhuinne uile ag amharc mar le aghaid gun fholach air gloir an Tighearna.”—(2 Cor. iii. 18).

An so tha ceartas gun smal, gliocas do-thuigsinn agus gradh neochrìochnach a dealradh uile mar chomhla. Cha'n eil aon dhiu fath leth ag ais-thilgeadh dealradh soillseach air cach. Tha iad a measgachadh an gathan soluis le cheile, agus a dealradh le boillsgeadh aonaichte siorruidh;—am Breitheamh cothromach, an t-Athair trocaireach agus an Riaghlair uile-ghlic. Cha'n eil cuspair eile a toirt a leithid de thaisbeanadh air na buadhan ud uile; cha'n eil eadhoin, cuspair eile is aithne dhuinn tha toirt a leithid de thaisbeanadh air aon de na buadhan ud. Cha'n fhacas ceartas riamh ann an cruth cho eagalach, trocair cho ionghradhach; gliocas cho domhain; no cumhachd cho ion-mholta:—“Anns a cheud aite;”—Air sgath na h-ard-urram neochrìochnach a bhuineas do phearsa Chrìosd, chuir a chrann-ceusaidh-san barrachd gloir agus onoir air lagh agus air ceartas na gach fulangas a bha no bhitheas air an giulan anns an t-saoghal. 'N uair tha an t-Abstol a labhairt ris na Romhanaich mu'n t-soisgeul, tha e nochdadh dhoibh gu'm bheil, cha'n e amhain trocair Dhe, ach a cheartas mar an ceudna air fhoillseachadh ann.—(Rom. i. 18). Tha fearg Dhe an aghaid neo-fhireantachd dhaoine air a taisbeanadh gu sonruichte le fireantachd agus le fulangasaibh Chrìosd. Bha an Tighearna grasmhor air sgath fhireantachd fean.—(Isaiah xlii. 21.) Is ann an cosnadh na fireantachd sin a dh'iarr e mar choir, a dh'ardaich e an lagh agus a chuir e urram air. Agus ged tha 'fhireantachd a cosheasamh ann an umhlachd agus ann am fulangais nach do mhair ach re seal, gidheadh,—do bhrìgh g'um bi iad air chuimhne gu soirruidh, faodar a radh gu'm bheil crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd a cur urram agus oirdhearcas siorruidh air an

lagh leis an riarachadh a thug e dha ; an lagh uamhasach sin leis am bheil a chruitheachd (rioghachd Dhe) air a riaghladh, agus d'am bheil uachdaranachda agus cumhachdan neamhaidh fo smachd ; —an lagh sin, ann an dìteadh peacaidh, a dh'fhuadaich an Diabhul agus a chuid ainglibh a mach a gloir, a dh'fhuadaich ar ceud pharantan a mach a Eden, agus a dh'fhogair sith o'n t-saoghal. A beachdachadh air Dia, uime sin, mar Bhreitheamh agus mar Lagh-thabhairtear an t-saoghail, tha e soilleir gu'm bheil a ghloir a dealradh le dearsadh do-labhairt ann an crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd, mar dhioghaltas an aghaidh a pheacaidh. Ach is e so an dearbh ni tha cumail luchd gradhachaidh a pheacaidh o bhi ag aideachadh gloir a chroinn-cheusaidh ; do bhrìgh meud na tha e nochdadh de'n fhathast a th'aig Dia do'n ni sin d'am bheil gradh acasan. Gu bhi claidh naimhdeas na h-inntinn fheolmhoir do'n chrann-cheusaidh, tha e feumail a thoirt fainear ;—ged tha iobairt Chrìosd a nochdadh a mhain. Tha i toirt peanas a pheacaidh bharr ar lamh ;—air chor 's nach eil tuilleadh gnothuich againn ris. Agus gu cinnteach bu choir do shealladh air ar cunnart, air dhuinn fhaicinn air a thoirt as an rathad, ar n-aobhneas a mheudachadh an aite a lughdachadh. Le sealladh air meud ar cunnart, chi sinn meud ar saorsa. Tha crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd a taisbeanadh gloir ceartais neo-chrìochnach, ach tuilleadh na sin ;—Oir—

Ann an dara aite,—Tha e air mhodh araidh a taisbeanadh gloir trocair neo-chrìochnach. Cha n eil ni 's an t-saoghal is glormhoire no is ion-ghradhaiche na gradh agus maitheas ; agus is e so an taisbeanadh is mo air gradh, is urrainnear a breithneachadh. Tha maitheas Dhe ri fhaicinn 'n a oibribh uile ;—Is e sin a chuid is sonruichte de ghloir na cruithachd. Tha e air a theagasg dhuinn sealltuinn air an t-saoghal iosal so mar aite comhnuidh freagarach airson dhaoine. Ach le suil ri briathran an Abstoil (Eabh. iii. 3) bu choir do'n tiodhlaic mu'm bheil sinn a labhairt a bhi air a meas leinn airidh air barrachd urram na an saoghal, ann a mheud 's gu'm bheil barrachd urraim aig an Ti a thog an tigh na th'aig an tigh.

Thug Dia dhuinn 'n a Mhac, tiodhlac a tha gu neo-chrìochnach ni's mo na an saoghal. Tha an Cruithfhear gu neo-chrìochnach ni's glormhoire na'n creutair, agus is e Mac Dhe cruithfhear nan uile nithe. Is urrainn do Dhia saoghail do-aireamh a cruthachadh le focal a bheoil. Cha n eil aige ach aon Mhac ambain ; agus cha do chaomhainn e aon Mhac, ach thug e thairis e chum bais air ar son-ne uile.

Tha gradh Dhe d'a phobull o bhith bhuantachd gu bithbhuantachd. Ach o bhithbhuantachd gu bithbhuantachd, cha n eil taisbeanadh air, a tha aon chuid aithnichte no so-thuigsinn dhuinne an coimeas ris an taisbeanadh so. Tha solus na greine an comhnuidh gun chaochladh. Ach is ann mu mheadhoin la tha i dealradh oirne 'n a lan shoillse. Is e crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd tra-noin a ghaoil shiorruidh. Bha ioma taisbeanadh soilleir air a

ghaol ud roimh laimh ; ach bha iad mar shòlus na maduinne, a tha dealradh nì's mo agus nì's mo gu ruig an la iomlan ; agus be an la iomlan sin, an uair a bha Crìosd air a chrann-cheusaidh, ged bha an talamh air a chomhdach le dorchadas.

Cìod air bith na coimeasan is comasach dhuinn a dheilbh, cha toir iad fa chomhair ar n-inntinnean ach sealladh neo-iomlan air a ghradh so, tha dol thar gach uile eolais. Ged shaoileamaid gu'n robh gradh nan uile dhaoine a bha riamh, no bhitheas air an talamh, agus uile ghradh nan ainglibh air neamh, air an aonadh ann an aon chridhe ; cha bhiodh ann ach cridhe fuar an coimeas ris a chridhe ud anns an do shath an saighdear a shleagh ! Cha n fhaca na h-Iudhaich ach fuil agus uisge ; ach chithear le suil a chreidimh cuan soilleir do ghaol soirruidh a taomadh a mach as na lotan ud. Faodaidh sinn ruigheachd air tomhas eolais air gloir a ghraidh so, le beachdachadh air a thoraidhean. Bu choir dhuinn beachdachadh air na fhuaradh de bheannachdan spioradail agus soirruidh le sluagh Dhe re cheithir mìle bliadhna mu'n robh Crìosd air a chur gu bas ; na fhuaradh leo o'n am sin gus a nis, no a gheibhear leo gu am comhlionadh nan uile nithe ; —gach saorsa o thruaighe shiorruidh ; gach cuan aoibhneis air neamh : gach abhuinn do uisge na beatha a bhios air am meal-tuinn fad na siorruidheachd le aireamh mar ghainneamh na fairge ann an lionmhorachd ; —bu choir dhuinn beachdachadh air na beannachdan ud uile mar tha iad a sruthadh o'n ghradh ud a th'air a thaisbeanadh ann an crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd.

Anns an treas aite—Chithear an so mar an ceudna gloir gliocais do-thuigsinn Dhe, d'an cliu a bhi toirt gu buil nan crìochan is fearr leis na meadhonaibh is freagaraiche. Is iad crìochan a chroinn-cheusaidh is ro fhearr annta fein, agus is fearr d'ar thaobhne is urrainn sin a bhreithneachadh ; —gloir Dhe agus leas dhaoine. Agus tha na meadhonaibh tre am bheil na crìochan so air an coimhlionadh cho freagarach agus cho iomchuidh, agus gu'm bi an doimhneachd neo-chrìochnach a th'annta do ghliocas, 'na chulaidh iongantais do'n chruitheachd fad na siorruidheachd.

Is nì furasda thuigsinn, gloir a Chruithfhear air a taisbeanadh ann a bhi deanadh maith do chreutair neo-chiontach : ach is e gliocas diomhair agus sonruichte a chroinn-cheusaidh, gloir a Bhreitheamh chothromaich air a taisbeanadh ann an deanadh maith do'n eucorach chiontach. Is nì furasda thuigsinn fireantachd Dhe air a taisbeanadh ann am peanasachadh pheacaidhean ; is e an crann-ceusaidh a mhaing a tha taisbeanadh 'fhìreantachd ann am maitheadh peacaidh (Rom. iii. 25). Tha e ag ardachadh ceartais ann am maitheadh peacaidh, agus ag ardachadh trocair ann a bhi ga pheanasachadh. Tha e taisbeanadh ceartais ann an dreach is uamhasaiche na ged bhiodh trocair air a dunadh a mach ; agus trocair ann an dreach is ion-ghradhaiche na ged bhiodh ceartas air a chur a thaobh. Tha e ag ardachadh an lagha agus a cur urram air (Isa. xliii. 21). Tha e ag ardachadh an eucoirich a

bhris an lagh ; oir tha an onoir a chuireadh air an lagh a cur onoir airsan mar an ceudna (1 Cor. ii. 7). Tha so eadhoin air a dheilbh air a leithid do dhoigh agus gu'm bheil gach onoir a chuirear air an lagh, 'n a onoir do'n eucorach mar an ceudna. Cir tha gach beannachd tha am peacach a faotain air an tabhairt dha air sgath na h-umhlachd agus an riarachaidh a thugadh do'n lagh ; cha n ann leis fein, ach le neach eile, d'am b'urrainn urram gu neo-chriochnach a bu mho, a chur air an lagh. Agus tha an riarachadh a thugadh leis an neach ud eile ann an aite a pheacaich a cur airsan na h-onoir is mo is urrainnear a chur air. Faodaidh an lagh agus am peacach le cheile, uail a dheanadh a crann-ceusaidh Chriosd. Tha iad le cheile a faighinn glair agus onoir shiorruidh d'a thrìd.

Tha gach glair a tha dealaichte o cheile ann an oibribh eile Dhe air ann faotainn aonaichte anns a chrann so. Tha solasan neamh a glorachadh maitheas Dhe ;—tha piantaibh ifrinn a glorachadh a cheartais ;—Tha crann-ceusaidh Chriosd a glorachadh gach aon dhiu air mhodh is comharraichte na tha neamh no ifrinn a glorachadh aon seach aon dhiu. Tha onoir is ro-chomharraichte air a chur air ceartas Dhe le fulangasaibh Chriosd na le piantaibh nan diabhul ; agus tha taisbeanadh is ro-chomharraichte air maitheas Dhe ann an tearnadh nam peacach, na ann an aoibhneas nan ainglibh ; air chor agus nach urrainn sinn cuspair eile bhreith-neachadh anns am faicear a leithid do ghliocas eugsamhuil, no a leithid do dhoimhne innleachd gu bhi ag ardachadh glair Dhe.

Faodar an ni ceudna a radh d'a thaobh mar thionnsnadh air son math an duine. “Is e maitheas a pheacanna gu leir, agus a shlanuicheas' eucailean uile” (Salm ciii.). Is i so an iobairt a bheir air faibh cionta a pheacaidh. Is e so am prìomh aobhar brosnachaidh gu bhi fuathachadh a pheacaidh ; marbhaidh e am peacadh anns a cheart am an toir e dioladh air a shon ; diolaidh e airson easumhlachd ;—brosnuchaidh e gu umhlachd. Cosnaidh e neart chum umhlachd ; ni e umhlachd 'n a ni cleachdail, tlachdmhor agus taitneach air mhodh do-sheachainte ;—Co-eignichidh e gu umhlachd (2 Cor. v. 14). Tha e araon na eiseimpleir agus 'n a aobhar-brosnuchaidh gu umhlachd. Riarach e mallachdan an lagha ; agus coimhlionaidh e' iarrtasan. Is e gradh coimhlionadh an lagha ; eadhoin, gradh do Dhia agus d'ar coimhearsnaich. Is e crann-ceusaidh Chriosd an eiseimpleir is airde air a ghradh sin. Faodar sealltuinn air fulangais Chriosd mar ghnìomharan. Cha tug gnìomh eile riamh a leithid de ghloir do Dhia ; cha d'rinn gnìomh sam bith eile a leithid do mhath do dhaoine. Agus is e so an doigh air an nochd sinne ar gradh do Dhia agus do dhaoine, a bhi ag ardachadh glair Dhe agus a deanadh math do dhaoine.

Mar so tha fulangais Chriosd a teagasg dhuinn ar dleasannais, leis a ghradh o'n do shruth iad a mach, agus leis a mhath airson an robh iad air an sonrachadh. Agus tha sinn air ar teagasg leo,

cha'n ann amhain leis an run bu mhathair-aobhair dhoibh, ach mar an ceudna leis an doigh 's an do ghiulain e iad. Cha 'n eil da dhleasannas is duilghe a dheanadh na strìochdadh do Dhia, agus maitheanas a thoirt do namhaid. Tha a cheud aon dhiu'n a chomharradh air gradh do Dhia, agus an t-aon eile air gradh do dhaoine. Ach is e an strìochdadh is mo, neach a ghiulan le fulangais, agus e neochiontach; agus is e am maitheanas is airde, maitheanas a thoirt d'ar mortairean, gu sonruichte, ma's muinntir iad a chuir sinn fo chomain dhuinn;—mar gu'n tugadh neach, chan e a mhain maitheanas dhoibhsan a thug a bheatha air falbh, eadhoin ged bha iad'n a eiseimeil airson am beatha fein; ach a dh'asluich maitheanas o neach eile air an son, a guidhe as an leth, agus a gabhail an lethsgheil cho fada's bu chomasach dha sin a dheanadh. Is ann mar so a ghiulain Crìosd 'fhulangais; "Athair, do thoilsa gu'n robh deanta;" "Athair, thoir maitheanas dhoibh, oir cha n eil fios aca ciod a tha iad a deanadh." Mar so chi sinn cho freagarach 's a bha an crann-ceusaidh mar mheadhoin gu bhi coimlionadh nan crìochan a b'fhèarr; eadhoin, fireanachadh agus naomhachadh. Cha ruigear a leas a bhi caitheamh uine gu bhi nochdadh a fhreagarachd eugsamhuil gu bhi ag ardachadh sith agus aoibhneis anns a bheatha so, maille ri sonas sìorruidh anns a bheatha tha ri teachd. Oir gun teagamh, bidh sonas sìorruidh ann an tomhas mor ag eiridh o bhi cuimhneachadh mar bha e air a chosnadh; agus ann a bhi faicinn an Uain a chaidh a mharbhadh 'n o shuidhe aig deas laimh an Ti sin a thug thairis e airson na crìche sin. Tha na thugadh cheana fainear, a nochdadh gu'm bheil crann-ceusaidh Chrìosd 'n a thaisbeanadh glormhor air gliocas do-thuigsinn Dhe, do bhrìgh na deilbh iongantach a tha ri fhaicinn ann gu bhi ag ardachadh math an duine, cho math ri glòir Dhe; oir is e bu chrìoch dha bhi foillseachadh glòir Dhe, agus deaghghean do dhaoine.

Annas a cheathramh aite—Tha an cuspair beannaichte so mar an ceudna a taisbeanadh glòir cumhachd Dhe. Tha so'n a baath-chainnt neocholtach leosan do nach aithne Crìosd; ach do na creidmich, is e Crìosd air a cheusadh gliocas Dhe agus cumhachd Dhe.—(1 Cor. i. 24). Bha ceusadh Chrìosd air a mheas leis na h-Iudhaich mar dhearbhadh air easbhuidheachd a chumhachd. Mar sin, rinn iad tair airsan a dh'oibrich cho liugha mìorbhuil, gu'm fuilingeadh e dha fein a bhi air a chrochadh air crann. Ach b'e so ann fein, am mìorbhuil bu mho de gach mìorbhuil. Dh'fheoraich iad,—Cionnus, mar shaor e feadhain eile, nach do shaor se e fein? Dh'ainmich iad an t-aobhar ged nach tug iad aire dha. B'e sud an dearbh aobhar nach do shaor se e fein 's an uair ud, dìreach, gu'n do shaor e muinntir eile; gu'n robh e deonach agus comasach air an saoradh. Bha an t-aobhar leis an robh e air a chur thuige gu bhi giulan a chroinn-cheusaidh, 'n a aobhar ro-chumhachdach;—"Gras Dhe, cumhachd Dhe chum slainte" (Rom. i. 16) a deanadh chreutairean nuadh,

a togail anamaibh o'n bhas. Is e th'annta so gnìomharan uile-chumbhachdach. Tha sinn ullamh gu bhì air ar lìonadh le iongantais leis an taisbeanadh tha an saoghal faicsinneach a toirt air cumhachd Dhe; ach tha anam an duine ann a chruthachadh moran ni's airde agus ni's urramaiche na'n saoghal. Tha cumhachd a Chruithfhear ann an glusad siubhlach lochrain nan speur na chuspair ioghnaidh dhuinn; ach tha glusad anamaibh reusanta a dh'ionnsuidh Dhe mar chuspair-talaidh, gu ro mhor ni's glormhoire na glusad nan reull a dh'ionnsuidh na greine;— buaidh na cumhachd cheudna; ach buaidh gu ro mhor is airde, is urramaiche agus is buan mhaireannaiche.

Bha lotan Chrìosd a reir coslais, nan dearbhadh air' anmhuinneachd; ach cha n eil e duillich neart gun choimeas fhaicinn annta. Thigeadh e dhuinn a bhreithneachadh—Cìod e sin leis an robh e air a bhruthadh? “Bhruthadh e airson ar n-aingidheachd-ne.” Tha an sgriobtur 'g an taisbeanadh dhuinn (Isa. liii.) mar eallach mhor; agus sinne uile ann ar neo-chomas, 'n ar luidhe foidhe, mar shluagh luchdaichte le aingidheachd. Ghiulain Chrìosd ar peacaidhean agus ar n-anmhuinneachd 'n a chorp fein air a chrann; dh'iomchair e ar doilghiosan; cha'n iad amhain na doilghiosan a dh'fhaodar fhulang leinn anns a bheatha so, ach na thoill sinn a bhì fulang anns a bheatha tha ri teachd. Thugamaid fairear, co a leag an eallach ud air;—“Leag an Tighearna airsan aingidheachd gach aon againn.”—(Isa. liii. 6). Is math a dh'fhaodamaid a radh le Cain, “Tha ar peanas ni's mo na's comasach dhuinn a ghiulan.” Dh'fhaodta sin a radh leis gach aon againn fa leth. Ach cha b'iad peacaidhean aoin a ghiulain e, ach peacaidhean mhorain, sluagh do-aireamh mar ghaineamh na fairge; agus peacaidhean gach aon dhiu sin co ionnan ann an aireamh ris a ghaineamh cheudna. B'e sud an t-uallach bu truime agus a b'uamhasaiche a bha anns an t-saoghal.

Bu leoir cudthrom mallachd an lagha gus an saoghal a phronnadh gu luathre. B'amhuil sin a fhuaradh e leosan a thug a nuas orra fein e anns an toiseach. 'N uair a mhi-ghnathaich legion do ainglibh treun an neart, an neart ud a bha aca, an aghaidh an lagha, chuir mallachd an lagha fodha iad o neamh nan neamh do'n t-slochd gun ghrunnnd. Bha an cudthrom ceudna chuir fodha na h-ainglibh ceannairceach, air a bhagar air an duine airson co-aontachadh leis na h-ainglibh ud. Mu'm b'urrainn daoine am mallachd ud a ghiulan, mu'm b'urrainn gach neach fa leth a chuid fein fhaotainn dheth; dh'fheumadh e, mar gu'm b'eadh, a bhì air a roinn 'n a earranan do-aireamh. Fad linntean do-aireamh, bu bheag dheth a b'urrainn a bhì air a ghiulan leis a chinne-daona. Bhiodh an fhearg ri teachd, an comhnuidh 'n a feirg ri teachd gu saoghal nan saoghal: bhiodh gu brath, fuigheall neo-chrìochnach fhathasd ri ghiulan. Is ann aig Chrìosd amhain a bha neart gus an t-uallach ud uile ghiulan, gu a ghiulan uile, mar gu'm b'eadh, a dh'aon bheum, agus 'n a aonar. “Do na sloigh cha robh neach maille ris.” Leagadh ar n-uallach agus ar

cuideachadh air neach a bha cumhachdach ; oir hha an doigh air an do ghiulain e ar n-uallach 'n a thaisbeanadh glormhor air a chumhachd, an cumhachd a b'airde agus a b'urramaiche ; eadhoin cumhachd tearnaidh.

Tha e fìor gu'n deachaidh a bhruthadh fo'n uallach, ach cha bhiodh sin 'n a iognadh leinn na'n tugamaid fainear uamhas na maoim a thuit air. Na'm bu chomasach dhùinn cudthrom ceartais shiorruidh a bhreithneachadh, ullamh gu tuiteam le gairge mar dhealanach air saoghal ain-diadhaidh ; agus sealltuinn air a chorp naomh ud 'n a luidhe eadar cudthrom na feirge air an talamh ; cha chuireadh am bruthadh ud iongantais oirn ; cha mho a dheanamaid dimeas air. Bu chubhaidh dhuinn a smuainteachadh ciod a thachradh na'n tuiteadh an fhearg ud ni b'isle. Mur bhith gu'n robh i air a glacadh leis a chuspair ud a chaidh 's an eadaragain, dheanadh i sgrios agus milleadh air doigh eile. Dh'fhagadh i an saoghal comhdaichte le dearbhaidhean air dioghaltachd ceartais agus feirge naomha Dhia.

Ged bha 'fheoil naomh air a dochann agus air a reubadh fo'n eallaich eagalach ud, cuimhnicheamaid gu'n do ghiulain e i. An so chithear neart neo-leithideach, a giulan an ruathair ud a mheilleadh an saoghal gu luaithre. Agus ghiulain e i 'n a aonar. Cha do leig e leis an roinn bu lugha dhi dol seachad air fein. Tha iadsan uile ghabhas fasgadh fo'n didean bheannaichte so, cho tearuinte 's nach eil dad aca ri dheanadh ris an eallaich fheirge so ach amharc oirre (Eoin iii. 14, 15). Mar deir an Salmadair—Salm xci. 7, 8) “Cha tig i am fagus dhoibh ; amhain le'n suilibh seallaidh iad, agus chi iad diol nan aingidh.” Ach chi iad i air a leagadh air an aon chothromach ud. Agus cha'n eil air fhagail dhoibhsan da-rìreadh anns a ghnothuch so, ach a bhi faicinn tre chreideamh an cudthrom a bha an crochadh os cionn an cinn chiontach ; agus mar chaidh an corp naomh ud a bha gun chionta agus gun smal anns an eadaragain. Chi iad e air a bhruthadh gu deistinneach. Ach is e deireadh a chath a nochdas co an taobh leis an teid a bhuaidh. Anns an iomairt eagalaich ud, thugadh corp Chrìosd cho iosal ris an uaigh. Ach ged thuiteas am fìrein, eiridh e a ris. Is e am bas a bha an iochdar anns an iomairt ud (1 Cor. xv. 25). Is e Crìosd a thug a bhuaidh anns an tuiteam ud, agus lan-choimhlion e a bhuaidh 'n uair a dh'eirich e. Tha cumhachd agus neart gun choimeas air a thaisbeanadh ann an aobhar, ann an run, agus ann an toradh nan lotan ud.

Tha an neart ceudna ri fhaicinn 'n a ghiulan fo na lotan, agus anns a mhodh air an do ghiulain e iad, mar chi sinn ann an eachdraidh a bhais. Ghiulain e iad le foighidinn, le truas agus le iochd ri muinntir eile. Bhruthadh earran ro bheag do dhoilghiosan Chrìosd an spiorad is treine 's an t-saoghal gu bas. Cha n eil càil duine comasach air tomhas anabarach do bhron no dh'aoibhneas a ghiulan. Is leoir aon seach don dhiu gu cur as d'ar beatha nadurra. Bha doilghiosan Chrìosd uile gu leir gun choimeas, ach bha 'neart lan-fhoghainteach air an son.

Tha na nithibh so a nochdadh cho amaideach 's a tha e, a bhi 'g altrum beachdan iosal no suarach a thaobh lotan an Fhir-shaoraidh. Air dhoibh a bhi do na h-Iudhaich 'n an ceap-tuislidh, agus do na Greugaich 'n an amaideachd, agus do bhrìgh gu'm bheil moran do Chriosduidhean aideachail air nach eil iad ri drughadh iomchuidh, tha e feumail dhuinn beachdachadh orra beagan ni's sonruichte.

Tha an sgrìobtur a cur an iomlain de irioslachadh Chriosd f'ar comhair mar aon ghnìomh mor, leis an tug e buaidh air naimhdean Dhe agus dhaoine, agus tre an do shuidhich e rioghachd ghlormhor agus buan-mhaireannach.

Tha na Faidhean, agus gu h-àraidh an Salmadair, a labhairt uiread mu Chriosd mar ghaisgeach cumhachdach, d'an robh a naimhdean gu bhi air an deanadh 'n an stol-chos, is gu'm bheil an h-Iudhach eadhoin fathast a cumail a mach gu'm bheil an Messiah-san gu bhi'n a phrionnsa aimsireil rochumhachdach, 'n a fhear-cogaich mor; a chiosnaicheas a naimhdean le teine agus le claidheamh, agus leis am bi iadsan air an togail suas os cionn uile fhineachan na talmhainn. Mur biodh iad air an dalladh le uabhar, agus le gradh do nithibh talmhaidh, b'fhurasda dhoibh fhaicinn gu'm bheil an cliu tha na faidhean a toirt air, tuilleadh is ard gu bhi aia a thuigsinn ann an seadh cho iosal ri am beachdsan da thaobh. Chithear so gu soilleir le gearr-shealladh a ghabhail orra, a nochdas aig an am cheudna, glòir a ghnìomh mhoir sin mu'n robh sinn a labhairt cheana, le bhi taisbeanadh meudachd na h-innleachd ud, agus na toraidhean a thug i mach.

Tha na faidhean gu tric a labhairt air mhodh sonruichte mu'n Mhessiah mar Rìgh mor—ainm anns am bheil a mhoralachd thalmhaidh is ro-àirde air a chiallachadh. Bha lamh Philait air a h-ardriaghladh gu bhi sgrìobhadh an tiodail urramaich ud, eadhoin air a chrann-cheusaidh. Tha glòir na rioghachd a bha gu bhi air a cur suas leis, air a cur fa'r comhair ann an cainnt ro-oidhearc leis an fhaidh Daniel (ii. 35-45), agus a ris anns an (vii. 13, 14)—“Chunnaic mi ann an aislingibh na h-oidhche, agus feuch thainig neach cosmhuil ri Mac an duine, le neulaibh neamh, agus thainig e chum Aosda nan laithean, agus thug iad e dluth 'na lathair. Agus thugadh dha uachdranachd, agus glòir, agus rioghachd, a chum gu'n tugadh na h-uile shluagh, chinneacha, agus theanganna, seirbheis dha: 'uachdranachd, is uachdranachd shiorruidh i, nach siubhail thairis, agus a rioghachd, cha sgriosar i.” An so tha taisbeanaidhean beothail air morachd gun choimeas; rioghachd shiorruidh gu bhi air a suidheachadh, grabaidhean laidir gu bhi air an toirt as an rathad, naimhdean cumhachdach gu bhi air an ciosnachadh.

Tha e feumail anns a cheud aite a thoirt faineas mor-chudthrom uile-choitichionn an tionnsgnaidh so. Cha robh pairt sam bith de'n chruith-eachd caoinshuarach mu' thimchioil. Bha glòir a Chruithfhear gu bhi air a h-ard-fhoillseachadh; trì pearsaibh na

Diadhachd gu bhi air an taisbeanadh gu ro-ghlormhor ; buadhan na Diadhachd gu bhi air an ardachadh ; slighibh agus oibribh Dhe gu bhi air an onorachadh. Bha an talamh gu bhi air a shaoradh, ifrinn gu bhi air a claidh, neamh gu bhi air a ceannach, an lagh gu bhi air ardachadh agus air a dhaingneachadh (Isa. xlii. 21). Iarrtas an lagha gu bhi air an coillionadh ; a mhallachdan gu bhi air an giulan. Mar so bha an lagh gu bhi air a riarachadh, an t-aingidh a bhrìst e gu bhi air a thearnadh, a bhuaireadair agus 'fhear-casaid gu bhi air a chur air theicheadh. Bha ceann na seann nathrach gu bhi air a bhruthadh ; 'oibribh gu bhi air an sgrios. Bha arduachdaranna agus cumhachdan an dorchadais gu bhi air an creachadh le buaidh-chaitheam thairis orra (Col. ii. 15). Bha cionfath ùr airson Aleluia shiorruidh gu bhi air fhaotainn le uachdaranna agus chumhachdan neamh, agus cuideachd ùr gu bhi 'g an seinn comhla riu. Bha na h-ainglibh a thuit gu bhi call an seann iochdarain, agus na h-ainglibh naomha gu luchd-comhbhaile ùra a chur ri'n aireamh. Cha'n ioghnadh e bhi air a radh-gu'r h-e so a bha deanadh neamh nuadh agus talamh nuadh ; bha eadhoin aghaidh ifrinn gu bhi air a h-atharrachadh. Gu cinnteach cha bu chomasach tionnsgnadh 'bu mho na so a dheilbh.

Agus mar is mo a bheachdaicheas sinn air 'na mheudachd fein, is ann is mo chi sinn do mheudachd a chath-tre an robh e air a choillionadh.

Oir anns an dara aite, mar bha an tionnsgnadh mor, bha gach ullachadh a bh'air a dheanadh air a shon, ro-sholuimte. Is ann air an talamh a bha e gu bhi air a dheanadh. Is ann aig an talamh a bha sarghnothuch ris ; agus bha e air ullachadh gu soluimte air a shon. Is e so a chithear anns 's na freasdalan a thainig air thoiseach air, rinn iad an saoghal freagarach airson an tionnsgnadh mhoir a bha gu tachairt ann an lanachd-na-h-aimsir. Na'm faicte leinn gu soilleir an t-iomlan do shlabhruidh nam freasdalan ud, chite an t-aomadh a bha aca uile 'g a ionnsuidh mar an ceann-uidhe ; agus mar a chuidich iad onoir a chur air ; no mar bu chubhaidh a radh-mar chuir an tionnsgnadh ud an onoir a b'airde orrasan. Tha an fhaistneachd a chaidh ainmeachadh ann an Daniel, a bharr air feadhain eile, 'n an samplair air so. Tha iad a nochdadh mar bha gach mor-chaochladh agus buaireas ceannairceach a thachair anns an t-saoghal fhineachail a frithealadh do'n tionnsgnadh so, agus gu sonruichte, eirigh-suas nan ceithir rioghachdan a th'air an toirt fa'r combhair ann am bruadar Nebuchadnesar. Fhritheil agus chuidich eirigh-suas agus dol sìos nan rioghachdan ud, togail suas na rioghachd so nach bi gu brath air a tilgeadh bun os ceann.

Cha leir dhuinne ach ro-bheag do shabhruidh an Fhreasdail ; agus eadhoin am beagan sin gu gle dhorchach. Ach is fiach e-madh'fhaodte, thoirt faineas gu h-aithghearr ; gu'r h-ann o'n Ear a thainig rioghachdan mora gus an Iar do'n t-saoghal—O na h-Asirianaich agus o na Persianaich a dh'ionnsuidh 'nan Greugach

agus nan Romhanach. Bha so 'na mheadhoin air cairdeas agus comh-chaidreamh fhosgladh suas eadar caochladh fhineachan an t-saoghail, o eirigh gu luidhe na greine. Bha an rioghachd a th'air a samhlachadh leis a chloich air a gearradh a mach as an t-sliabh, gu ruigheachd orra le cheile (Dan. ii. 34, 35).

(*Ri leantuinn.*)

Obituary.

CAPTAIN MACLEAN, EDINBURGH.

WE record this month with regret the decease of Captain Neil Maclean, 9 Danube Street, Edinburgh, which took place on the 8th February. The deceased, who had reached the advanced age of upwards of 90 years, was well-known as a generous supporter of the Free Presbyterian Church. He was a native of the island of Coll, went to sea in his youth, traded for a number of years along the coasts of Australia; and eventually retired from active life and took up his abode in Edinburgh upwards of 30 years ago. He was originally an adherent of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, but latterly was not formally connected with any particular Church. It may be said, however, that of all the Churches, the Free Presbyterian was the one to which he was most attached. He took a deep interest in its prosperity, regularly read its Magazine, and supported its schemes, especially those for building purposes. Mr. Maclean was a lover of the old paths, and could brook no deviation from the doctrine of the Confession of Faith or any innovation in worship. He was also, we have reason to think, a good man, and one that feared the Lord, though reticent in regard to personal experience. In his will he has bequeathed £1000 to the Rev. Mr. Macfarlane for behoof of the Free Presbyterian Church; while as evincing his desire for the spread of the Scriptures throughout the whole earth, he has left about £20,000 to the National Bible Society of Scotland. We trust that the money left to both purposes will be attended with the divine blessing, and help to further the cause of Christ in the world.

J. S. S.

Church News.

Legacy to the F.P. Church.—The Rev. Mr. Macfarlane, Raasay, has received notice from Messrs. Guild & Guild, W.S., Edinburgh, of a legacy of £1000 bequeathed to him for behoof of the Free Presbyterian Church, by Mr. Neil Maclean, 9 Danube Street, Edinburgh, who died on 8th February, and of whom we give a brief notice in this issue. The legacy is payable free of Government duties at the term of Martinmas next. Captain

Maclean's Trust Disposition and Settlement is dated 19th August, 1895, and the following is the section in reference to the above legacy:—"To the Rev. Donald Macfarlane, Raasay, for behoof of the religious body with which he is now connected and known as the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, for the general uses and purposes of said religious body, the sum of one thousand pounds sterling; said sum to be administered and applied by the said Donald Macfarlane and his successors in office, in accordance with the Constitution or Rules and Regulations of said religious body."

Acknowledgment of Donations.—The Rev. Neil Cameron desires to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following donations to the St. Jude's Building Fund:—£5 from a friend, through Mrs. J. Anderson, West Princes Street, Glasgow; £2 from two sympathising friends, through Mr. Angus Fraser; and 10s. from an anonymous donor in Inverness-shire. Mr. Cameron's address is 110 Hill Street, Garnethill, Glasgow.

Communions.—Farr, Sutherlandshire, 1st Sabbath of this month; Portree, 2nd.

Memoir of Rev. Mr. Macdonald.—Rev. Mr. Macfarlane, Raasay, has almost ready for the press a memoir of the late Rev. Mr. Macdonald, Shieldaig. It contains a number of interesting particulars of the beloved minister's life and history, and is bound to be read with great interest by Free Presbyterians and others. Further notice will be given in a future issue.

Notes and Comments.

Ritualists and the late Queen.—A requiem for the soul of the late Queen Victoria was sung in the Church of St. Matthew, Westminster, London, on the morning of the 4th February. This Popish service in an English Church did not pass off without protest. About thirty members of the Protestant Alliance were present. After the blessing had been pronounced, a gentleman stood up in the centre of the church, and said in a loud voice, "This is rank blasphemy; what we have seen this morning, my friends, is a blasphemous insult to the memory of Queen Victoria." Some other Protestants shouted—"This is a joss house," "This is the house of Baal," "This is blasphemy." It is stated that the service was sanctioned by the Bishop of London. Romanism has come in like a flood into the Church of England, and nothing less is needed than that the Spirit of the Lord would lift up a standard against this great enemy of God and man.

The Original Seceders and the Spirit of the Age.—When in the year 1733 the Commission of Assembly deposed

Ebenezer Erskine and the three protesting brethren for their faithful testimony against the error and despotism of the moderate party, the authors of that act made history with more effect than they were aware. They laid the foundation of the secession movement which soon acquired a national and even a world-wide importance. The course of that movement, though somewhat marred by a spirit of rash censure and doubtful disputation, was nevertheless not without signal tokens of the presence and blessing of the Great Head of the Church. Days of the Son of Man were experienced through the length and breadth of Scotland in connection with the ministrations of the Messrs. Erskine and their like-minded associates. M'Kerrow's history of the Secession is not a satisfactory book by reason of its excess of dry Presbyterian records and its defective account of the spiritual and inward side of the Church's history. Such humble literary efforts as the autobiography of Elizabeth Cairns of Stirling, and Marion Laird of Greenock give a better insight into the true wellsprings of the movement. Nevertheless such right-hearted persons as still remain in that Church may now reflect sadly upon the word of the apostle "Here have we no continuing city." The Church of their fathers is now, to all appearance, a wreck. So far back as the end of the eighteenth century, both the Burgher and Anti-burgher sections of the Secession were invaded by the spirit of the age in the shape of an epidemic of voluntary doctrine. This resulted in rents in both the bodies which left the faithful minorities very small. In 1820 these voluntary majorities joined and formed what became the United Presbyterian Church. In 1842 the two conservative sections also united and formed the original Secession Church which remains till this present. In 1852 a considerable number of original Secession members and people joined the Free Church, and since then the Church of Ebenezer Erskine has been small among the tribes of Israel. This last month the spirit of the age has made further havoc of their small numbers. Two prominent ministers, Rev. Messrs. Patrick of Glasgow and Aitken of Kirkintilloch, have intimated their severance from the body. The reason, of course, is that they find the place too strait, and they view with approbation and desire the broad pastures and well frequented highways of the United Church. The Kirkintilloch congregation has resolved by a majority of 64 against 10 to follow its pastor's lead into the communion of Principal Rainy and Professor George Adam Smith. They probably expect to solve some problems by this course, but if their ears were open they would hear a voice saying, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead."

A Scheme of Church Union.—The columns of the *Northern Chronicle* have been busy these last two months with enthusiastic proposals of union with the Established Church. A gentleman writing over the signature F.D., broached the idea in an early

December issue, that the Free and F.P. Churches should seek shelter under the broad wings of the mother Church. Since then various seconders of the proposal have been busy amending or defending the scheme. We very much dislike the function of turning on the cold water tap on any well meant effort to mend the present distracted state of Scottish Presbyterianism. Nevertheless it seems a real kindness to criticise with some force proposals so fanciful and visionary. We say then to F.D. and his associates that they do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the wisdom of God. A union between brethren long divided and scattered is one of the thoughts of God, and He has clearly indicated how He will accomplish it. For in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel we have a prophecy of the healing of the immemorial breach between Ephraim and Judah. "They shall become one in mine hand." But the sequence of events in the chapter is well to be marked. It is not till after He has caused a resurrection in the valley of dry bones that He promises a union of Judah and Ephraim. So the Divine scheme is life first, and then union. F.D.'s scheme is union first and then life. The same revelation of the Divine mind we have in Jer. l. 4, 5. There also we find Ephraim and Judah speaking to one another about a scheme of church union. But this is preceded by a revived sense of their apostacy from the God of Israel. No such conditions are in evidence at the present time. The Established Church is, in these days, a valley of dry bones. Anyone who views her condition otherwise has need to anoint his eyes with eyesalve. For the Free Presbyterian or the Free Church to merge themselves with the Establishment would be to destroy instead of strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die. Neither does the Established Church desire the fellowship of old-fashioned Presbyterians, whose usages and doctrines she has spurned. The present aloofness is best for all parties.

The late Professor Davidson.—There passed away at Edinburgh on the 26th January, Dr. A. B. Davidson, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages in the New College. The deceased, who was about 71 years of age, was appointed to the Hebrew Chair in 1863, as successor to the distinguished and beloved Dr. John Duncan. We regret to say, however, that while Professor Davidson was an able and accomplished scholar, he did not follow in the theological footsteps of his worthy predecessor, but earned for himself the ignoble distinction of being the pioneer of a new and pernicious method of interpreting the Old Testament in Scotland. As the father of the destructive Higher Criticism in this country, it will be difficult to estimate the injury he has done to the cause of sound truth in our midst. His amiable qualities as a man will by no means mitigate this. While such papers as the *British Weekly* and *British Monthly* abound, as might be expected, with unqualified eulogies of the deceased professor, we feel an obligation resting on us to tell what we

believe to be the whole truth about his views and teaching. Having studied under him, we are in a position to do this at first hand, and hope to give a more detailed sketch of the man, his theological ideas and methods in a future issue.—ED.

Petitions against Change in King's Declaration.—Mr. Mellor (Yorkshire, Sowerby) presented in Parliament on 25th February, a petition from the colony of Victoria, signed by 98,000 persons, which was read by the Clerk. The petitioners asked the House not to consent to the attempt being made to tamper with the statutory declaration required by the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement to be made by the Sovereign, as dangerous to the Protestant succession and the stability of the Throne, and fraught with great dangers to the civil, religious, and political liberties of the people. A large number of petitions, similarly worded, were also presented by Mr. Mellor from various towns in the Australasian colonies, from New Zealand and Tasmania, Canada, British Columbia, British Guiana, Windward Islands, Mauritius, China, Arabia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Barbadoes, Bermuda, various places in India, Singapore, Durban, and Pietermaritzburg, East London, Jerusalem, Paris, Dusseldorf, Vienna, Switzerland, some towns in Spain, &c., Christian colonies of the Zulus—total 144 petitions, with 520,543 signatures. From England the petitions were signed by 284,647, from Scotland by 51,197, from Ireland by 16,949, from Wales by 8676, and from the Channel Islands by 2309 persons. In the case of the petition from the Zulus, which was in the native language, Mr. Mellor said he had obtained and handed in a translation.

The Imprisoned Preacher.—Quite a sensation has been felt throughout the country at the imprisonment of the Rev. W. C. Macdougall, minister of Coatbridge West Free Church. Mr. Macdougall had been dealt with by the Free Church (previous to the union) under the Inefficiency Act, and had been asked to retire from office. This he refused to do, and continued to minister to his congregation as usual. The U.F. Church, however, took the case of the Church Buildings to the Court of Session, which Court decided in their favour. Recently an interdict was issued by the Court prohibiting Mr. Macdougall from the use of the church; but he has refused to obey the interdict. He was finally called to appear before the Court, when he declared his willingness to submit to sentence rather than yield in what he considered a point of principle. On the motion of Mr. Guthrie, K.C., legal representative of the U.F. Church, the judge passed sentence. The penalty was one month's imprisonment. We are not in a position, as yet, to give a decided opinion on all the points of this remarkable case, but it is our impression that Mr. Macdougall has not been fairly dealt with. If he had been a Higher Critic instead of a Constitutionalist, we believe he would have been very differently treated.