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The Leading Ideas of the Higher Criticism

S our reeaders are well aware, there is a subtle and determined attempt at the present time on the part of what are called the Higher Critics to overthrow the infallible truth of the Bible. They profess great love for the sacred Book, and do not hesitate to speak of it as the Word of God, and yet all the while they are engaged in a work which robs it of its divine glory, and reduces it to a level lower than that of many purely human compositions. They have the unhallowed boldness to affirm that many parts of the Old Testament set forth nothing but myths and legends. This infidel assertion casts a slander upon every part of the sacred volume. For the Bible is not a confused collection of detached pieces of literature; it is a And, moreover, the Critics issue their marvellous unity. unwarrantable theories in defiance of the infallible testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God and supreme Teacher of the Church, who has declared that the Old Testament, from beginning to end, is the very Word of God. And still these Critics want to be considered loyal to Christ. They may be loyal to a Christ of their own imaginations, but they are not so to the true Christ of God.

It is our present purpose to point out some of the leading ideas of this pernicious form of Bible Criticism, which is strengthening the natural infidelity of the human heart in the case of

multitudes at the present time.

I. The first of these ideas we observe is a disbelief in the supernatural. We do not say that this is distinctly avowed, but the disbelief manifests itself, all the same, in its fruits. The Higher Critics look askance at every incident in the Old Testament that cannot be accounted for by the common laws of nature. If they cannot wholly deny the reality of these miraculous events, they will suggest that there was nothing supernatural in them, but that they were due to purely natural causes. For example, they declare that Moses in his use of the rods excelled

in magical skill the Egyptian soothsayers, and that Elijah was a "wild worker by fire and water." It is quite apparent that the rationalism which so strongly dominates men of science in our day has got in among theological scholars and teachers. bring to the Bible not the far-seeing eye of living faith in an almighty, wonder-working God, but the limited vision of carnal reason, which cannot penetrate beyond the material and the natural. No wonder, then, that the remarkable record of God's supernatural dealings with His Church in the Old Testament has lost its reality for them, and has become in their puny estimation a collection of stories that originated in the imagination of ancient It is the distinguishing glory of the Bible, as compared with other writings, that it is a supernatural book. It is the voice of the great God to fallen men, and they who endeavour to rob it of its heavenly character are doing their best to stop communication between heaven and earth, and to deprive perishing souls of the words of eternal life.

2. A second idea that pervades the Higher Criticism is a belief in the erroneous theory of evolution. The Critics may not trumpet forth in every page their praise of this theory, they may not even mention it at all, but much of their criticism is regulated by a regard to it. Evolutionists hold that man did not spring into existence by an immediate act of creation, but is the result of a slow process of development from a primordial germ upwards through the lower animals. This theory, unwarrantable enough in the physical sphere, is introduced by the Critics into the sphere of religion. They affirm that man's ideas of God and the spiritual world were very crude and gross at the beginning. When he began to think of these important subjects, he was an untutored savage. He believed at one time in many deities, and it was only by a very gradual process that he came to have exalted notions of a Divine Being, and attained an intelligent belief in one God over all. They profess to see this process carried on in the history of Israel. For example, they regard the age of Moses as a rude and barbarous one, and Moses as no more enlightened than Mohammed. They then set to work to account for the spiritual and evangelical passages that are found in the writings of Moses. The result is that they boldly aver that these passages were not written by Moses at all, but by later writers who inserted them in his works. In this way they have had the audacity to say that the Book of Deuteronomy is a great speech put in the mouth of Moses by a later writer, just as Shakespeare puts a great speech into the mouth of one of his heroes. This idea of the insertion of passages in the composition of books by later writers under the name of others of an earlier date is thoroughly immoral, and discloses the distinctly defective conscience of those who have imagined it. Besides, it is entirely incompatible with the facts, and involves a moral monstrosity absolutely unrealisable. The man, for example,

who wrote Deuteronomy was filled with the Spirit of God in no ordinary degree, as is manifest from the exalted truths to which he gives utterance. Now, it is morally impossible that this man, who was so richly endowed with the Holy Spirit of God who cannot lie, should write a lie upon every page of the book in ascribing, according to this theory, to Moses what was never spoken or written by him. The Critics forbid us to believe that Moses, the man of God, who was admitted into such intimate communion with his Creator, was the writer of Deuteronomy, a most probable thing in the circumstances, and they ask us to believe that the writer of it was a man who lived long afterwards, and who stamped his book from beginning to end with a Goddishonouring lie. The Higher Critics consider themselves the only apostles of reason, but this is reason with a vengeance. We say it is moral insanity that no honest, illiterate peasant would be capable of. Such, then, is the outcome of the evolutionary theory as applied to the Old Testament. Again, they have surely gone far astray in affirming that the chosen people were, to be begin with, like the heathen nations around them, believers in many gods, and in the Lord Jehovah as one among the many. do not deny for a moment but there was a tendency on the part of the unspiritual people in Israel to lapse into idolatry, but it is also as clear as a moonbeam that the chosen race had a distinct revelation from the beginning of the one living and true God, and that this was the important mark which distinguished them from their heathen neighbours. Undoubtedly they believed that the Lord Jehovah was their God in a special covenanted sense, but they also believed that all the gods of the heathen were dumb idols. The idea that the ancient people of God were at any time in their religious opinions on the same level with the heathen is a pure concoction of the Critics' brains, and has no warrant from the sacred history. In fact, we find that the best authorities on the ancient religions of the world have come to the conclusion that the records of all these religions distinctly point to the fact that the first form of religion was the purest, and was characterised by a belief in only one God over all. Monotheism was the original religion; polytheism is a subsequent and degenerate system. This well-grounded opinion entirely overturns the evolutionary theory of the Higher Critics.

3. The last feature of the Higher Criticism we meantime notice is its perverse conclusions from minor difficulties. It is the opinion of sound divines that the Scriptures are perfectly plain and perspicuous on all matters pertaining to sin and salvation, on man's relation to God and God's relation to man; but it is also their opinion that there are passages here and there, both historical and doctrinal, that present some difficulty in being understood. The Bible is not as plain as the multiplication table, but that does not make it any less the book of God. In fact, it would be the marvellous thing if the Divine Book should

present no difficulty of any kind to the reader. Now, on the minor : difficulties the Higher Critics stumble. They cannot understand this, and they cannot understand that; but instead of pursuing their researches in the sacred writings with patience, judiciously comparing passage with passage, and waiting for divine light and driection into the truth, they sit down and cut and carve these writings to suit their own ideas. of taking up a more reverential attitude towards the Scriptures, they become quite irreverent and presumptuous, and take liberties with it that they would not dare to take with any other book. As we have already shown on the subject of the evolution theory, they take upon themselves to affirm that passages have been inserted by other writers than those whose names appear. Moses didn't write this; David didn't compose that; passages are inserted in Amos and Hosea that they themselves could not be the authors of. The fact of the matter is that such bold and absurd handling of books composed many hundreds of years ago, and that possess the stamp of God's oracles upon them, would seem only possible to the profanest infidels and The conclusions that are thus drawn from passages not easily understood are fitted to turn the whole Bible into a confused jumble of unreliable records of which nothing can be surely believed. Of course, webelieve the Critics make hundreds of difficulties for themselves, but their way of getting out of them is the way of rationalistic unbelief, not of God-honouring faith. Their view of the Old Testament-some of them have carried the same pernicious principles into the New-is entirely inconsistent with what is known of its history in ancient times. Jews were most jealous of the sacred records; they guarded the oracles of God from interference with uncommon care and zeal, But what care the Critics for the historical testimony of the Jewish people, unto whom were committed the oracles of God They will believe nothing but their own irrational theories. They are captivated with the dreams of their own imaginations. a modicum of theological learning seasoned with pride and irreverence is the most intoxicating opiate that ever upset the reason and stupefied the conscience of intelligent men.

In conclusion the question may be asked, How is it that men, brought up in the Christian Church, some of them under very godly influences, should adopt the principles of infidelity, and yet continue professed lovers of the Bible and zealous servants of Christ? The only adequate explanation of these circumstances, in our opinion, is that embodied in the words of the inspired apostle: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." Men may be brought up in the best of homes and acquire a certain esteem of the Bible and Christ, and yet remain ignorant of the new birth and of saving illumination by the Holy Spirit. The same

apostle has a very weighty and solemn passage in reference to men who in his own time appeared to be zealots for Christianity and yet were not true servants of Christ, but emissaries of the Prince of darkness. He says: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor. xi. 13-15). With these remarks we leave the subject at the present time.

A Sermon.

By the Rev. C. C. Mackintosh, D.D., of Tain and Dunoon.

MANASSEH.

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign," etc.—2 Chron. xxxiii. 1.20; 2 Kings xxi. 1-18.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."—Rom. xv. 4.

UCH solemn and important instruction is to be learned from the life of Manasseh, and God's dealings with him.

He was the son of a man who was distinguished for personal piety, and who was eminently honoured of God; 2 one who must have been exemplary as a father and as the head of the household.3 And it is a high privilege to have such a father, involving in it deep responsibility. But his father was removed when he was but twelve years of age. This, in any circumstances, would have been a terrible blow, but more especially when, at so early an age, he was to occupy the arduous and dangerous station of King of Judah. What particular influences were at work to ensnare and corrupt him we are not informed. But if Hezekiah had been pre-eminent for piety, the son proved pre-eminent for wickedness. "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel," and the evil is specified with fearful minuteness.4 He began by insulting his father's memory and his father's God, by "building again the high places which Hezekiah had broken down." And, as though this had been a small matter, he proceeded to establish idolatry, rearing up altars to Baalim, and worshipping all the hosts of heaven; experiencing the vanity of his idols, but endeavouring to make up by their number for their vanity. He profaned the name and the house of God, and set God at defiance, building altars in the house of the Lord and in the two courts of the house of the Lord for all

² 2 Kings xviii. 3-6. ³ Ps. ci. 2; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9:

⁴ Ver. 2-10.

the host of heaven, and setting a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God. He was guilty of the most revolting cruelty as a father, causing his children to pass through the fire in honour of the idol Moloch. He made a covenant with hell, abandoning himself to the most degrading superstition. made Judah and Israel to sin, and he shed innocent blood very much till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other. And all this was aggravated by his being the son of such a father, and by his being King of Judah, where God was known; by past judgments of God against the wickedness of rulers and people; by his long continuance in sin; and by the solemn warnings which he received and despised—for "the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people, but they would not hearken." This whole description presents the character of an outrageous, hardened sinner, past fear, feeling, or shame. And who would expect anything else than that such a heaven-defying sinner, after filling up the measure of his iniquity, would be driven away in his wickedness.

But "the Lord brought unto them the captains of the host of the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his king-Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." He was afflicted and his affliction was sanctified. The severest affliction has indeed no power in itself to bring the sinner to his right mind. No doubt there are some things which a sinner must see and feel in the time of sore affliction; for example, the vanity of the world, the misery of being without true hope in God, the bitterness of sin: but all this may be seen and felt, and yet the heart be the more hardened and closed up against The fetters and the dungeon, the change from outward greatness and power to misery, disgrace, and ruin, might have produced in Manasseh the repentance of a Cain or a Judas; but without grace this would have been all. However, in the Lord's hand, and in connection with His word, affliction proves efficacious for breaking the stubborn heart and humbling the stoutest sinner. And the Lord often makes precious use of it, and begins a precious work with such painful dealing.

How long he may have remained stupified and sullen under the hand of God, a prey to the workings of tumultuous passions, endeavouring as he could to endure what he could not resist, or brought down and terrified without being humbled; what a hell may have been felt in his breast when he had but his own heart to commune with and a God whom he still strove to forget; or what temptations to self destruction he may have been visited with in this situation we know not. But it pleased the Lord in His sovereign mercy, to visit him, and, instead of leaving him under the dominion of a reprobate mind, to let in so much light on his dark understanding as made the existence, the presence, and the nearness of the one living and true God real to him. was then a truth that God is; the God of the Bible, the Creator, the great and terrible God who had spoken from Mount Sinaithe God of his fathers. He felt His presence; with Him he had to do; against Him he had been sinning and contending for a Conscience now awakened from its long sleep; and what a charge had it to bring against him! Sin began to be seen in its true colours. Memory wakened up. His past life was before his view. The instructions received in childhood were remembered by him. The image of his godly father stood before him, and the images of the souls he had slain. What had he been doing on God's earth till now? Oh! how infatuated had he been! How truly had he approved himself a child of the devil!

Oh, had he but life to live over again, with its precious years to be redeemed for God, its blessed opportunities for glorifying God! But that cannot be. What would he now give to efface the black catalogue of his sins? But there they were in God's book, and in the book of conscience too, in all their enormity and inexcusableness and aggravations, charged with the wrath of the Almighty. Where shall he look for comfort? The arrows of the Almighty are already within him; he is in the hands of an angry God, a God who has often reproved him, while he has hardened

his neck.

Must he then become a vessel of wrath? Must he spend a never-ending existence in cursing the day of his birth? of the dungeon, he sink into the abyss of hell, he feels that he must carry with him the conviction that he will suffer justly. How often has God called and he refused? how often has God stretched out His hand and he has not regarded? May He not then now "laugh at his calamity and mock at his fear?" oh! if what he apprehends of the wrath of the Almighty and the agonies of a guilty conscience be so insupportable, what will the full experience of the wrath be?—to lie down in everlasting burn-See the change which the letting in of the truth on the mind (the truth about God and sin) has wrought in the proud, hardened, remorseless man! See how his knees smite together, and how dismay may be read in his countenance, while he expects almost momentarily the execution of the sentence in force against him!

Is there then no hope? Is he falling into black despair? and is this the terrible sight that our eyes witness, that we may take warning? Is Satan right when he says, "Faithfully has thou served me during a lifetime; now thou art mine for ever. Never did I lose at the eleventh hour one who had served me as thou

hast done!"

Adored be the grace that kept Manasseh from despair! The Friend of Sinners was in that dungeon, in the exercise of the love

which, in the fulness of the time, was to be poured out on the accursed tree. It was written in His Word, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Surely Hezekiah would have sought to imprint these words on the heart of the child: they may have come to his mind now. And it was also written there, "If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." 2 There was, then, nothing too hard or too rich for such a God. wondrous, beyond conception, the patience that had been exercised towards him year after year! If there were such riches in His forbearance, what untold and unsearchable riches must there be in His saving mercy! Might it not then be that even sins like his might be pardoned, a polluted wretch like him be cleansed, and a rebel such as he had ever been be reconciled? Who could tell what such a God could do? And was there not a prayer suited for such a case as his? "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; FOR IT IS GREAT."3

His pent-up feelings gave themselves expression in a new way. Rivers of waters run down his eyes, while he prostrates himself before God. "Behold, he prayeth!" Solemn, blessed sight!the chief sinner making confession; free confession, no longer wrung from him; confession which must be made, though the Lord should cast him from His sight; full confession, without any reserve or attempt at self-justification; particular confession—his sins crowding upon him or kept before him as past reckoning, in all their aggravations as against light and privileges and obligations and dealings and warnings, as against God-and such a God. Condemning himself as a beast, a devil-as deserving of the lowest hell; humbling himself before God, the Holy One, in whose sight the heavens are not clean; humbling himself "greatly" before the God of his fathers; crying with groanings that cannot be uttered; yet making supplication for mercy and for a heart to turn to the Lord; and making supplication too, that, if it were consistent with the Divine glory, not only might his sins be pardoned and his nature renewed, but that he might be restored to the place and country where he had so long dishonoured God and been a soul murderer, that he might bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and weep in sackcloth before his people, and endeavour to awaken them to a sense of the wickedness of the courses to which he had seduced them.

He prayeth: but oh! how little has he confessed! He must pray again. How faint, comparatively, is his sense of sin, how wretchedly inadequate is his humiliation! He must pray again. How unspeakably precious the blessings which he seeks! How can he rest one hour without reconciliation to God? And dare

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 6. ² Deut. iv. 29. ³ Ps. xxv. 11.

he after all hope that God will hear His cry; that he shall ever know Him as the God of peace on earth, or stand in His holy place above? Surely not for his prayers' sake dare he cherish any hope. Yet mercy he will seek, and at His footstool will he now be found.

Behold, then, he prayeth! Amidst temptations and discouragements, he still prayeth; with a deepening sense of sin, of his own sinfulness and desert of wrath, and of the pollution of his prayers, he still prayeth. While there is no present response, while his burden increases and while the hope that had entered his breast is almost ready to expire—for it is hard to pray while there is no

present answer-he still waits for God.

And God's time came, whether after days or weeks or months, for making Himself known as the Hearer of his cry. The Lord "was entreated of him." For He delighted in mercy; there is forgiveness with Him for "all manner of sin and blasphemy"—for all sin confessed in Christ's name; and He is the hearer of prayer. He cannot deny Himself. He delivered him from his fears, spoke peace to his soul, and took him out of the fearful pit. He said, "Deliver from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." Not only so, but He brought him again to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. This was indeed special mercy—to give him some little time on earth for manifesting the depth of his repentance, and for glorifying God, by making confession and by seeking to turn others from the errors of their ways.

"Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God." When in affliction, He had known Him in His power and holiness and jealousy; He now knew Him in His grace, in which His glory specially appears. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy." And he brought forth fruits meet for repentance, walking humbly with his God, establishing His true worship, and exercising his authority for the suppression of all idolatry. And these efforts were accepted, and, in some measure,

acknowledged by God.

Yet we read, after all the reformation wrought by Josiah, "Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem, which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there." Thus Manasseh had sealed the temporal ruin of the land, while he was plucked as a brand from the burning. Thus may a hardened sinner obtain mercy, and souls whom he has tempted and led in the way to destruction be left to

¹ Ps. xxiv. 3. 4. ² Micah vi. 18. ³ 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

perish. An awful truth, yet a truth; and unless this were the case, "who could be saved?" for who, by his sins of commission or omission, has not been in God's sight a murderer of the souls of others? But what an overwhelmingly affecting consideration to the child of God, that while he has obtained mercy, others, perhaps far less guilty than he, whom he may have been instrumental in hardening, have been left.

We do not know how many years he lived after his return from Babylon. We cannot doubt that he loved much, and, even while rejoicing in the grace that could gloriously pardon and transform such a sinner, sorrowed much. Nor would he feel it necessary to conceal his sadness; for his case was an extraordinary one-all the land ought to know what reason he had for being of a sad countenance; and it is probable that it was by his own desire that he was buried, not in the sepulchres of the kings, but in his own

garden.

The lessons to be learned from this subject are such as these:—

1. The wickedness of the heart—not of Manasseh's heart only, but of ours—no outward means, or privileges, or providences, will of themselves avail to change it. We learn, too, how "one sinner destroyeth much good "-a lesson specially applicable, indeed, to one in a station of much influence, but also generally applicable. It is easy to do evil in this evil world; but it is hard to do good: it is a continual working against the stream.

2. Be anxious to improve the time of affliction. Has it surprised you in your sins? Oh! entreat the Lord to have mercy upon you, lest you should be taken away with a stroke, or lest, while outwardly delivered, you be left more hardened than before. other hand, is it as a child you are corrected? Receive the evil of affliction as from a loving Father, who chastens you for your

profit.

3. Let us learn the superabounding character of the grace of God; its power to take away the stoniest heart, its riches to make the guiltiest sinner white as snow. Who would not have said, "What an awful reckoning with his Judge awaits the man!" yet the Lord had mercy on him. The last was made first. then, of self-righteousness. God saved Manasseh for His name's sake; and if He saves you it will be for no other reason. Have you been preserved from open sin? give God the glory: but take care lest you stand on your good character in the presence of your Judge, and it fare with you as with the Pharisee in our Saviour's parable. But turn not His grace into lasciviousness. case, like that of the dying thief, is an altogether singular one. How few hardened sinners are converted, how few who lose the time of youth are converted! "To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." And let us not despair of the salvation of very unlikely characters. Is there one over whom you have been grieving, whose case you have been trying to keep on your spirit at a throne of grace. but of whom you are ready to lose hope altogether? Think of Manasseh. Think of the grace in which there are exceeding riches. Faint not in prayer. God's thoughts are not our thoughts." There are last which shall be first

4. Let us improve the subject, as a remedy against despairing thoughts in regard to our own salvation.

There may be many of my hearers who have no felt need of such an exhortation, because they have light views of sin, of God and of salvation. The Lord look down in mercy upon them, and awaken them to a sense of the straitness of the gate ere they be left without for ever. There may be others who have a constant feeling of uneasiness and insecurity arising from an unpurged conscience, while at the same time they cleave to sin and feel as though it were hopeless to expect to be delivered from it. When conscience at any time speaks louder than at other times, the tempter whispers, "There is no hope;" and, loving their idols, they continue to follow them. Oh! this is an awfully dangerous condition. If there is any one of my hearers who realises it as his own, I would warn him against the snare of the devil. There is no hope if he continue to drown the voice of conscience, and to refuse to know the worst of his case; but there is hope in the blood and grace of Christ; and if he perish, it will not be because Christ's blood could not cleanse him, and because Christ's grace could not humble and sanctify him, but because he would not prove Christ, and would choose death. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

But the child of God, the Christian, needs this exhortation too. He may now have "peace;" he may come yet to be in deep waters. "When God giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him?"

There was an eminent saint, an eminent minister of Christ now in glory, who in his dying sickness was sorely exercised in regard to the state of his soul. The enemy thrust sore, and he was brought very low. His sins possessed him, God's face was hid from him, and hope had well-nigh expired. While in this anguish of spirit, one night he dreamed a dream. He was not one of those who put any trust in impressions or in dreams apart from the law and the testimony. But God can still make use of this means for instruction and for admonition. He dreamed that he saw heaven opened, and a company approach and go in, and the door was shut. In this company he beheld Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and many of the Old Testament saints, and some

whom he himself had known; but he could not get in along with them. There was a pause, and again the door was opened, and again a company approached, and in this company he knew many; but he could not get in along with them, and he began to tremble exceedingly. A third time the door was opened, and another company approached, and they went in one after another; and terror began to seize upon him, and his knees smote one against another; when all at once, looking round, he saw Manasseh—Manasseh who had made Jerusalem to stream with blood: "and," said the dying saint, "I crept in at Manasseh's back." Thus he found peace, and thus he died, having nothing to trust to but this—but it was enough—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," even the chief.

Outlines of Sermons

By the Late Rev. John Sinclair, Bruan, Caithness.

Preached on September 1st, 8th, and 22nd, 1839. (Continued from Vol. VI., p. 308).

'Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, xcept a a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—John iii. 3.

HE marks that have been given of those who have been born again are:—1. They do not commit sin. 2. They have a new principle of life and new strength. can be no good thought without this. They have a new rule! there is no peace without this. They are made fools in themselves. A Christian without the Word is the greatest fool ever you met; he knows not what to do in spirituals or temporals; he is a man without eyes. They have a new end. The divine glory lies near their heart. They are not satisfied with self-praise if God is not glorified in word, or relation, or ordinance. Self is the burden of their soul, instead of being their god. 3. They overcome the world. They are soldiers; Christ is their captain of salvation. Their armour is spiritual—the Word and the Spirit. They are more than conquerors, they are spoilers, they trample the enemy under foot. Their Captain holds their hand; He teaches them to war; to break bows of steel in pieces, and to overleap a wall.

1. They overcome the wicked one. Satan's armour is taken away. (1) The Lord takes away the lying spirit that is in their hearts, and makes them to believe and receive the love of the truth that they may be saved. (2) He takes away a guilty conscience by the blood of Christ. (3) He takes off Satan's shoes. These are of iron, to tread on the blood of Christ. He puts on the preparation of the gospel of peace in faith and

practice. He takes away a prayerless spirit and puts on concern, never to be put off. The sinner is a concerned, preparing man now. (4) The Lord takes away unbelief of law and gospel. The unbelief of the former tended to ease; that of the latter, to despair. The threatening is urging on the sinner, the promise is drawing him. (5) The Lord takes away the "no hope" of those This is a powerful piece of Satan's armour. who are fearful. "There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go" (Jerem. ii. 25). "There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every man do the imagination of his evil heart" (Jerem. xviii. 12). When this hopelessness comes in, it is one of Satan's masterpieces, whether the person be under concern or not. Satan tries to keep the person in ease, or to drive him to despair. Now, the Lord gives hope, though it may be hardly seen; He keeps up an expectation in the soul, a peradventure, a "Who can tell?" which keeps the soul seeking. O, how poor the creature is when this is for a moment out of sight! (6) The Lord takes away blank deism. He sends the Word, and teaches them to use it. It is the sword of the Spirit. In short, he takes away the stony heart, and then Satan's armoury is spoiled to him.

When Satan's armour is spoiled, his power as a prince is gone. He had nothing in Christ, and by that he loses his power in They now disobey his commandments, refuse his tribute-money, and renounce his service and army. They have another Captain now. And then as a god he loses his worship. They do not call on his name. Formerly they would be swearing by his name, and by the name of God at his order. They do not worship the golden image he has set up, the world which he calls his. They need a Saviour for their souls. Their eyes are now so open that the whole world cannot fill them. (1) Has he had his captivity in you overcome? Does he run away with you in morning and at night? Does he run away with you on the Sabbath from the Church? And does he take you away from the people of God? (2) Has his armour been taken from him? Have you ceased lying, or is there a lie in your right hand? Have you got on the breastplate of righteousness, faith, and love? Have your feet been shod with the active preparation of the gospel? Have you the shield of faith, the shield of promises and threatenings? Have you for a helmet the hope of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit? Can you work without the latter? (3) Is Satan, as a friend, cast out of you? Are his law, tribute, service, war abandoned? Or are you on his pension list? (4) Have you given up his worship as a god? Do you pray to him, and can he say, "I am thy god"? Oh, horrible!

2. They overcome the men of the world. They overcome them in their doctrine. If you are in a religious family, you will be feeling it hard to keep up with them; if in an irreligious family, you will be examining their views. "Try the spirits whether they

are of God." Many children are in danger of being ruined by the doctrine of their parents, and the world, their neighbours. Happy they who are not. They overcome the world in their "I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil-doers, and will not sit with the wicked" (Psalm xxvi. 4, 5). God is dishonoured, and their souls are hurt. They overcome the world in their fashions. "Be not conformed to this world." They do not dress for fashion's sake, but only are not quite singular. They will not conform a hair of their head to please a person who is after the fashions; when in part they do so they will suffer in soul, and often in body. They overcome the world in their threats. So did Daniel and the three children. This is not easy. They overcome them in their favours. Balaam cannot go beyond his commission, but willingly would to gain the favour of the world; but David says, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

3. They overcome what is in themselves. "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (John iii. 16). Sept. 8th.—We have mentioned three marks of the new birth.

1. They do not commit sin. 2. They do righteousness. 3. They overcome the world.

In speaking of the last—the overcoming of the lust of the flosh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—we made a distinction between sin crucified and sin mortified. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Not shall, but have crucified. They are commanded also to mortify sin, to put it to death. This is the evidence of having crucified it. "Mortify, therefore, your members." "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." This shows that if sin is not being mortified, there is no evidence of its having been crucified by faith in Christ; and that unless sin be mortified, it will mortify us.

Now, if sin has been mortified several things are true:—(1) It has been discovered to be a traitor, a malefactor. Many acknowledge, but do not believe they are sinners. But when the Spirit comes He convinces, proves, demonstrates sin to be exceeding sinful. He shows not only that great sins will condemn us, but that all sin is hateful in its very nature. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (2) Sin has been tried as in a court of justice. The guilty person has been tried by the holy law. The commandment comes; he is found guilty and condemned. The sentence must be executed; either sin must be crucified, or the man must suffer. (3) Sin is given up. It is given up with the whole heart and soul. Now, "Of Thy mercy, slay my foes." Then all sin is put on the Cross: sins of omission as well as sins of commission. "One thing thou lackest." All sins now are burdens. Now, the great aim is to get sin dead,

mortified. If it is not slain by the Cross, it will be a mark of reprobation. Temptation will return, but sin is now horrible. It is like a ghost returning which is more dreadful than when the person was alive. Questions: Has sin been found? Has it been tried? Has it been condemned? Has it been crucified? Is it now mortifying? Is it horrible? Is it terrible to us?

4. The fourth mark is love. "Everyone that loveth is born of God" (1 John, 4-7). We are told at verse 8 and 16 that "God is love." It is His very nature to love, as if there was nothing in Him but love. Indeed, He loves in heaven, because all there are holy; He loves on earth what is holy; He loves in hell His justice. He loved from eternity the Son and the Spirit. He hates nothing but sin. He loves holiness and holy persons. They that are born again have the nature of their Father. This love belongs equally to the three Persons of the Godhead. The Father's love appears in giving the Son to be a propitiation for sins; the Son's love in dying to take away sins; the Spirit's love in applying for such a purpose the precious blood of the Son. This love is full of mystery, God giving up His Son for loathsome creatures lying in their blood in the open field of nature.

None have love to God until it is put in them. "Hateful, and hating one another" is the character of all by nature. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. xx. 6). Thus, the possession of this love is a sure evidence of the new birth, as none have it but from the Lord. He is one flame of love, and out of that all true love comes. It is in order to bring sinners back to His image that Christ came to save, more than merely to save them

from punishment.

(1) Those who are born again love the Father. They are said to "love God and keep His commandments." Now, in this particular, it is very difficult to attain to proof and to satisfy conscience. God is so exalted. No man hath seen Him at any time. faith brings a report of Him from the Word, and in this way they come to love Him. Keeping His commandments is loving His commandments, when it proceeds from love to their holiness as reflecting His image. This is, therefore, an evidence of love to Himself, as if we had seen Him. Examine yourself then on the ten commandments in their spirituality, and see whether you love God or not. The Holy Ghost writes the commandments on every newborn soul, and hen the soul begins to love God and keep His commandments. (2) Theylove the Son, "Whom, having not seen, yelove; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory" (1 Peter i. 8). They can get nearer the Son in human nature, yet their apparently greater love to the Son will not offend the Father, for He speaks as if He Himself had additional love to Him in His humanity—"Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might

take it again." (3) They love the Spirit. They show this in weariness of their own spirit, and in grieving for having grieved the Holy Spirit. (4) They love the Lord's Day, And this, because it is the most holy day. They call the Sabbath a delight. Why do they not do so always? Because of the lack of holiness. Yet they have drops of grief for their weariness of the Sabbath. Would you love the Sabbath if you got sin mortified, your case cleared, more life in your soul, and the world cast out? (5) They love the Word. "O, how I love Thy law!" It is the most holy book; therefore, they love it. Do you love the places in the Bible which reprove sin? They read it oftener than other books, for they find life in it. Those who prefer profane books have no mark unless it is that they are of the devil. (6) They love the people of God. They love them because they are a holy people. They love them according to the proportion of holiness that is seen in them. They love them even when they reprove, when they smite, and when they seem to give no credit to themselves. Notice Paul's spirit in connection with some of his converts-"And I will very gladly spend, and be spent, for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. xii. 15). They lament that the people of God are so few in their own time. They do good to the household of faith, because they belong to Christ. (7) They have love to all. They cry with the woman of Samaria, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" Would you not wish to see sinners brought to holiness, and then to heaven? Do you like to see grace in others more than in yourself? And do you take shame to yourself for the want of it? Do you warn sinners out of love, praying for a blessing? Or do you curse them to death? Would you be willing to part with anything to save them, or to take any trouble for saving them? This love includes a hatred to everything unholy in self and in others. Are you thinking about your own family, your neighbours, people passing on the road? Are you thinking about the nation? If we profess to love God, do we keep His commandments? If we profess to love Christ, what hatred have we of sin and of self? If we profess to love the Holy Spirit, what about our own spirit? If we profess to love the Sabbath, what of our hearts on that day? If the Bible, what do we think of our breaking the word? If the people of God, what of ourselves beside them? If we profess to love all men, what do we pray for on their behalf?

5. The last mark of the new birth we intend to give is, believing Jesus to be Christ. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John, v. 1). Also, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John, iv. 15). This was the first doctrine Paul preached after Christ appeared to him with power, and was revealed in him—"And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix. 20). This was the confession of

Peter's faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). This was also the confession of Martha, the Ethiopian eunuch, Andrew, and Nathaniel. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Anointed One is born of God. He said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins;" and also, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

It was usual in Old Testament times to anoint prophets, priests, and kings with very precious oil. Elisha, Aaron, David, Solomon, Joash, and others were thus anointed. Christ was never anointed with material oil; He was anointed with the Holy Ghost (Acts x. 38). This is a most precious anointing, showing that He was fully qualified for His great work. The eternal God the Spirit rests on the Mediator. As such, He made a day of Pentecost; and He is still the maker of all true revivals. Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, equal with the Father, the express image of His person, the brightness of His glory, having all the attributes of God, and therefore able to save to the uttermost.

Letters of John Sutherland, Badhea,

To DAVID STEVEN, BOWER.

(III.)

BADBEA, 6th March, 1845.

My DEAR FRIEND,—I received your kind and much esteemed favour, and I am glad that you were not confined, as I was dream-

ng about you in sleep and awake.

I am not to mention any particulars, but to say that of His long forbearance I am in the body yet; after all my provocations, He bears with such a barren tree. Glory to Him who is called Jesus, who is saying, "Spare the sinner till I dig and dung about him with divers trials and chastenings." This was the case with poor me from my youth, but still when He seeks fruit there is none but wild grapes of mourning and fretting at His holy dispensations towards me. I am "as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." Though I am in the school of affliction from youth, I am like the fig tree, having leaves, but no fruit. O, to be preserved from the curse, for after that it soon withered away, and the disciples beheld I am in danger to be in that condition, though you said in your letter (and so do other friends that know me not) that I was a happy man. If following the means of grace from my childhood would make me happy, I might be what I am not. But I feel it grieving me when I reflect on my way in the valley all my lifetime, and look to my steps in every tract of life, and have to say, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of sin?" I see to my sad experience that I was doing nothing all my

lifetime with my profession, but fostering and making my corrupt nature fatter, to bring forth wild weeds, and Satan's seed getting

more root and more strength.

I envied you in many respects, and in that I am sure your labour was blessed to many, and your example. But for me, Satan will cast in my teeth that there was not a word that ever came out of my mouth that was blessed to any, although it is now nearly forty years since I have been making a noise in this house about the things of which I am so ignorant. Oh, to have a hold on the one thing needful! Oh, to get faith to lay hold of the Father's Beloved!

I am grieved to hear that that eminent witness in this dark day is so low—I mean, William Macbeath. O, to be in his coat or room going to eternity! I heard by a letter from Castletown that he is a little better, and we have much need that the Most High would spare him. It is written in connection with one, "He was sick nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow! And so we may say of worthy William.

Dear friend, you sympathised with me always in inquiring about my body and circumstances. You did not spare your means in looking after this Church, but I hope it is of the Lord's doing. It is in your day the Church was to be built. This Disruption came on so rapidly, but the generation that will come after will get good

of it.

My afflicted sister is spared, but still in the furnace. My love to you. O think of me in secret moments. Best wishes to A. Stewart and your sister. Please write me when you can, for I am lonely.—I am, your attached friend, John Sutherland.

(IV.)

BADBEA, 6th August, 1847

My Dearly Beloved Friend,—I am ashamed of my long delay in writing you, but I am slow in every Christian duty. Many a letter was my mind writing you on my languishing bed. I can say conscientiously that yourself and Donald Mackay were my

companions in my tribulation.

I went to Lybster when the Sacrament was there. I had great hopes of meeting you there, but was disappointed you could not come. I had a great desire to be with them at the Reay Sacrament, if the Lord would countenance me and my soul's faculties. I went to Reay, and had a great desire to see you there; was making myself sure that I would have that pleasure; but I did not. George Macleod, Dalnaha, told me he was at your house when the Sacrament was at Bower, and that you were not able to counten-

¹ The discerning reader will understand this self-scrutiny and self-condemnation.—ED.

ance the reading Sabbath nights owing to the frailness of your body. I hope you are able to be with them just now at Olrig or at Watten.

John Grant (Breckachy) and I were stopping with Janet Macleod, Sandside. I find her always remarkably kind. Annie Sutherland and I came Monday night to Thurso. I left Thurso Tuesday and arrived here Wednesday night. I found my afflicted sister low, but not so low as when I came from Lybster. She was then so low that my niece and I would be attending her most of the night. I ought to state this as my apology for delay in writing, and not as complaining of the gracious dealings of the God of all grace, whose forbearance and longsuffering should forever suppress my murmuring, it being so apparent that He has no pleasure in my death, but rather that I should have life, making a free tender of Himself to me, a frail, sinful worm.

My dearest friend, try and be fervent for me at a throne of grace. I am now old and withered, like the mountains of Gilboah, where the mighty has fallen. I have no good mark, but that David Steven, Mr. A. Sinclair, and both Donald Mackay's are inquiring for me. At times I will think that I am not wholly forsaken when I have that same. But when I think of them that I once had, who are now glorified, I am afraid that they will see me with the goats on the left hand. And oh, how it will aggravate my condemnation that I deceived them so that they were opening their posom to me as if I were a new-born babe, when I am as I am! O the desolation in this day! And worthy Mr. Munro's removal crowned it. We are as if we were in another world after them, as dear Adam Mackay would say.

I thank you for being so concerned about me and my circumstances. I received your benevolent kindness by George Macleod in spring. I have had food and raiment. O for grace to be humbled

at His footstool. I will be glad to hear from you.

Give my kind regards to Mr. John Macbeath. Tell him, "Fear not, worm Jacob"; it is written, "I will help thee." Desire Mr. Macbeath to write me. My love to you, and your sister, and Alexander Stewart. My sister and niece join me, and I remain, my dearest friend, yours truly,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

Letters of late Bonald Mackay, Student.

STRATHY HEAD, 6th June, 1894.

DEAR FRIEND,—I received your very kind letter some time ago,

and was very glad to hear from you.

It is the spiritual mind which is life and peace, and nothing else than that will do; for though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, and though I give my body to be burned, it is nothing. O what need I have

^{&#}x27; Death of the Rev. John Munro, Halkirk.-ED.

to be made a new creature in Christ, and to depend on the Holy Spirit of God for comfort and renewing! How good would it be for me to come to that blessed experience—"Though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day." But as for me, it will be very wonderful if ever I will be found in the number of the saved.

You were writing about my going forward to study. It is very little that I ever studied, and though there have been some truths impressed on my mind—even some of these before I was speaking to you last—yet other things are so unlike it. Still, I would like to study just now, whatever the end of it may be. Please say in your reply if you think you can come to Strathy this time, for there is great need of the Gospel here, and it is to be feared that the case is this—"If ye were blind, you had not had sin, but now you say you see, therefore your sin remaineth."

It is sad to hear of Dr. A—— going to the Rev. Mr. Macdonald's (Shieldaig) congregation in such a way. What need have we to be directed by the Lord to do His will, and not to depend on man for

our path of duty!

My soul is very dry and barren; pray for me, as I know you care

for my soul.

M—— rises a while every day, though far from being strong. She is grieved to have heard that Dr. A—— is going to Shieldaig; but it would not have been pleasant for the prophet of the Lord

to see Jehoshaphat going with Ahab to battle.

Wishing you may get a mind and way to come north soon, I will be coming to an end with this letter. May you have the presence of the Lord as a congregation. Do pray for me. May the Lord give a door of utterance to all them who have chosen rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Let me know who are the eiders who were ordained recently at ——.

I am, your affectionate friend,

DONALD MACKAY.

LYNDALE LODGE, PORTREE.

My Dear Brother,—I am, after coming home, somewl at cast down, because I fear that I have grieved the Holy Spirit of God, and if the Spirit will leave me I need not continue this work. My desire and prayer for you is that you may be filled with the Spirit. I long to see you again. May Jesus grant that I may not be separated from you at the Judgment-Day, when all will go to their own place. You may know the way coming home was not very comfortable with these two passages—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The other passage which I was exercised about was—"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." If I should have the Spirit I could enjoy myself, but when I am in this way, it is very few that

I find shelter with. I am thinking my soul longs to meet with you, though I am afraid I am discouraging you with my dull spirit. O that light would break in on my soul once more, and that I would taste of the forgiveness of sins. May His Spirit be with you, to give you a door of utterance. O that it would please Him to briug in other sheep in some place by some one. As for myself, my sins are so great, and I am so unwatchful. May Jesus forgive such a sinner. Remember me to all the friends, and tell them to pray in a special manner for me, to see if the Spirit will return to my soul. I have a very kind letter from M—— before me as I write. May the love of Christ be in you; and the more I get of the Spirit of prayer for you all there, the happier I will be. Be sure to write immediately, supposing it were only a few lines.

I am, your loving brother,

DONALD MACKAY.

P.S.—Do pray for me, though you will feel tired in the Lord's work. O that light would come from Heaven.—D.M.

STRATHY HEAD, 5th October, 1898.

My Dear Friend,—I was pleased to get your kind and welcome letter a few days ago, though we would like better if you had come yourself if that would be His will. A day came on the Apostle Paul when he had to lay aside his own will in order that he might do the will of the Lord. It seems the more of this spirit is found in any soul, the more he will enjoy of the peace of God. when the day will come when they will have no other will, this peace will flow through their souls like a stream or river. What would do us good is that the virtue which flows from the intercession of Christ would reach on us. When the woman mentioned in the Gospel touched His garment, through faith virtue went out of Him, by virtue of which she acknowledged that she was healed from her disease. So those who get nearness to Him through faith will realise in themselves that quickening power has come to to their souls, and although they shall not be wholly delivered from their diseases in time, at death their souls will be made perfect in holiness, freed from all sin, and at the great and last day their bodies also. And I am persuaded you are among these, because you have been often raised with Him by the power of His Spirit working in you effectually.

Tell our dear friend, ——, that I am thinking of going to Glasgow, but that I am not quite sure yet, as I am far from being strong. I hope you will both pray for me in this matter. I desire to be kindly remembered to all the household, also to all other friends.—With kindest regards, I am, your dear friend,

DONALD MACKAY.

Expository Motes:

Isa. xlii. 1-4.

By the Rev. ALEXANDER STEWART, Oban.

v.—The Servant: Ibis Endurance.

He shall not fail nor be discouraged, Till he have set judgment in the earth; And the isles shall wait for his law.—(ver. 4.)

HAT have we here? What is the quality or the condition which these words describe? It is Endurance, courage. And it is more. Endurance may be barren: the burden may have been bravely borne through the heat of the day, and when the struggle is past the effort may seem to have been a waste of strength; after the "long holding out" there is nothing to show. But this is endurance crowned with victory; it is endurance coming back in the rejoicing of harvest, bringing its sheaves.

It is worthy of notice how these verses bring before us in the servant of the Lord a combination of seemingly opposing qualities. The Person of Christ is the meeting-place of apparent contradictions. We saw that He is meek, and that He is tender; but His meekness is wedded to unyielding strength, and alongside of His

tenderness there is unwavering tenacity of purpose.

We often find that where one of these qualities is prominent in a man's character the other is lacking. The man who is meek and gentle is often wanting in strength and courage. He recoils from opposition. He is unfit for blows. Even when his claims are just, he is more ready to surrender than fight for them. is disposed to compromise rather than face hardship and trial. His very sensitiveness makes him more easily crushed and disheartened. On the other hand the man of iron and inflexible purpose is often lacking in the softer graces of character. What he has gained in strength he has lost in tenderness. He shrinks from no difficulty, he fears no foe; but his eye does not spare,. and his heart knows no pity. He has a goal, and he makes his way towards it with but scant respect for the feelings of others. Whatsoever opposes his progress he sets aside, and with no gentle hand. His sensibilities, in a word, are apt to be lacking in fineness of edge in proportion as determination and strength are outstanding features of his character.

But in Jesus Christ these qualities are perfectly balanced. There is the most harmonious adjustment; there is the most exact equipoise. He is tender, yet strong; He is lowly, but unyielding. He has the meekness of the Lamb, but the strength

and courage of the Lion.

Here, then, in this rich cluster of graces, we have endurance crowning all. It is given as a mark of the servant of the Lord that He shall not fail. His strength will not fail. His courage will not waver. His hope will not grow dim. At present we shall seek to consider the words in their application to His personal ministry on earth. He did not fail nor was He discouraged in the work that was given Him to do.

It was a great work. He was made under the law. He had to meet all its claims. And the requirements of God's Commandment are "exceeding broad." One vain thought, one idle word, one hairsbreadth of shortcoming would have meant failure. But He did not fail. He was as a Lamb without blemish and without spot throughout all the days. The law of God had to join with

Pilate in saying, "I find no fault in this man."

He met with much opposition. Men laid wait for Him at every turn, to ensnare Him in word or deed. The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles were gathered against the Holy Child Jesus. Satan, too, the god of this world, rose up in all his strength and fury to withstand the invasion of his kingdom. The strong man resisted the spoiling of his gods. Earth and Hell combined their forces against the servant of the Lord to bear Him down, and make Him their prey. But He did not fail. He was more than a conqueror over all His enemies. He overcame the world. He spoiled principalities and powers. The prince of this world was cast out. His power was broken. His kingdom was overthrown.

He had to bear the wrath of God. And who can tell the weight or the bitterness of that load? Who knows the power of Divine wrath? It would crush into nothingness the universe of created being. It will make Hell a place of wailing and gnashing of teeth throughout eternity. It brought Christ to the dust of death. It brought the bloody sweat in great drops through the pores of His body. It pierced through His soul with sorrows that were even unto death. It wrung the awful cry from His blessed lips in that dark hour when the sun hid his face, and the heart of the very rocks was breaking. But He did not fail. did not sink beneath the load. His energies were not paralysed. His activities were not impaired. His work was not interrupted. He was never more active, never more triumphant, than when failure seemed written over all His work from beginning to end. That is what the Jews would have read in the writing over His head on the Tree-the King of the Jews-the impostor —the man who wanted to be king, but who so miserably failed. But it was on the Cross and through the Cross that He brought forth judgment unto victory. It was then that He saved the dying thief, "t he richest jewel in His crown." It was then that He finished transgression and made an end of sin. It was then that He abolished death and destroyed him that had its power.

It was then that He offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot unto God, and cried, not in expiring feebleness, but in the full and glad concentration of His strength, "It is finished."

And not only did He not fail; He was not even discouraged. It is one thing to overcome, to snatch a victory, to obtain the mastery; it is another thing to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm unto the end. Sometimes a man succeeds almost in spite of himself. Long before the hour of triumph his courage has wavered, and his hope has well-nigh vanished. His eyes have failed with looking long, and the gladness has gone out of his spirit. He reaches his goal, not amid the splendours of unquestioned triumph, but like a vessel that creeps into the haven, with tattered sails and broken spars, "scarcely saved" from the violence of the storm. The servant of the Lord was not discouraged. His hope never became dim. The end He had before Him was never obscured with the faintest cloud of doubt or mistrust. He moved along the path of quiet confidence and calm assurance unto the end.

There was much to discourage. He came to His own and The Deliverer was treated like an His own received Him not. oppressor. The Saviour received the sinner's meed. He spoke as never man spake. He performed works that compelled the the admiration of His enemies; but men still refused to believe in Him. He had to say, "Who hath believed our report?" had to cry, "How often would I . . . but ye would not." saw many who at one time were His followers going back and walking with Him no more. He saw much that showed the richest promise fade away like the morning cloud and the early The same lips that cried, "Hosanna to the son of David," in glad and spontaneous loyalty, also cried, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him!" with almost frenzied vehemence. And there is nothing more discouraging to the heart of man than the blighting of such hopes as these. Christ was not discouraged. He had no false hopes. no illusions. He did not judge after the sight of His eyes. He was of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He knew what was in man.

But He knew also what was coming. He knew that before Him were the Cross and the Shame. He knew that the betrayal and the forsaking and the awfulness of Calvary awaited Him; but He was never discouraged. He held on His way without wavering. For He also knew that after the Cross there was the Crown, and beyond the shame, the joy that was set before Him. His hope in God burned with a steady flame, and cast its cheering ray across the dark waters of the River of Death into the glories of Emmanuel's Land on the further shore. He always joined the two together. When He spoke of His sufferings He spoke of the glory that should follow. When He foretold His death He foretold in the same breath His resurrection. He spoke with

never the slightest abatement of confidence. No difficulty ever shook the firm rock of His trust. No misgiving ever clouded His assurance of final triumph. The freshness of the morning remained unto the close of the day. "I, if I be lifted up, from the earth will draw all men unto me." 'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Within a few hours of His agony He spoke of the time when He should eat the fruit of the vine in the Kingdom of God. On the Cross itself He assured the penitent thief that they should be together that same day in Paradise. And it is the mystery of that great, awful cry that came forth at last from the depths of His agony, that it gives expression at once to the bitterness of His forsaking by the Father, and His unbroken, appropriating trust in that Father's love. He cried, indeed, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" but He also cried, more than once, "My God."

Letter to our Canadian Friends.

By the Rev. S. H. MacNeel, Original Secession Minister, Chesley, Ontario.

DEAR FRIENDS,—Though absent in the flesh, I am often present with you in the spirit. There is not a day in which I do not think of you, and often do I carry you to a throne of grace, and beseech our Heavenly Father that you may be kept steadfast in the faith, have the comfort of His love, the strength of His

power, and the joy of His presence.

The times in which we live call for great searchings of heart, deep humiliation before God, and special grace to hold fast that to which we have attained, witness faithfully for Christ, and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. strong winds of erroneous doctrine. religious delusion, and corrupt worship are blowing over the earth, and unless divlnely protected we are in great danger of being carried away thereby. While we rejoice in the efforts that are being made to give the Bible to all nations in their native languages, in the missionary spirit of the Churches, and in the possession of social and civil privileges which have their roots in Christianity, we cannot but be pained to see how much the Churches have followed the customs and spirit of the world. And when we see the present condition of the great majority of the Churches which had their origin in a Covenanted Reformation, we cannot but exclaim, "How art thou fallen." When we compare the average professed Christian with the divine model, and the Church of to-day with the Church of the New Testament, we are amazed at their want of conformity to the divine pattern. And when we see the strenuous efforts that are being made to spread error and innovations in the worship of God, and

to draw people away from sound doctrine and pure worship, and see what a multitude are going after the commandments of men, we cannot but feel that perilous times have come.

The declension has gone so far that the Churches are in great danger of losing their distinctiveness as Christian institutions, They are becoming clubs, recreation grounds, mutual entertainment societies, and the like. They have largely lost their firm convictions of the importance of truth, and have sunk into indifference, or have halted at the point of compromise, or have shown favour to any creed that allows conscience to slumber and responsibility to be discharged by proxy There is a general impression that one creed is as good as another, and that the best creed is the one that permits most self-indulgence and is satisfied with the gold and jewels of a fleeting and frivolous world. How little sanctified money there is in those days. I mean money set apart for Christ's cause, directly, cheerfully, and as God has prospered the giver. Christian men rightly suppose that they do a good deal for the work of the Church, but what do they more than others? Some will give twice as much for a political campaign as they will for the Church. Very often some rich worldling has by a single gift done more for some hospital, or library, or town, than Church members of equal wealth have done for the Church of Christ in a lifetime. Christians help one another, but a host of fraternal societies help their members more liberally, and they pay their dues and frequent assessments directly into the treasury, and they pay willingly and cheerfully. But a large part of the funds for the Church must be drawn out of her members by means of oyster suppers, soirees, garden parties, and various other entertainments. They are loath to part with their money for Christ until they have gotten all the carnal satisfaction out of it that they possibly can.

Look, too, at the toy efforts that some people are so fond of multiplying for the advancement of the Church. Anything new is sprung at with avidity, no matter how much may be cast off which has been proved to be of solid worth. "Only get np a new society, a new scheme, a new toy of any kind, and like every kind of quack medicine in the world, it will be loaded with testimonials. We have guilds, and bands, and rings, and fellowships without count." There is no evidence that Christ ever contemplated a brass band and drums for arousing a revival in the Church. The Old Testament had its trumpets and cymbals and gorgeous ritual and imposing ceremonies, but in the New Testament we have a simpler ritual of singing psalms, and prayer, and preaching, and observing the Sacraments in simple ways.

Never was there a greater need for a full, clear, and particular testimony for God's truth than now. Sound doctrine and pure worship are slipping away from the leaders and the masses in the Churches everywhere. The Word, which God has exalted above his great name, is treated as a common thing. Its grand doctrines of sovereign grace are characterised as mere opinions, and its

appointed worship is looked upon as something that may be changed as human fancy may dictate. Instruments of music have forced themselves into the house and worship of God; choirs have destroyed congregational singing; and human hymns have superseded the matchless songs of Zion. The Lord's vineyard is overrun with the briers and thorns of Poperty, Arminianism, Socinianism, Humanitarianism, and other gospels contrary to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Church government and discipline have been lowered to the standard of mere policy. Not the will of God, but the will of the people, has become the law of administration. No doctrine must be preached contrary to the public mind, no sin rebuked contrary to the popular practice. This or that change must be made in the worship simply because the majority of the people want it. And the Sabbath-the Sabbath of the Shorter Catechism and the Bible—has slipped away from On all sides there is a manifest disposition to please the world. Instead of trying to lift the world up to the high standard of truth, the Church is stepping down to the level of the world. How long shall these things be? All these things are to be mourned over, but the most lamentable of all is the fact that these things that ought to be put away are regarded by the majority in the Churches as evidences of progress and of growing light, for so long as they remain blinded there is little hope for reformation.

It is sad to find so many evils in the Churches, and it is with a sorrowful heart that any true Christian points them out, but to be loyal to our Lord and Master we must condemn and testify against them both by our words and our lives. Because these things are so, and because they are contrary to the Gospel of Christ, you and I, and others, stand in the position we do. We ought to be thankful that God has not permitted us to be carried away with the current of defection. Thankful that we have eyes to see, ears to hear, consciences to feel, and a desire to uphold the banner of truth, but let us not be high-minded, but fear. "Let him that

thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

At the bottom of all these unscriptural sentiments and practices prevalent in the Church, the indolence of Church members, and their coldness respecting truth and duty, lie ignorance of God and decline of piety. It is therefore our duty to seek a deeper and more extensive knowledge of God, and to keep our hearts warm by constant communion with God. We should prove by word and act that we not only accept the rich legacy of truth which God has bequeathed to us, but that we value it. We must strive against the prevalent indifference to the cause of God. must not be discouraged or cowed into silence by reproach. called to bear reproach for Christ's sake, we should rejoice that we are counted worthy to bear reproach for His name. called to be soldiers of Christ. Let us prove ourselves worthy such a captain, learn His laws and discipline, abide by His standard, put on the whole armour of God, guard well the sacred deposit of truth both for ourselves and posterity, and teach them the truth and ordinances of God. The diligent and the faithfu will not lose their reward.

My letter is now longer than I intended, and lest I weary you I must bring it to a close. "The Lord bless thee and keep thee the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." That the Lord may keep you all safe and faultless untit the day of Jesus Christ is the prayer of

Your Brother in Christ,

SAMUEL H. MACNEEL.

Chesley, Ont., 20th February, 1902.

Is e Criosd na h-Uile.

LE TOMAS UILCOGS.

Anns an Tighearn fireanaichear uile shliochd Israeil, agus ni iad uaill (Isaiah xlv. 25). Is e bàs an Fhirein ud air 'ar son-ne, the 'nar neo-fhireinibh, tha mhàin comasach air 'ar tabhairt gu Dis (1 Pead. iii. 18). Rinneadh esan do nach b'aithne peacadh, 'na pheacadh, air ar son-ne, chum is gu'm biomaid-ne nach robh 'na' ni idir ach peacadh air 'ar deanamh 'na'r fireantachd Dhé ann-sar (2 Cor. v. 21).

Is e Criosd lànachd gràis is'glòir an Athar. Feumaidh a t'urram is àirde 'bhi aige-san, Tha esan a mhàin airidh, mar a Ti, tha gu teampull spioradail an Tighearna a thogail, agus a ghlòi a ghinlan. Feumaidh uile shoithichean an teampuillsa o na h-uil ghnè chuach, gus na h-uile ghnè aghann bhi air an crochadh ai Criosd. Is esan le sònruchadh an Athar, a' chlach-stèidh, a chlachoisian, agus a' clach-mhullaich.

A leughadair! am bheil thu ag aideachadh ainm Chriosd, agu a' sealbhachadh orduighean? (Lucas i. 6). Tha thu deanam gu maith, is sochairean glòrmhor iad. Ach mur 'eil fuil Chrios aig freumh d'aideachaidh (1 Eoin i. 7; 1 Cor. iii. 11), seargaidh e

is fàsaidh e neo-tharbhach.

Tha mòran air an tonn-luasgadh, ullamh chum a bhi air a giulan mu'n cuairt leis gach uile ghaoith teagaisg, le cleasachdhaoine, agus seòltachd chealgaich, leis am bheil iad gu h-inr leachdach ri feall-fholach chum meallaidh (Eph. iv. 14). Th iomadh bunait mheallt ann, air am bheil moran air a chaitheam gu diomhain; tha cuid nach 'eil a' labhairt na firinn ann an gràdh agus nach 'eil a' fàs suas anns na h-uile nithibh chuige-san, a's an ceann eadhon Criosd (Eph. iv. 15). Cha'n urrainn do neac fàs le fàs Chriosd, gun a bhi air 'aonadh ri Criosd. Mur 'e aonadh ris-san ann, tha gach ni a nì sinn malluichte.

Ma ghleidheas tu ciont' agus fáin-fhireantachd fuidh d'aideach adh deòthailidh na nathairiche-nimhe sin a bheatha as, gu h-iomlar Dean dichioll air rànnsachadh le mòr chùram gach aon la, ciod i a'bhunait air am bheil d'aideachadh, is dòchas do ghlòire air an togail (1 Cor. iii. 11), an robh a'bhunait ud air a leagadh le lamh Chriosd; oir mur robh, cha bhi i chaoidh comasach air seasamh ris na stoirmean a bhuaileas 'na h-aghaidh. Tilgidh Sàtan sios e

gu h-iomlan, agus bithidh a thuiteam mòr (Mata vii. 27).

Tabhair fa'near, feudaidh na peacaidhean is mò, bhi air am folach fuidh na dhleasdanasan is àirde, agus na h-eagalan is truime. Faic gu'm bi an lot a' rinn peacadh 'nad anam air a leigheas gu firinneach le fuil Chriosd, is cha'n ann air a chomhdach gu tana le croicionn de dhleasdanasaibh, de dheoir, is de dh'fhuasglaidhean. Ciod sam bith ni, a chàireas tu air an leòn, ach fuil Chriosd a mhàin, cha dean e ach a phuinnseanachadh. Gheibh thu nach robh peacadh riamh air a mharbhadh ann am firinn, mur faca tu Criosd a' dortadh fhola air do shon air a' chrann. Cha mharbh aon ni am peacadh ach sealladh de dh'fhireantachd Chriosd.

Cha'n 'eil iocshlàint aig nàdur a leighiseas an t'anam. Cha'n 'eil san leigheas tha teachd o dhleasdanasan, is ni h-ànn o fhuil Chriosd, ach an galar is cunnartaiche. Cha'n urrainn do nàdur bochd lomnochd, le 'oidhirpean is fearr, trusgan freagarrach gun ghiòmh, a shniomh, chum an t'anam ruisgte a chomhdach. Cha

dean ni so, ach fireantachd iomlan Chriosd.

Feumar deilbh nàduir thoirt as a cháile gu buileach, mu'n urrainear fireantachd Chriosd a chur umad. This Sàtan agus spùillidh e còmhdach nàduir. agus fàgaidh e an t'anam ruisgte, is fosgailte do chorruich Dhé. Cha'n urrainn do nàdur le 'oidhearp is fearr. an tomhas is lugha de ghràs a dheanamh suas, peacadh a mharbhadh, no Criosd amharc 'san aghaidh. Feudaidh tu urnuigh a chluinntinn, an t'sacramaid a ghabhail, agus a bhi gidheadh truagh, mur faic thu Criosd a' toirt barrachd air na h-uile oirdheirceas is fireantachd 'san t'saoghal, agus iad sin uile a' tuiteam f'a

chomhair mòralachd graidh agus gràis (Isaiah ii. 17).

Ma chunnaic thu Criosd ann am firinn chunnaic thu ann fior ghràs, fior fhireantachd a bha neo-chriochnach an tomhas, ag eiridh gu h-árd os ceann peacaidh, agus truaighe. Ma chunnaic thu Criosd saltraidh tu le gràin air uil' fhireantachd dhaoin' is ainglibh mar bhonn réite ri Dia. Ma chunnaic thu Criosd, cha rachadh tu an ceann dleasdanais a's eugmhais, air son deich mìle saoghal (1 Cor- ii. 2). Ma fhuair thu riamh sealladh de Chriosd, chunnaic thu e 'na charraig ni's àirde na féin-fhireantachd, Sàtan, is peacadh Salm lxi. 2), agus tha 'charraig so ga'd leantuinn (1 Cor. x. 4), agus bithidh a' sruthadh aisde a ghnàth chum thus' urachadh sruthan meal is gràis (Salm lxxxi. 16). Rannsuich am fac thu Criosd riamh, mar aon-ghin Mhic an Athar làn gràis agus firinn (Eoin i. 14, 16, 171. Thig gu Criosd, agus cleachd na h-uile dichioll air do ghairm a dheanamh cinnteach (2 Pead. i. 10). Seas air carraig nan àl.

Ni daoine mòran de bhruidhinn, mu chreidsinn am feadh is tha iad slàn gun tinneas; is e àireamh bheag tha 'creidsinn. Is e Criosd diomhaireachd nan Sgriobtuirean; is e gràs diomhaireachd Chriosd. Is e creidimh an ni a's iongantaiche 'san t'saoghal. Cuir ni sam bith is leat féin ris, is millidh tu e; cha mheas Criosd e mar chreidimh. 'Nuair a chreideas tu, agus a thig thu gu Criosd, feumaidh tu t'fhireantachd féin fhàgail as do dhéigh (Och! tha sin cruaidh ri dheanamh), do naomhachd uile, do dhleasdanasan, do dheoir, d'irioslachd, agus gun ni a thoirt leat, ach do pheacadh, d'uireasbhuidhean, agus do thruaighean, no cha'n 'eil Criosd freagarrach dhuitse, no thusa do Chriosd. Bithidh Criosd 'na Shlanuighear, is na Eadar-mheadhonair iomlan, agus tusa a'd pheacach caillte, no cha d'thig sibh a chaoidh chum cordadh. Is e an ni a's dorra san t'saoghal Criosd a ghabhail a mhàin air aon fìreantachd, b'e sin aideachadh a dheanamh, gur e Criosd.

Ciod sam bith ni, thig a steach a bharr air Criosd, 'nuair thig thu dh'ionnsuidh Dhia, air son réite, meas e mar ana-Criosd; àithn air falbh e; oitheadh fireantachd Chriosd a mháin a' toirt a mach na buaidh. Is Babilon a dh'fheumas tuiteam gach ni mach bh'uaithe-san, mu tha Criosd gu seasamh, agus thusa gu gàirdeachas a dheanamh san là an tuit Babilon. Is e Criosd a mhàin a shaltair an t'amar fiona agus cha robh neach sam bith maille ris (Isaiah lxiii. 3). Ma chuireas tu ni sam bith ri Criosd, saltraidh e air, ann an corruich is ann am feirg, agus bheir e sal air 'éididh le fuil nan

nithe ud.

Tha thu 'ga mheas furasd a bhi 'creidsinn, an robh do chreidimh riamh air 'fheuchainn le uair uairidh, agus le fior shealladh de pheacadh? An robh aige riabh ri seasamh an aghaidh Shàtain, agus corruich Dhia a mhothachadh 'na luidhe air do choguis? 'Nuair a bha thu fo gheilt roimh ifrinn is an uaigh, an d'fhoillsich Dia Criosd dhuit mar éiric, mar fhireantachd? Agus am b'urrainn dhuit a ràdh, "Tha mi faicinn gràs ni's leoir an Criosd." Ma tha sin mar sin, feudaidh tu am focal is mò 'san t'saoghal a ràdh, Tha mi 'Creideamh gun dearbhadh, is creideamh neo-chinnteach e.

Chum is gun creideadh tu, feumaidh dearbhshoilleireachd mu pheacadh bhi agad, agus mu airidheachd fuil Chriosd, is air co toileach 's'a tha Chriosd peacach a shaoradh,—ni a's dorra na saoghal a chruthachadh. Cha'n urrainn do dh'uile chumhachd nàduir, ann an stoirm a thogas peacadh is ciont, eirigh co àrd ri a chreidsinn am firinn, gu'm bheil gràs no toil a chum tearnaidh 'Nuair a chuireas Sàtan peacadh as leth an duine, ann an Criosd. gu'n rachadh an duine le a chionta gu Criosd, bhiodh sin cosmhuil ri spiorad an t'soisgeil; b'e sin Criosd a dheanamh dheth. Is e so criochd a theachd. Is e suim an t-soisgeil gun gabhamaid ri fireantachd Chriosd a mhàin, ri 'fhuil a mhàin air son slàinte. 'Nuair is urrainn do'n anam 'sna h-uile dhleasdanasan, agus dheuchainnean a ràdh, "Criosd a mhàin, Criosd mar fhireantachd, a' fireanachadh, mar naomhachadh, mar shaorsa (1 Cor, i. 30) is ni h'e m'irioslachd, no dhleasdanasan, mo ghràsan," tha e an sin air a thogail suas os ceann cumhachd nan tonn.

Tha cumhachd nan uile bhuaireadh, cothroman Shàtain, agus gearan annainne a luidhe ann am féin-fhireantachd, is ann am féinspéis. Tha Dia a' deanamh tòir air na nithibh sin, am mòran do ròidibh, mar a lean Laban Iacob air son' iodholan. Feumar iad sud bhi air an spionadh bh'uat, air co mi-dheonach 's gu'm bi thu. Cha ghabh Criosd còmhnuidh maille riu; agus gus an d'thig Criosd a stigh, fanaidh cionta maille riut. Far am bheil cionta tha cruas cridhe, tha uime sin mòran cionta 'taisbeineadh nach eil ànn ach ro bheag, ma tha eadhon beagan féin ànn de Chriosd. 'Nuair tha mothachadh air cionta air a dhùsgadh, thoir an aire nach cuirear 'na thosd e ach le fuil Chriosd: tha gach innleachd eile a' cruadhachadh na coguis. Biodh Criosd 'na shìth dhuit (Eph. ii. 14), cha'n e dleasdanasan no deoir, no ni sam bith eile. Feudaidh tu cur an aghaidh Chriosd, le d'dhleasdanasan mar le d' pheacanna. Aml.aire ri Chriosd, agus an sin, dean na's àill leat de dhleasdanasan.

Seas le d' chudthrom uile air fireantachd Chriosd. Bi air d'fhaicill roimh aon chas bhi agad air fireantachd Chriosd, agus a chas eile air d'fhireantachd féin. Gus an d'thig Criosd, agus an suidh e air cathair gràis 'sa choguis, cha bhi ànn ach cionta, eagalan, teagamhan uaigneach, an t'anam a crochadh eadar dochas agus eagal, ni nach 'eil 'na shuidheachadh soisgeulach. Tha an neach air am bheil eagal roimh ghràineileachd is mò a pheacaidh fhaicinn, agus olc mòr a chridhe aideachadh, a' cur an teagamh airidheachd Chriosd.

Ciod sam bith, am peacach mòr tha'nn dhiot (1 Eoin ii. 1), dean Criosd, d'fhear-tagraidh, agus gheibh thu e, Iosa Criosd am firean. 'Na d'uile theagamhan, is eagalan, agus stoirmean coguis, amhairc a mhàin agus gun sgur ri Criosd; na feuch argumaid ris an t'Sàtan, cha'n iarr e nis fearr; cuir a dh'ionnsuidh Chriosd e, agus freagraidh Esan e. Is e a dhreuchd bhi 'na fhear-tagraidh dhuinn (1 Eoin ii. 1) an lagh a riarachadh mar ar n'urras (Eabh. vii. 22), agus ceartas a dhioladh mar 'ar n'eadar-mheadhonair (Gal. iii. 20; Tim. ii. 5). Cuir thuige Criosd. Ma's àill leat, thu féin a dheanamh ni sam bith. mar riarachadh air son peacaidh, tha thu 'cur cùl ri Criosd am firean a rinneadh 'na pheacadh air do shon (2 Cor. v. 21).

Is urrainn do'n t'Sàtan an fhirinn aithris, agus a fiaradh, ach cha'n urrainn dha a freagairt. Is i an fhirinn focal cumhachd mòr Chriosd, tha e 'cur an t'Sàtain air theicheadh leatha. 'Sna Sgrìobtuirean uile, cha'n 'eil aon fhocal cruaidh an aghaidh peacach bochd, tha air a rùsgadh dheth fhéin-fhireantachd. Cha'n e sin a mhàin, ach tha e air a chomharrachadh a mach, mar chuspair gràis an t'soisgeil, agus cha neach eile. A mhàin creid cho toileach agus tha Criosd, agus gur esan féin tha ag oibreachadh a' chreidimh annad. Tha e ag oibreachadh na toil agus an gniomh, dheth a dheadh-ghean féin (Philip. ii. 13). 'S'ann le gràs tha thu air do thearnadh, tre chreidimh, agus sin cha'n ànn uaibh féin, is e tiodhlac Dhia e. Tagair ris air son an tiodhlacs' (Eph. ii. 8). Is e

Criosd ùghdair agus fear-criochnachaidh a chreidimh; cuir esan thuige. Dean caoidh thairis air d' as-creideamh tha cur cionta 'sa choguis suas os cionn Chriosd, a cuir an suarachas toillteanas Chriosd, a meas 'fhola na ni mi-naomha, coitchionn, agus nach d'thoir riarachadh.

Tha thu a'gearan gu mòr ort féin; am bheil do pheacadh ga d' threorachadh gu amharc ni's mò ri Criosd, no riut féin; ma tha, tha 'chuis mar is coir dhi bhi; mur 'eil cha'n 'eil ànn dhe do ghearan ach ceilg. Tha e 'na fhéin-fhireantachd bhi ag amharc ri dleasdanasan, ri gràsan, ri saorsaidhean, 'nuair bu chòir dhuit bhi ag amharc ri Criosd: ni amharc riu do chridhe a thogail suas; ach ni sealladh de ghràs Chriosd d'irioslachadh. Ann ad uile bhuairidhean, na bi air do dhi-mhisneachadh (Seumas i. 2). Feudaidh gur e crìoch nan tuiltean ud, cha'n e thu bhi air do bhàthadh, ach thu bhi air do dhealachadh riut féin, chum a bhi air do shuidheachadh air a' charraig Criosd.

Feudaidh tu bhi air do thoirt iosal, eadhon a chum bruaich sgrios, ullamh gu tuiteam. Cha'n urrainn thu a theachd ni's isle na broinn ifrinn (Ionah ii. 2). Bha moran de na naoimh an sin. Ach eadhon ann an sinn feudaidh tu éigheach; as a sin feudaidh tu amharc ri a theampull naomh (Ionah ii. 4). Cha'n fheudadh neach a dhol a stigh do'n teampull a rinneadh le làmhan, gun e bhi an tùs air a ghlanadh, agus gun tabhartas a thoirt leis (Gniomh. xxi. 26). Ach a nis, is e Criosd, an teampull, an iobairt, an altair, an t'àrd-shagart, chum nach feud a theachd ach peacaich, agus sin gun tabhartas ach a mhàin 'fhuil féin air a dortadh aon uair (Eabh. vii. 27).

The Martyrs of Madagascar.

February 27, 1849.

UT the sight which most deeply penetrated many hearts, and stirred their inmost feelings, was that of the true, steadfast confessors who had refused to bow down and worship the idols of Ranavalomanjaka. Outwardly there was everything to repel, or to awaken pity. Each Christian man and woman was fastened with cords to two poles, their bodies wrapped in torn and soiled pieces of matting, in token of their degradation, their mouths filled with rag to prevent their speaking of the Saviour; yet these eighteen, the noble, the civilian, the slave—all equal now, children of God going to glory—formed, as they were borne along—the young and faithful Ranivo walking alone at the end of the illustrious line—the grandest procession which the sun of Madagascar had ever shone upon.

When the pile was kindled, and the flames were rising, they prayed and praised the Lord. Among the utterances then heard by those around them were these—"Lord Jesus, receive our spirits—lay not this sin to their charge;" and, as if visions of rhe future

triumphs of the Lord were given to their departing spirits, one was heard to exclaim, "His name, His praise, shall endure for ever and ever."

Once, if not more than once, the falling rain extinguished the fire, which was rekindled; and to one of the sufferers the pains of maternity were added to those of the flames. While their spirits were thus enduring and praying, a large and triple rainbow, the sign of God's promise and faithfulness, was stretched across the heavens, one end seeming to rest upon the spot when the martyrs' spirits were departing. Some of the spectators, to whom the phenomenon appeared supernatural, fled in terror; but one, who faithfully remained to the end, records of the Christians—"They prayed as long as they had any life. Then they died; but softly, gently. Indeed, gentle was the going forth of their life, and astonished were all the people around that beheld the burning of them there."

The transactions on the plain of judgment were ended. Liberty and life at the price of apostacy had been offered, and by some few, occasionally associated with the Christians, it had been accepted; but by the great body of the accused, amounting to between two and three thousand, it had been deliberately declined. Sentence against the followers of Christ had been pronounced. general the punishment immediately follows the passing of the sentence, nothing now remained but its infliction. The criminals of highest rank, in whose veins the blood of kings was supposed to flow, had already been sent away to die, In the same order and manner in which they had been brought to receive judgment, the remaining fourteen confessors were now taken along the public roads, through the agitated and deeply affected crowds in the city, to Ampamarinana, the Tarpeian rock af Madagascar. the top of a lofty precipice, at the edge of the western crest of the mountain on which the city is built, the matting wrapped round their bodies was removed, but their arms remained pinioned, and their ankles were bound with cords. Thus bound, they were taken one by one to the edge of the precipice, and either pushed, or laid down and rolled, or kicked over the downward curving edge, whence they fell fifty or sixty feet, when, striking a projecting ledge, they bounded off and fell amongst jagged and broken fragments of granite lying at the base of the precipice, one hundred and fifty feet below the edge from which they had been hurled. Life was generalty extinct. One distinguished Christian, when the matting in which he was wrapped had been removed, is said to have asked permission to stand and view once more the scene before him. His request was granted, and, after looking at each familiar object, he remained silent a few minutes, as if in prayer; then, forced over the precipice, he was heard singing a Christian hymn as his body descended to be crushed and broken in death.—Ellis's Martyr Church of Madagascar.

Letters of the late Cabtain Ross, Wick.

BEAUFOY STBEET, PULTENEY.

My DEAR DONALD,-I have not much news to give you. Y---- was here to-day and spoke twice. He had many weighty cases. I was asking him if you were coming. He said he did not know, and that you were troubled so much in your mind. It's not easy to be under a heavy yoke, even the Spirit's yoke sometimes. Christ says about His own tried people: "What I do ve know not now, but ve shall know hereafter." The Lord tries His people as if He were in wrath against them, but it is all in love. And the more the Lord tries them, the better for them, as He is proving and trying them till they know what is in their heart; and the Lord says in the Word that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" He tries the reins of the sons of met, and He will try His own to purpose. For the present the trial is not joyous but grievous, but afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruit of rightcousness to them who are exercised thereby.

I was many a year under trouble of mind, but at last I got careless. I was praying and reading the Bible and good books all the time. No one could say anything against me outwardly; I kept myself from open sin and sinful company, but yet a little careless in my devotions, thinking I was on the right way to heaven. If the Lord had left me that way, I was on the road to perdition, as I found afterwards when the Lord thundered on me with the law, and made the law a right schoolmaster to bring me Christ. Now it was nothing but the thundering of Sinai, and a terrible pit before me to be lost for ever. But the word came, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." I got a clear view of Christ crucified for me, and His love filled my soul with joy, so that I was rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This lasted, I don't remember how long. Then I thought I would go straight to heaven, and what a heaven on the earth I had for a long time! But I had more to go through in the world, and I would not have been fit for my temporal duties in the world if I had continued in such a case. I got enough of doubts and fears afterwards. I was then twenty-one years of and now I am eighty-six.—With kind love,

ROBERT ROSS.

BEAUFOY STREET.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have no news to send you, only the great news, if we knew it aright. I hear you are a little better than you were, but still weak. The Most High has His own way of trying His people. We may be sometimes asking what He did not appoint for us. Grace is a valuable gift that we cannot fully comprehend; it's a mystery, a free gift from God, the beginning of the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of His own people

in the world. It's altogether a mystery that they cannot comprehend, because in height and depth and length and breadth it is above knowledge; it will be a wonder to the redeemed through all eternity. They will be perfectly satisfied with the will of God; they will be as happy as glory can make them. Seeing we cannot comprehend that grace, how can we comptehend what glory is? But we should be seeking to find the Lord. His people were often saying, "O that I knew where I might find him." This longing is what is keeping them alive. When they do not know where to find Him, He knows where to find them, lying in spiritual death, darkness, ignorance, unbelief, and wanderings of mind after vanity. But the blessed Psalmist says:

"My wanderings all what they have been
Thou know'st, their number took:
Into Thy bottle put my tears:
Are they not in Thy book?"

May the Lord be giving you strength of body and mind! I hope you will be well in both.

ROBERT Ross.

Literary Motice.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ITALY. By Dr. Alexander Robertson. Price, 6s. London: Morgan & Scott.

In this new book Dr. Robertson, of Venice, gives a striking and convincing picture of present-day Catholicism. Dr. Robert-son uses great plainness of speech in his rehearsal, and does not call a spade an agricultural implement in dealing with the Papacy. The book is, in fact, one long indictment of the Roman Catholic Church. Claiming to be Christian in the highest degree, he finds her to be in reality the "very antithesis of Christianity, incapable of bringing holiness into the heart and life"; "A compromise with evil, teaching to deceive and deceiving"; "A moral leper, sensual, avaricious, and cruel beyond all measure." These, he says, are her present-day characteristics, as notoriously as they were her features in pre-Reformation times. Having lost the temporal supremacy, and therewith the power to wield the dungeon and the stake, the Church of Rome since 1870 has, according to our author's showing, betaken herself to the poison-cup and to unholy intrigue in order to remove from her pathway anyone who dares to oppose her, not excepting the more liberal minded of her own clergy. Dr. Robertson enters into details regarding the dealings of the Vatican with the State, with education, and also with the Bible and the Sabbath. The confessional and the teachings regarding it form a black record. He also criticises the attitude of the great English-speaking nations towards the Papacy, comparing it unfavourably with that of the Italian laity, and claiming that the unbending attitude of the latter is correct as far as it goes. The book is a well-written one. The author's merited castigations of offending parties are couched in direct and well-chosen language. We hope the work will sell, and especially that it may fall into the hands of our rabid Ritualisers. It will do them good to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest this account of the Papacy by one who speaks what he knows and testifies what he has seen.

Motes and Comments.

The English Education Act.—The following letter from "A Plain Man" to the editor of the British Weekly is worthy the attention of our readers, from the light it throws on the present educational position in England. Under the first head the writer, perhaps too easily, accepts the principle of secular education, but otherwise his sentiments must commend themselves to all free and Protestant people:- "Sir, I object to this Act, as the father of a family—(1) Because it is not an Education Act at all; it is an Act to secure the teaching of Church of England doctrine, whatever that may be. I want a good school for my children; I can see after their religious instruction for myself. (2) I object again, because it deprives me of my rights as a citizen. According to this new Act, it seems I have masters who claim to put their hands into my pocket, not only without my consent, not only to spend the money for a purpose which I abhor, but without giving me the least vestige of control as to the way in which it may be spent. This is Charles I. and 'the ship money' over again. This is a violation of the constitutional principle that taxation and representation must go together; that, to put the case in the popular fashion—the man who calls the tune compels somebody else to pay the piper. (3) I object to the Act again, because it is a manifest attempt to seduce and drive the nation into the Anglican fold, or, better still, into the Roman fold. The school door is to be followed by another door—the door into 'the Church.' (4) I object to the Act again, because should the promoters of it gain their end, all who should refuse to conform will be left outside of every valuable and important position. There will be no possibility for a poor man's son to rise. He will be disqualified by want of education and non-conformity for any high post. They indeed condescend so far as to say that the Nonconformist youth may be allowed to be a pupil teacher, or even (how generous!) to be an assistant master, but a head master never. In short, the aim and end of the measure is to secure that, for all time to come, those who refuse to conform may become the helots of society, hewers of wood and drawers of water. Read the story of the French bishops and the persecution of the Huguenots. (5) Finally, I object to the Act because I do not wish my children to become poor priest-ridden creatures, who will have no right to eat meat on Fridays without permission of the priest. Having these objections, and many more, I should consider myself no longer a freeborn Englishman, but a serf, if I paid a rate to uphold such a state of things. Like my forefathers before me, I claim to be a man, I claim to have a conscience, I claim the liberty to follow my conscience, and that I will maintain at all hazards. I was not born to be a slave, or with a saddle on my back for a despot to ride on, be he king, or priest, or aristocracy, or even a chance Parliamentary majority."

The Memory of John Knox.—We are glad that Mr. David Hay Fleming has a prominent place assigned him in the British Weekly to vindicate the character and work of our brave and praiseworthy ancestor, John Knox. Mr. Andrew Lang, the successful writer of books, and Mr. Wm. Law Mathieson, a new author, have both essayed to damage his reputation in various essential particulars. Mr. Fleming, with great wealth of historical lore and commendable zeal for Knox's good name, has replied, and. we think, very much to the purpose, to both detractors. Whatever real or imaginary objections may be made to Knox and his life-work, his glory undoubtedly is that he has part and lot in that word of Christ: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Knox's work has the quality of permanence. It has stood for over three centuries, and it will be famous in a future day when the clever, worldly-minded brilliancy of the politicians and penmen of the twentieth century has quite vanished from the memory of man.

The Tedium of the Village.—From a leader in the Glasgow Herald we learn that some men of light and leading have lately been reviewing the drawbacks incident to life in our villages and rural districts. It is held that the rush to the large cities, which is such a feature of our time, is very much caused by the thirst that besets the villager for a faster and more interesting existence than his monotonous township affords. This theory contains a large degree of truth. The desire for novelty and excitement is a constant factor in human nature, and there is a whirl of business and of pleasure, and an abundance of society in the city, to which young unencumbered people of both sexes may abandon themselves freely. Persons of all tastes and tendencies will find there kindred spirits with whom to improve their time or divert their leisure. It may be conceded that human existence in districts so rural as hardly to contain a village is ill-circumstanced for many important ends and uses of life. It seems to be the Divine plan of society that while agriculture remains the staple employment of mankind, towns and populous places for the cultivation of the arts, the sciences, and the refinements of life should be abundantly planted on the face of the habitable earth. But the present day

spectacle of a few monster cities devouring the population and the prosperity of innumerable glens and villages, is a thing of evil omen, and in its last analysis brings us face to face with the fact of original sin. That mighty thirst for money which besets the landlord class, and which produces evictions and depopulations, may result in some present access of the means of fashionable pleasure, but the country is thereby denuded of a race of hardy industrious yeomen and peasants, who constitute the true wealth and defence of the nation. The long result of time will show that a selfish policy of landowning, which violates the instinct of neighbourliness in its dealings with the tenantry, is also a policy of financial folly and national ruin. As for deluded young people who have a useful prospect opening before them in their quiet village sphere, but who discontentedly conceive that they must see life in the city in order to be happy, their day dreams are erroneous and bad. The pursuit of their flighty programme is a mere revolt against the providence of God, and will result in damage and disappointment to themselves. The scene of excitement and noise which they have coveted to enter will, in due course, sicken them, and then they may vainly desire to escape again to those fresh fields and breezy shores that they spurned in the heat and rashness of their wayward youth.

The pervading idea of some schemes which are set on foot to brighten the existence of the unprivileged villager is to assimilate him as nearly as possible to his city brother, as if, forsooth, the city man's existence was an ideal thing. Thus, one philanthropist, mentioned by the Herald, proposes to gladden the neglected rustic with the radiance of arc lamps in the evening. In most villages of any consequence libraries and reading-rooms are already established, but their popularity is not remarkable. The simple country youth perversely prefers the time-honoured diversions of his predecessors—the smoke at the road-end and the tipple in the village inn, seasoned with such topics of remark as the time of day affords. The truth is, life both in town and country sadly wants some new element to give it zest and interest. The God of Heaven has appointed the Gospel of His Son to be the abiding source of joy and strength to men and nations. If the people and their guides will despise and neglect this Divine provision, they are doomed to mount perpetually the tread mill of vanity and disappointment, and to find the excitement of the city and the fresh air of the country alike powerless to banish the care and gloom.

At the close of the 72nd Psalm we have an interesting and beautiful picture of diffusive prosperity that prevails alike in the quiet country and the busy town—"There shall be an handful of corn in the earth on the top of the mountain; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." These words, no doubt, have an excellent spiritual significance, but their direct, primary meaning is also

good. They tell us that, in that bright future day of the triumph of Christ's kingdom, the rectified, well-balanced mental state of a regenerated people shall declare itself outwardly by the harmonious, well-ordered condition of the classes and masses alike. The city shall be prosperous, but not after the present unequal, ill-assorted fashion of riotous abundance in the west-end and squalid poverty in the east. The common people shall then flourish like grass refreshed by sun and shower. Nor will the overgrown city stand amid the depressing prospect of rural depopulation and decay. When the God of Heaven arises, after ages of man's experimenting to build a perfect fabric of human society, there will then be busy, healthy commercial towns and smiling farmlands on all sides stretching to the horizon. Husbandry will then be so vigorous and successful that the very mountains will be green and arable, and the thin earth on the summit, being sown with corn, will yield a harvest luxuriant as Lebanon.

"The earth her fruit shall yield, Our God shall blessing send, God shall us bless; man shall Him fear Unto earth's utmost ena."

Popish Music by a Presbyterian Choir. The choir of St. George's Established Church, Edinburgh, under the auspices of the minister (Dr. Scott) and the Kirk-Session recently gave a concert of sacred music in the Music Hall. The main feature of the programme was a piece of music composed for the Popish observance of the Mass by a famous author, Palestrina, some 340 years ago, and known as "Missa Papae Marcelli," the Mass of Pope Marcellus. It is to be feared that this dabbling in Mass music is preparing the way for the embrace of the idolatrous sacrifice of the Mass itself in due time. The choir is an institution that has never been known to bring forth any really good fruit in connection with the worship of God, but has been almost invariably a demoralising influence in congregations.

Edinburgh Council and "Sunday" Concerts.—It is somewhat refreshing to notice that the Edinburgh Town Council has given its voice by a majority against the letting of the Waverley Market for concerts on Sabbath evenings, conducted by that modern abomination "The Sunday Society." The Council also refused to pass a motion to the effect that they themselves should adopt the practice of providing concerts on Sabbath evenings in their halls. May the Most High strengthen them more and more in the attitude they have taken up! For assuredly the Sabbash desecration in our large cities is gradually dragging down the common people deeper and deeper into the mire of moral degradation and social misery. The enemies of the holy day of rest in our communities are not only the enemies of the glory of God but also of the good of humanity.

Obituary Notices.—It is with deep sorrow we learn the decease of Angus Gray, Lairg, another of the venerable fathers of the Church and one of the most massive personalities within her borders. He passed away on the evening of Tuesday, the 24th February, at the advanced age of upwards of 93 years. His death, coming so soon after that of the beloved Mr. George Macleod, will be all the more keenly felt by our friends in Lairg. The loss, however, is equally shared by the whole Church.—We also regret to learn that our Ullapool congregation has been bereaved of one of its most worthy members in the person of Mr. Kenneth Urquhart.

A Moral Lecture to Dishonest Divines.—Mr. Andrew Lang, the eminent litterateur, writing in Longman's Magazine on that new product of the "Higher Criticism," the Encyclopædia Biblica, delivers himself thus concerning the freethinking clergyman who has signed a definite creed:-"He is under certain obligations-in honour, if not in law-to uphold, or certainly not to attack, a given set of beliefs. If he holds none of them, but still preaches them, that is between himself and his conscience. If his conscience does not tell him that he is a sneak, a humbug, and a hypocrite, he will be so much the happier. If he chooses to have, in one sense, the courage of his opinions and other people's opinions, and to publish ideas which leave the religion he professes with no more historical basis than the tale of Troy, nobody will interfere with him. Nobody will deprive him of his bishopric. Still, his conduct is amazing to the lay mind. To that unsophisticated intellect it seems that such a man has a plain course before him. He should send in his papers. After that he would be free to invent any theories, however absurd, and to promulgate any mythological hypotheses, however antiquated and obsolete. How these things can be done with honour, while a man wears the uniform of any Christian sect, is a mystery to the laity."

Church Motes.

INDUCTION IN EDINBURGH.—The induction of the Rev. Alexander Stewart, Oban, in Edinburgh, is (D.v.) to take place on Thursday evening, the 19th March.

COMMUNIONS.—Portree, 2nd Sabbath of this month; Greenock, 1st Sabbath of April; Lochgilphead, 2nd.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Rev. Neil Cameron begs to acknowledge, with thanks, a donation to St. Jude's Building Fund of 10s. from A Friend, Inverness.