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The Unlettered Christian and the Bible.

IT is no doubt a great puzzle to such men as the Higher Critics that the ordinary Christian, who has never been taught in the schools, has so deep and decided a belief in the infallibility of the Scriptures. These critics, of course, in the majesty of their learning, attribute this belief to the unlettered ignorance of the common people. The latter have not studied Greek or Hebrew or the principles of criticism, and therefore are incapable of a thorough inquiry into the truth. Besides, they accept without examination the traditional views of their forefathers, and so are entirely prejudiced against any new view whatsoever that may be taken of the Bible. This is the usual learned representation of the case, but if it be duly examined it will be seen to be a very unfair and pernicious one, and one that does not recognise *all* the facts which ought to be taken into account.

1. We make bold to say that there is open to the unlettered Christian a source of light and conviction in regard to the Bible that is of more value than all intellectual sources combined, and that is of the most indispensable importance to all men whether learned or illiterate; we refer to the Divine Instructor, the Holy Spirit of God, whose office it is to bear witness by and with the Word in the hearts and understandings of men. In fact, our Confession of Faith, in treating of Holy Scripture, says that "our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts." There are other evidences that abundantly show the Bible to be the Word of the living God, but the *full* assurance of its infallible truth and divine authority is by the teaching of the Spirit. This, the greatest of all sources of light and knowledge, is open to the most ignorant, and without this the most learned student of the Scriptures lacks an absolutely essential requisite to a satisfactory understanding of the character of the sacred volume. It is thus apparent that the simplest

Christian *with* the Spirit has an entire advantage over the most profound scholar *without* the Spirit. Not that we cherish the absurd idea that the Spirit and scholarship are antagonistic to one another. The time was when there were many men of the highest learning and intellect within the bounds of the visible Church who were also deeply taught of the Spirit; but the Bible suffered nothing at their hands; all their scholarship, both human and divine, was employed to establish and defend the Divine inspiration and perfect integrity of Holy Scripture. We therefore refuse to believe for a moment that the Higher Critics of our day are taught of God's Spirit, whatever their pretensions may be. It is very clear that a false, a lying spirit has gone out among the prophets, so that, deceived themselves, they also deceived others on matters of momentous importance. It is the Scripture which the Holy Spirit employs as the seed and sustenance of the Kingdom of God, as well as "the sword" of its defence and victory, and so they who are doing their utmost to destroy this seed and sword are acting in direct opposition to the Spirit of God, and are thus proving themselves to be enemies of Christ's Kingdom in the world. To take any different view is to affirm that the Spirit is divided against Himself—yea, that the Son of God, who has set His infallible seal to Holy Scripture, is divided against Himself, than which nothing can be more absurd or blasphemous.

The unlettered Christian, then, who is illuminated by the Divine Spirit is not a personality to be contemptuously despised in the matter of his faith in the Bible; he may lift up his head boldly in the presence of all unbelievers and infidels, for his faith does not stand in the erring wisdom of men, but in the power of the God of truth.

2. The ordinary Christian has heard by the Spirit the voice of God speaking to him through the Word. This experience was no piece of illusion or imagination. The impression was too deep and lasting for that. The voice was a greater reality to him than all other voices. Every other call addressed him in the world became as nothing before the call of God. And now it is the voice of the Eternal he listens for as the source of light and direction at every step of his pathway. The word of man is little in his estimation. Again, this Divine voice was no mere echo of the inner thought of him that heard it. It came from the outside; it came from above; it was a voice from the Throne of God and of the Lamb—a direct, supernatural communication. True, the medium was the written Word, penned by Moses or Isaiah, John or Paul, or some other inspired writer, but the original author of the Word was God Himself; and it was He also who made it vital and powerful in the heart of him who heard it.

It appears to us that it is here one of the great differences exists between the unbelieving critics and vital Christians. The former do not appear to know anything of this heavenly experience; the Bible has never become anything to them

than the word of man, whatever use they may make of the name of God or of Christ. Thus they do not attribute even to the prophets direct communication with heaven; when the prophets say "Thus saith the Lord" they merely give expression to the voice of their own consciences. And so when these critics do not believe that God spoke in a direct supernatural manner to the prophets, who recorded His message, what may they not deny to the ordinary believer in God's Word? Their whole system of revolutionary criticism is based on nothing more or less than the fact that the Bible is still to them a dead letter, a word of man, and not the heavenly voice of the living God.

3- The unlettered Christian has experienced such a remarkable change in his whole soul and conduct by the power of the Scriptures that he possesses invincible testimony within himself that the Bible is not the erring word of fallen man, but the infallible word of the infinitely perfect God. When we speak of the power of the Word we do not exclude the power of the Spirit who applies it. It is the instrument which He uses to accomplish His gracious designs, and is perfectly adapted for its work. It is in this perfect adaptation that the Word's special efficiency lies, an efficiency which manifests itself when the Spirit puts forth His power.

What has the Bible done for the Christian? It has done everything for him. It was by this Word he was checked in the days of his ignorance when he was careless about the welfare of his soul and about his prospects in view of eternity. He was, it may be, deeply engrossed in the affairs of the world, or pursuing in hot haste after its vanities and pleasures, reckless of the danger of being lost for ever, when the Word of God came home with power to his conscience and arrested him in his mad career. It opened up to his awe-stricken view the solemnities of God's tribunal, and he found himself a sinful, guilty hell-deserving creature standing before the bar of a holy God. He got a sight in that day of the infinite purity and righteousness of his Maker and of the unspeakable misery of being condemned to all eternity, a sight he shall never forget. In that day of the Spirit's power he was brought to tremble at the Word of God, and to view with overwhelming awe the tremendous realities of an eternal world. This, though a painful, was a most wholesome experience. The Word showed him his sin and guilt and danger. But it did more than this for him, unspeakably more; it unfolded to him a glorious way of escape and salvation. By this same Word in the hand of the Spirit the sinner's eyes were opened to see the Divine way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He beholds that God, before whose awful tribunal he trembled in conscious guilt as a condemned sinner, manifesting Himself as a just God and a Saviour in Jesus Christ, as just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus. O what a memorable deliverance the poor soul gets in this day when he is enabled by the Word and the Spirit to behold the glory of a gracious God in the face of Jesus Christ, when he

hears the voice of pardoning mercy proceeding from the Throne of God, and when he finds himself rejoicing in the light of God's reconciled countenance. This wonderful change implies a translation from death to life, from the power of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son. The criminal is pardoned and justified; the child of the devil becomes the child of God; the captive of heli is made the free citizen of heaven. Such are the blessed results of being "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

The testimony of the humble Christian now is that if there be anything of spiritual life in his soul, if he have any saving acquaintance with Jesus Christ, if he have any hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, after conformity to the glorious image of Christ, and if he has made any progress at all in the walk of godliness, if, in one word, he have any privilege or comfort in this life worthy the name, or that he can encourage himself within view of death and eternity, all, all is due to the Scriptures of truth, the Holy Bible, in which are the words of eternal life.

4. It is vain therefore to think that this Christian will accept principles of criticism that have been born in the cradle of infidelity and that rob the Bible of its supernatural glory and virtue. The most illiterate believer has a testimony in his own experience of the purity, integrity and unerring character of God's book that no power in earth or hell will ever be able to take from him. He has heard the voice of God, and experiences the witness of the Spirit, and so all the declarations of the most learned and intellectual infidels, though dressed in the guise of Christianity, will utterly fail to move him out of his impregnable position. And this is as it ought to be. The Bible was not designed for the use of the few learned people there are in the world; it was written for the purpose of instructing men of all ranks and classes. In fact, it is clearly observable that God has not chosen the greater number of his children from the learned, the noble, or the wise, but from the poor, ignorant and foolish. And so it is to be fully expected that God will give a testimony to His Word than can be received and experienced by the most unlettered of mankind. Theological learning is only the privilege of the few, and after all a privilege that can be attained by the natural man without Divine assistance. Good and useful as it is in its own place, it is being made an idol of in the present generation, and it is to be greatly feared that the worship of this idol will be the destruction of multitudes.

In favour of the Sabbath.—A plebiscite numbering 20,816 votes was recently taken in Dundee to determine whether the city wished tramcars to be run on the Sabbath or not. By a majority of 2137 it was agreed not to have Sabbath car traffic. This is well done on the part of Dundee. On the other hand, we are informed that, for want of time on other days, London Volunteers have begun to exercise on the Sabbath.

Notes of a Sermon

BY THE LATE REV. CHRISTOPHER MUNRO, STRATHY.¹

Preached at Kilmuir, Skye, 13th November, 1868.

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 "And looking round about upon them all He said unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."—LUKE vi. 10.  
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THE account of the miracle recorded here is introduced by the writer narrating some of the circumstances connected with it. It happened that the Saviour went on another Sabbath day into the synagogue and taught the people. It seems, though they put others out of the synagogue for acknowledging Him as the Messiah, that they had no courage, at least as yet, to cast Him out, or to prevent His teaching the people. The reason why they did not attempt it was the favour which the common people everywhere showed towards Him; and together with this, there was an authority accompanying His teaching and presence that overawed them and kept them in check or under restraint so far that as yet none ventured to lay violent hands on Him. They, however, spoke against Him, and sought on every opportunity some grounds on which they could accuse Him, and get Him condemned by the law. They were here in the synagogue professing to worship God and to learn out of His law or word, for Moses and the prophets were read there on every Sabbath; but instead of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, they were watching Him who came from God in order to find occasion against Him to arraign Him before their legal tribunals.

It is to be feared these men have representatives in our modern assemblies for worship; that is, persons who come not to worship, not to be instructed, but to find fault, and therefore to have an excuse, according to their own view of matters, for neglecting worship and for condemning all gospel institutions and all who maintain them. Their presence and the sinful motives that actuated them did not prevent Christ from teaching. He knew their need of being instructed, and felt pity towards them and all others under the influence of ignorance and unbelief; and therefore, as one anointed to preach good tidings to the meek and declare the acceptable year of the Lord, He availed Himself of the present opportunity to declare the gospel of the Kingdom. This is the duty to which all ministers are called, namely, to declare the truth, whether men will hear or forbear.

Christ saw one person in the audience that attracted His particular attention; and what was it that drew His attention to

¹ From Mr. Munro's own MS. and hitherto unpublished.—ED.

him? It was a certain infirmity under which he laboured, which did not affect his whole body, but only one member thereof. But it was one of the most useful members, even the right hand, the use of which is well known to all, and the loss of which must be felt as a great calamity by everyone who labours under that disadvantage. From an expression in one of the Psalms—the 137th, verse 5th—we learn that its loss was counted a heavy calamity among the Jews, as well as it is among other nations and peoples, for one deprived of its use is almost unfit for any work, and so far for earning his bread. On seeing him, Christ no doubt was moved with compassion for him, for He pitied people who laboured under bodily ailments and wants, for we read of His pitying those who had stayed three days with Him and had nothing to eat. He resolved, then, on curing this man; but He knew how His enemies would endeavour to make a handle of this against Himself and His doctrine. He then endeavoured to correct them, and by reasoning with them lead them to entertain right views and cherish a brotherly spirit. He knew they would charge Him with a breach of the fourth commandment, and He addresses them with a view to convince them how groundless these charges were. In effect He says unto them, “Do you not think that ye yourselves observe this command?” To which question no doubt they would have answered, “We do, and have kept it from our youth.” “What would you do in the event of a sheep of yours falling into a ditch on the Lord’s day?” “We would take it out.” “Quite so; and I suppose you would not think that act any transgression of the law?” “No, we would not.” “Now, here is a poor man with a withered hand, who can do nothing to earn bread for himself, and perhaps for a poor, widowed mother or for a wife and helpless, starving children; and is not his case as deserving of attention as that of the sheep?” To this they make no reply. They could not answer Him. They were silenced, but not changed. They allowed works of necessity in the case of a sheep, but would not allow a work of mercy towards a fellow-creature. And by this cold indifference they were guilty of transgressing that very law for which they pretended to have so much holy zeal, for evidently they had no love to their neighbour as to themselves. Thus zeal without knowledge always misleads, for it led them at this time to that which was contrary to the spirit of the law, and therefore to the mind of the lawgiver.

Christ, however, was not to be turned away from His own work by the opposition and cavillings of ignorant and wicked men. His course was like that of the sun, far above all created power and human malice to check or hinder. He calls the man, addressing him by name, or points him out by the circumstance of his right hand being withered. The man, in obedience to Christ, stood up. He was not of the same mind as the lawyers and scribes; he heard Christ teaching, and by the time He

concluded, formed an opinion of Him very different from that which His enemies entertained concerning Him. He would say of Him, as others did, "No man ever spake like this person." Christ during His teaching might have fixed His eye upon him, and from that eye that afterwards looked upon Zaccheus, or that cast a glance on Peter, with such effect, there might have gone forth a power that touched his heart, and gained his esteem and love and confidence. His Jewish prejudices were at all events subverted, and so he obeyed Christ. If he were of the same spirit as the opponents, he would not have acted as he did, for he would have looked upon himself as concerned in what he considered sin. He did not, then, conclude that there was any sin in obeying Christ, and so did not believe there was any sin in Christ Himself. And when he stood up, he thus publicly professed Christ to be a teacher sent from God. He knew what sentiments and opinions were entertained regarding Him by the leaders of his nation, by those to whom he used to look up as his teachers and leaders, and that the same would be entertained towards those who should countenance Christ in the least. He knew he would be accused of transgressing the law by them, and regarded as an outcast; but he formed such an opinion of Christ that he resolved to cast in his lot with Him. Seeing his former teachers, then, and knowing their spirit and conduct and authority, he was not in the least intimidated. He did not fear what this man or that might say regarding him. He did not fear what this scribe or that pharisee might bring against him, and if indebted to them for help in his disabled condition, he never thought of the loss of their patronage and favour. No sooner did Christ speak than he obeyed.

See him, now standing among the people who were sitting in the synagogue, with his hand hanging at his side withered and powerless, and not in the least afraid of the powers of the lawyers and scribes. And if he were not afraid, He at whose command he rose up was less so. Christ felt the peace of God filling His heart; He felt confident of thinking and acting according to His Father's will. Here was work which it was His meat and drink to do from His bowels of mercy and compassion, work which was calculated to please and satisfy Him, and without being in the least disturbed by the presence of opponents, He proceeds to perform it. From the beginning He knew His enemies, knew their combination and their sayings against Him, but He heeded them not. Satan and his emissaries are always at hand, either when Christ is about to do any work of mercy or afterwards—to try and prevent Him in the former circumstances, or to cast a slur on it after He has performed it. He healed a man that was born blind before they knew that He did it, and also the man that lay at Bethesda; and as soon as both were known to have been healed, they did all they could to mar His work. But He was never moved by all that they did or said.

When the man stood up Christ asked them again, saying, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" To this reasonable question there was no reply. "Then, looking round upon about them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand." This look was an appeal to their own consciences as to the reasonableness and justice of the remarks made by Him, and for the time their mouths were stopped; for they could not gainsay what had been said. He then said, "Stretch forth thy hand." To this the man might have objected, and said, "Oh, I cannot do that, for my hand is withered, and I have not been able to move it for many a day; and it is a strange request on Thy part to ask me to do that which everyone knows to be impossible for me, and which Thou Thyself mayest know also to be beyond my power." The rest of the audience also might be of the same mind, and look upon the command as unreasonable. Were he to give place to this objection, and sit down with a feeling of displeasure and anger at Him who spoke to him, many people would be ready to say that he did what was right and proper. Perhaps some here would be ready to join them in their views, for I fear that not a few act a similar part when they hear Christ's command to do that for which they have no power. This man, however, did not act in this way. He believed that Jesus was able to cure him, or restore his hand and so enable him to stretch it out. The thoughts that went through his mind most likely were of the following nature: "I am not able to do this of myself, for I have had proof enough that my hand has lost all power; but here is one that can do all things commanding me to stretch it out, and therefore I will endeavour to do what He bids me." And in attempting this he found his hand recovered strength, and that he could stretch it forth. And the consequence was that it was "restored whole as the other." This filled His enemies with madness. How completely has sin perverted and blinded man's mind! The teaching and good deeds of Him who came forth from the Father, instead of producing a salutary effect on these, only filled them with madness. A madman does not care what he does or says. He is ready to perform any work, evil work, and to speak the most awful blasphemies. These men hesitated not to consult about putting the Son of God to death.

What a triumphant argument may be found here against the view of those who maintain that all the power of the gospel is of a moral nature. There were never more persuasive arguments used to prevail on men to turn from error unto the truth than those contained in the teaching and works of Christ, and yet no teacher ever met with greater opposition and hostility than the blessed Son of God. How clearly may be seen here the truth of what He said on another occasion, "I have not come to send peace on earth but a sword." Christ did not intend that this

should be the effect; but He knew man and how he hates the light, even the truth of God, and that even when it shows him what is good and what Jehovah requires of him. Man's low, blind, and miserable state cannot be more clearly seen than by his hatred and indifference to the truth, and opposition to Him who came in the name of Jehovah to bless sinners.

Having gone over in this manner the narrative contained in our text, I shall now endeavour to draw some practical lessons from what has been stated.

I. Christ, who came to the world to heal souls from the disease of sin, is seen here engaged in that blessed and merciful work. He goes from place to place, and loves to frequent those places where men meet in great numbers, thus proving the truth of what had been written of Him, namely, "Rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth; and His delights were with the sons of men." There was none ever on earth who loved men as men as He did. He showed no regard for those accompaniments of rank and station to which so much importance is attached by men in general. He did not court the society of the honourable and great in the world, He did not frequent the abodes of the great nor the palaces of kings, but He spent His time among the poor, the sick, and distressed. We do not read of His making any journey to pay court to Herod the king or the Roman governor, but we read of His going to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon to relieve a poor woman and her daughter. We do not read of His going to call on the governors of Samaria, but we read of His going there to meet a poor, wretched woman, to call her and convert her to the faith of the gospel. We do not hear of His feasting with the grandees of Israel, but we read of His entering into the house of one Martha, whose sister was Mary and brother Lazarus, and in their society enjoying rest and finding delight in their simple faith in and love to Him, and in the eagerness with which they drank in His heavenly message, the words of the Father which He came to declare. Here we find Him in the synagogue on the Sabbath day teaching the people, and taking notice of one who had need of healing, and exercising His divine favour to restore him. Christ is still present where there are two or three gathered together in His name, and takes notice of any sick soul that may be present, for nothing can escape the piercing glance of that eye that is like a flame of fire. And as He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, His pity for the wretched and helpless has undergone no change since the days of His flesh, since the day He saw this helpless man in one of the synagogues of Judea. Is this believed by all present? If so, wait His time to take notice of you and to heal you.

II. This man's disease may be taken as an illustration of man's helplessness as a sinner. This man lost the use of his right hand by some disease or other that destroyed the nervous energy, which loss, although the hand still lived like a vegetable, deprived it of

all power for work. Man by sin lost spiritual life, and therefore, though he lives an animal and rational life, yet he is dead spiritually; he can do no good; he can do nothing to please God; he sins and comes short of God's glory in all that he does. Therefore, instead of meriting life, he heaps up for himself wrath against the day of wrath, and fiery indignation that shall destroy the adversaries.

Man may think that he does good, as the pharisees, who esteemed themselves righteous and despised others. One may think that if he be a good neighbour, kind and just in his dealings, that he lives in a way that shall infallibly lead him unto heaven. Another may think that if he performs the external duties of religion that he pleases God. There were some among the Jews who made long prayers, but at the same time swallowed up widows' houses, and thought themselves very good men. Others, who hear of hypocrites, think they are themselves better because they have no form of any religion; and many more flatter themselves that though they speak and act foolishly to some extent, yet that they have far better hearts than those who pretend to be very religious. Thus many imagine that they are doing good, and will be accepted by God, while they never did any really good work nor thought any really good purpose. They know not nor believe that the imaginations of the heart by nature are only evil continually.

When Christ is to heal any or to save any, He first gives them a true sense of what their state is, shows them by His Spirit and Word how matters really are with them before God. He convinces them that they are sinners without any good and without power or inclination to do any good, and that all they do is sinful, and therefore that they deserve no better than death. This is not a mere opinion, but a matter of conviction and experience. They are to try all their thoughts and deeds by the standard of the divine law, and find that all these are contrary to the spirit and letter of that law. At the same time the conscience testifies clearly and powerfully that the law is good and that every sin deserves, according to the Word, eternal death. Then the sinner may try to do good and think according to the law, but this he finds impossible; for sin, by the light of the law, revives and operates more powerfully in the heart than ever, which deprives the convinced person of all hopes founded on his works of law. He now feels that he is low; all his high thoughts of himself are brought down; he cannot look up to God from this ground with any confidence; he rather fears that God may cut him down suddenly and unexpectedly, and cast him into outer darkness, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. He sees then his need of mercy; he cries for mercy—and has to wait God's time to help, for he now looks for none from any other quarter. He looks on his right hand and left, and lo, there is none to know him; all help fails him. Here is a helpless one,

and yet if able to go about he is not idle; what would he not do and where would he not go if he could expect to find help? He cannot but cry and groan, for he is burdened with fear and guilt, and burns within with a vehement desire after salvation, after deliverance from the pit which he seems to see opening to receive him, and from the wrath which he sees revealed from heaven against him, and as if it were ready, like an overwhelming flood, to devour him. If he could find Christ he would think no condition too hard to bear, he would think no labour too heavy; and so he is found diligently using the means of grace. A cold, a windy, or a rainy day would not keep him from going a short distance to the meeting or to the church. Many have travelled miles and miles in every kind of weather, and under many outward disadvantages to hear the gospel, and in hopes to meet Christ. And, oh, how frequently has He spoken a word in season to such when all hopes seemed clean gone!

III. The manner in which He cured this man is a very apt illustration of the manner He applies salvation.

When He does this, or rather when He is about to do it, opposition rises up to prevent this, if possible; sometimes by Satan directly, at other times he gets men to join him in this work so congenial to his nature. Here men were instigators in this work, but they failed. There are men still who are enemies to the cross of Christ, who do all in their power to cast reproach on Christ and His cause, who make a mock of all real earnestness, of all anxiety and sore trouble for salvation and for finding Christ as one's Saviour, and who condemn the diligent and constant use of means. And others do the same work by their carelessness and hardened indifference, setting an example before young and old, and so strengthening their fellowmen by their open indifference to the things of the Spirit. But when Christ begins to apply salvation no power can hinder Him, and no helplessness on man's part can baffle Him.

The gospel of salvation is called good tidings of great joy. The saying or tidings is that Christ Jesus came to save sinners, that He died and rose again to save sinners and such like. But this salvation purchased by Him must be applied to each individual. Christ must speak with power to every soul. In purchasing salvation, Christ had to obey and suffer; in applying it, He has to speak with power, imparting life to the dead, strength to the weak, light to those in darkness, and health to those sick unto death. This is what renders indeed tidings good. He comes to such a soul in all the fulness that it has pleased the Father to dwell in Him, and supplies that soul's need. His wants are great, so great that none can supply them but one who has all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Him. He sends forth His word and this fulness, this virtue goes forth from Him and terminates on the needy. He says, "Live," and then immediately life is there; He says, "Believe," and then there is faith; He

says, "Turn," and then they turn; "Repent," and that grace is both implanted and called into exercise; He says, "Let there be light," and then there is light; "Stretch forth thy hand," and immediately there is power to obey. In this way He saves the dead, the lost, the helpless. He gives them power to believe, to lay hold of Himself; and whosoever believes is saved, is healed, whatever may have been the nature of his disease. If a careless man, he is no longer one indifferent to the interests of his soul or to the realities of eternity. If he was altogether taken up with the world, he now sets his heart on things above; if carried away by carnality, he now crucifies the flesh; if selfish, he now feels an interest in his fellow-creatures, and prays for their salvation and does all in his power to bring them to Christ. He is now animated by a new hope which is that of the glory of God; he has now new desires which are after divine, spiritual, and heavenly things, even after God. He now delights in the exercises of religious duties; formerly they were but dead forms unto him, but now they are means in which he deals with God, hears Him speak to him, and in which he speaks to God. He delights in His word; this is one of the rich pastures in which he feeds, and what a treasure he has in this word; what light he now finds in it on God's name and ways; what light on the path he should go. He delights to meditate on God's laws, and at times enjoys that peace which passeth knowledge. At other times it seems to correct him; it serves as a medicine which in his mouth is bitter but in his belly sweet as honey. Though severe and sharp in accusing of sin and error, yet it is a medicine of sovereign efficacy to heal. He finds the grace that is in Christ sufficient for him. By Christ strengthening him, Paul could do all things. This is the effect of Christ speaking with power.

Here we may find correction for an error into which men are apt to fall concerning the gospel. When they hear that they can do nothing, then they are apt to ask why are they commanded what they cannot, and so convert the gospel into a covenant of works in which all depends on man's own ability. The gospel is not a law, but the word of salvation, a word that brings salvation with it when spoken by Christ Himself. But are not men responsible for their disobedience to the gospel? They are; and one way in which they disobey it is by trying to convert it into a covenant of works, and then imagine that they can and do obey it independently of Christ's grace and Spirit.

If, then, the gospel has come in power unto you, it has found you lost and helpless and put life and strength into your soul. Are you now helpless? None can strengthen you but Christ. He is still in His Church. He still goes about doing good, He comes in due time, He hears prayers, He sees the low state in which you are. Let Him hear your voice, and pray unto Him to send forth His power. There is nothing too hard for Him. Wait for Him, and in waiting for Him be not negligent, forget not your

need, plead His promise, plead His love, plead His work, cast yourself at His feet, beseeching Him to have mercy on you. Let not any man scare you away from Him; rise up in the midst and acknowledge Him; in spite of all opposition acknowledge Him as the Son of God, the only Saviour, one in whom there is no sin, one able to save, and one that ought to be obeyed in all that He commands. If challenged and asked either by enemies within or without, Why do you read God's word, why do you pray, why do you use means? Tell them that Christ commands you, and that you dare not disobey Him.

You, who are dead in sins, who can do no good, and who do not obey Him, remember that you are doing all that lies in you to reject Christ and His salvation. Without Him you can never have life, you can never have peace, pardon, and hope, you can never be healed, never be prevented from going down to eternal death. Let me earnestly ask you, Will you choose this death rather than listen to Christ, rather than forsake your own ways, rather than renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh. He comes in His word to you once more, saying, Wilt thou be made whole, wilt thou be saved from sin and wrath? Without salvation from the former there is no escape from the latter. Let me once more beseech you to be reconciled unto God, to come unto Him who now calls, invites, and welcomes him that cometh.

Three Years' Experience as a Nun.

THE following interesting narrative appears, along with a preface by the Rev. G. W. Weldon, Chelsea, a Church of England minister, in *The Evangelical Advocate and Protestant Witness* of October, 1880. It sheds instructive light upon the inner life of the Church of Rome:—

NARRATIVE BY CHARLOTTE MYHILL.

I think it a duty towards God to give a little sketch of my life as a Roman Catholic; trusting through the grace of God to prevent others from being led into such utter darkness. At the age of fifteen I went to Leamington; there I made the acquaintance of a young lady, G. H., a Roman Catholic. I was at that time a member of the Church of England, but very insufficiently instructed in its doctrines. No wonder then that my friend succeeded after a little time in drawing me to her church in Warwick—the first time in my life I had ever entered a Roman Catholic Church. The beautiful music and singing quite overpowered me. The Sabbath following I went to my own church; but no, it had not the same charm for me, I wanted something to fascinate my senses. Being very fond of Miss H., I had the misfortune to open my heart to her. Immediately she told me that it was my duty to see a priest, but at the time I scorned the very idea, as I knew it would be going

against my parents' wishes, and disobeying them in every respect. But what was I to do? I could not remain as I was. At last I told Miss H. that I would write to my father and explain to him my feelings; but she assured me I was placing my soul in a most dangerous position, and that God would not bless me unless I saw a priest first, and then I could follow his advice. Consequently, I did so, and after his advice took instructions to be received into the Roman Catholic Church, without letting my family know; during that time God alone knows all I suffered mentally. Six months after, I returned to my home. I tried to continue receiving instructions from another priest, but it was impossible, as I seldom went out alone. I then wrote to Miss H., who was at that time residing at Chipping Camden, Gloucestershire, keeping a school under the Earl of Gainsborough. I told her how unhappy I was, and that it was impossible to continue my "instructions." After a long correspondence she at last told me that I must sacrifice my home and go to her to be received into the Roman Church; but I told her it was impossible, as my friends would never give their consent. Finally, she wrote and told me that it was my duty to run away, as the Commandment, "Honour thy father and mother," was only meant when there was no question of religion, and that I was also to remember our Lord said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." In the letter was enclosed a post-office order, more than sufficient to pay my expenses there. She told me to start at once, and she would meet me at the station. The letter, in a sense, so frightened me that I consented. As may well be imagined, I passed a night of most bitter anguish. At 5 A.M. I left my home and all those that I held most dear on earth. On arriving at my destination I wrote to my family, but my absence had been soon discovered. My poor father and mother were nearly mad with grief, not knowing what had become of me. On the reception of the letter, they sent friends to fetch me home, but acting under the influence of Miss H., notwithstanding the broken-hearted letter I received from home, I refused to return with them; this was in the month of June, 1869. In the month of August following—Feast of St. Lawrence—I openly renounced the Protestant Church, and was baptized a Roman Catholic. I felt a sort of external joy or fascination, but inwardly I had *no peace*. Then Miss H., not content with seeing me a member of the Roman Church, wished me to become a nun. That I looked upon as quite impossible, as I was of a naturally gay character; but my love for her was great, and as usual I could not resist her, and consented to make a tour of different convents. In September we started for York, St. Mary's Convent (where she is a nun), from there to Ireland, etc., etc. In all we saw about 12 different Orders, but I did not like any of them.

On our return to Chipping Campden, Miss H. began to be very anxious about me (as I talked of returning to my home at Christmas), for she intended entering the convent then. She begged of

me to accompany her to Stroud, St. Rose's Dominican Convent there ; I consented. On our arrival we were introduced to the Mother Prioress, whom I found to be very amiable, and, in consequence, before leaving, I asked admission into that Order ; I was at once accepted, and the day was fixed for my reception. The next day we returned to Chipping Campden, I feeling most home-sick.

As Christmas drew near, I told Miss H. that I neither could nor would enter the convent until I had bid farewell to my parents. She tried to persuade me from it, showing me the danger I had of losing my vocation, but in vain ; this time my will was too strong. Accordingly, the week before Christmas we parted for ever, she to enter the convent at York, and I to spend a few days at home before shutting myself up for ever ; but when once at home I had not the heart to leave my family again, although continuing a firm Roman Catholic. My friends showed me the greatest kindness, and although I went daily, against their wishes, they did not forbid me to continue my religious duties. My friends had a most bitter hatred against the doctrines of Romanism. All went on well until 1871, when I was introduced to a French Order that had come over during the war. I went to see them with the permission of my confessor, and was at once enchanted with a most fascinating sister, "Sœur Marie"—who also spoke broken English. She spoke to me about the "religious life ;" she quite won my affection, and I confided to her all that I had suffered during the time that I had been a Roman Catholic, and that I had tried to find peace, but could not. I asked her if she could tell me how I could find that peace ; she told me that it was not difficult, that she saw plainly God was calling me to devote my life entirely to Him, and that I had only to answer to that call, and should at once find *that peace* I had so long sought for. My joy was beyond bounds, to think that *that peace* was within my grasp. I at once told my confessor, thinking he would rejoice with me ; but he strongly objected to my entering into a French Order, though he firmly believed I ought to become a nun, but had designed an English Order for me. Feeling greatly disappointed, I told all to Sœur Marie ; who said she believed God had called me to their Order, and advised me not to listen to my confessor. The same day I saw the Mother General ; she accepted me, and desired me to enter at once ; but my trouble was not all over : I had to break the news to my dear parents. From advice given me, I wrote my father a letter (dictated by a priest), telling him of my intentions, and that if he refused to let me go, he would only be able to prevent me until I became of age, as nothing could turn my mind from becoming a nun. My poor father, broken-hearted, gave no consent, but at the same time did nothing to prevent me, for he knew my strong self-will ; then, against everybody's wish, I entered the Convent De Marie Auxiliatrice, 4 Ivy Lodge, Kentish Town, April the 24th, 1871 ; I was removed the same day to Kennington Oval, where

the convent still remains. I was a Postulant until the 5th or August; during that time I felt deeply the loss of my family, and spent many a day of bitter weeping. The Mother of the Novices told me to banish the thought, as it was only a temptation from the devil; I tried to do so. During that time they allowed me to write and receive letters from my friends, but they were all read beforehand. On the 5th of August I took the habit and white veil. I felt happy, but that *true internal peace* was wanting. I received no letters from my friends although I wrote many.

At the end of October I was ordered to Bourges (France), with several others. This was a dreadful blow to me, for it seemed that I was then indeed to be torn from dear old England and all those whom I loved. Being the only English nun then in the convent, of course, I was alone in my grief. The eve before we were to start, my sister having called, the Mother of the Novices told me to go to the parlour, and forbade me to say I was going to France. My sister was much upset to see me, for I was looking very ill from fretting, and sitting up at night to work. I had scarcely been with her two minutes, when a Sister came and said I was to leave the parlour. It seemed to me most un-Christian like to be allowed to remain only two minutes with one whom I never expected to see on earth again, but I obeyed. At 5 P.M. next day we started for Bourges—I with a most heavy heart. The Mother of the Novices seeing the feeling I had for my family, resolved to detach me entirely from them. I should say that during the three years I was in the convent, I never knowingly let a month pass without writing to my father and sister, and very often wrote to different members of my family; but during the whole time I never received more than about four letters from my sister, and two from a Roman Catholic friend. Since I have been home I have been told the number of letters that have been written to me, and the few received in return. I understand perfectly well the reason my letters have been detained; it was to reconcile me to that cruel detachment from those who claimed my first affection on earth. I have always known the convent authorities to act with very little heart in all such cases. Strange to say, my eyes were not yet open to the truth, notwithstanding my bitter sufferings day and night. I spoke of this separation often to my confessors, and the only consolation they gave was, that I was not generous enough towards God, for He wished me to be detached from my family. I tried to make myself believe this, but in vain.

In June, 1872, I returned to England, accompanied by two Sisters. During the time I was at Bourges I saw very little of penances, and the novices were very agreeable one with the other. I did not like the idea of leaving to go to another house of strange Sisters, but the Mother of Novices assured me I should find the Sisters the same in all houses. On my arrival in England I found everything very nice, all seemed working for their salvation; but alas! it was only a blind. After a few weeks things soon began to

take a different turn. The Mother Superior, who was a young novice, very little older than myself in religion, *but the cousin of the Mother General, foundress of the Order*, showed me the greatest unkindness. The house soon became a house of discord and jealousy. She had not the slightest regard for my feelings in any respect—she would not allow me to receive letters or write any. My sister wrote to tell me she was going to be married, and wrote again to tell me she was married; she also sent me her card and a piece of wedding cake, but of all this I was in *utter ignorance*, and have only learnt it since I have been home; also letters subsequently written have been torn up before my face, and cast into the fire without one particle of their contents being communicated to me. My mother came to see me for the first and only time, but the Mother Superior refused me to stay more than a few minutes with her, and asked an account of all that had passed between us. During that time I was suffering very much from my heart and chest, and often from weakness turned faint. I told her of it, but she said I was not mortified enough, and took no more notice. My sufferings increased, but I did not complain. I was then mistress of the workroom, and had the whole charge of the work, taking it in and carrying it home. After a time she left the convent. We had another Superior, who seemed to be very fond of me, but she had the misfortune to break her shoulder. Again I found myself in the midst of most violent women; one through jealousy (because she thought the Superior liked me better than her) did all she could to set everyone against me. One day in a rage she threw the heavy top of a refectory table upon my back. I was under medical treatment for some time, and suffer in consequence to this day. I was *most wretched* at this time, and resolved to leave the convent, for I had met with nothing but *deception*. I entered the convent expecting to find peace and give up my time to serve God, but instead of that I found my heart hardening both towards God and man, and less peace than ever. At this time I had the most earnest desire to return to my family, but, as I had left them against their wish, I felt too much pride to approach them and ask to be received back.

I wrote to the Mother General in June, 1873, telling her how unhappy I was, and my intention of leaving the convent. She at once answered, telling me that it was only a temptation from the devil. She commanded me to return to Bourges. I did so, and on arriving there I found the novices very agreeable—in fact, I found everything much the same as when I left it. The Mother General told me I was to make a “retreat” and prepare for making the vows and taking the black veil, for to leave the convent would be damnation to my soul. I spoke to the priest; he told me *the same*. I then consented to follow their advice, and accordingly made the three vows—Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience—September 19, 1873. The next day I was sent to Paris as assistant to the Mother Superior. I had endured many bitter trials during

my life as a novice, but they were nothing in comparison to those I had to endure as a professed nun after taking the black veil. After a few weeks the fearful penances began. The following are a few :—

1. Discipline with a cord of knots.
2. The same made of iron, with sharp points that tear the flesh.
3. An iron chain with sharp points to be worn tight round the waist.
4. The same to be worn on the arms.
5. Same, in shape of a heart, to be worn on the heart.
6. Same to be worn on the chest.
7. Hair shirt.
8. To lie on the ground and be walked over by all the Sisters.
9. To kiss their feet.
10. To lick the ground in the shape of a cross.
11. To dine on your knees.
12. To beg your dinner.
13. To wear an immense white paper on the head with the most predominant fault written on it.
14. To rise a little time after you have been in bed, say a prayer on the cold stones with the arms stretched out in the shape of a cross, etc., etc.

I showed a great repugnance to all these penances; not because I felt too cowardly to use them, but because it seemed so unchristian-like, neither could I understand why I should mortify the flesh *thus*, as it gave me *no* peace. I began to pray very much that God would make known to me what I ought to do.

One day, whilst suffering the torture of one of those instruments of penance, I began to think on the last words of our dying Saviour, "It is finished." I felt there was some mystery which I could not understand, for what could be the meaning of these words if we were obliged to do such fearful penance in this life to atone for our sins, and to look forward to a fearful purgatory hereafter. I wanted to open my mind to some one, but dared not do so to a priest or nun; and, as a rule, all "Catholics" are forbidden to have a Bible. What was to be done? At last, almost in a state of despair, I prayed to God to give me light, and strength to act. In a few days Divine Providence sent one of my friends (Mme. C.) to stay a few weeks at the convent in Paris. I did not hide from her that I was unhappy, but at the same time gave her no reasons for my unhappiness. She at once communicated with my brother-in-law (Mr. M.), who made it known to my family, who desired him to act in whatever manner was best to reclaim their long-lost child. He at once wrote, and ordered me home, but the Superior of Paris telegraphed to the Mother General, and immediately I was ordered to Bourges. On my arrival I was told to take no notice of my brother's letter, for it would be damnation to my soul to renounce the vows I had made by returning to my family. During a week fearful curses were held over my head, which put me in such a state of despair that I was frightened to leave the convent; and at last consented to go to Angers for a few weeks to try to find a little peace. A few minutes before starting I saw one of the Sisters with three letters in her hand from England; one was addressed to me in my family name, from my sister, entreating me to come home, and appealing to my feelings of love to my

family. The other letters were addressed to the Mother General, the first from my brother-in-law, who, acting for my parents, commanded her to send me back to England by the 9th of March, failing which he should make the affair known to the English Ambassador in Paris, and claim his protection for me as a British subject, and stating that the family solicitor had been instructed to take such proceedings as were requisite to ensure my return. The other letter was also directed to the Mother General from the solicitor who had taken the case in hand, stating that proceedings *would* be taken immediately, as I was under age. The letters were so *severe* and *determined* that, after reading them, I positively refused to go to Angers as ordered, and when the Mother General knew my decision, she told me to go to the chapel and reflect upon the action I was taking. I did so, and became more convinced than ever that if I could get away I must do so, and return home. The Mother General, finding how *very determined* my *family* and *I were*, stood out no longer. She then acted very unkindly towards me, and gave me to *well* understand that there was no hope of my salvation, and that hell was paved with nuns who had renounced their vows; and another mother's parting words were, "It is a blessing to think there is mercy for the greatest sinner." I arrived in England March 9, 1874, and was received into the bosom of my family with an affection that for three years I had not known, and I have every day greater cause to thank God that He has brought me back.

My family did not influence my religious thoughts, but God has shown me since, not only the errors of a convent life, but the *utter darkness* of the whole system. Within her pale I sought peace, *but found it not*, and when I read my Bible quietly at home, it spoke in words of *tenderness to my soul*. I saw in *it* the words of eternal life, and by it I was led to the fountain opened for sin—the precious blood of Jesus so freely shed for every poor contrite sinner. I attended a Protestant Church on Sabbath, March 15, and was strongly impressed with the beauty and simplicity of the service, and after the unknown tongue of the Roman Church it was refreshing to my spirit. I have now found that peace I so *vainly* sought before. In conclusion, I will simply say that my feelings were akin to those of Luther before his conversion, who when journeying towards Rome expected to find it a heaven upon earth—a celestial city—and when he beheld it in the distance fell upon his knees and thanked God he was permitted to behold it; but when he *arrived* there, he found how great was its corruption, and that there was *no peace within its walls*; deception was written upon the gates thereof. Like him, I have had experience of that system, and rejoice that I have been brought out of darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Late Alexander Matheson, Elder, Bonar, Sutherland.

IT is with a keen feeling of our loss that we write this small tribute to maintain in our own recollection and that of our readers the name of one who shall be in everlasting remembrance. The Holy Ghost says:—"The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, and the righteous cry and the Lord heareth them." In this prayerless generation the removal of one righteous, praying person is a cause both for grief and alarm. "The righteous man perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, no one considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Alexander Matheson was born of parents of irreproachable moral character at the Poles, near Dornoch, in the year 1833. As a boy and young man he was quiet, honest, careful, sober and industrious. He lived a very inoffensive life towards men, but was without God and without hope in this world. He continued in this state till he was about 41 years of age. As he was a most reticent man about everything pertaining to himself, very little is known about the mental conflict through which he passed at that time. It is known, however, that the writings of John Bunyan and Thomas Boston, along with the Word of God, were, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, the means by which he not only saw himself a lost sinner but saw also the way of salvation through Christ crucified. He held these two great men of God in the highest veneration, and accounted their works to be of great value. He said to a friend:—"I believe if ministers are not faithful they will not be used as instruments for taking a soul from darkness to light, and if any change came over myself it was by reading the works of great and worthy authors."

When he felt constrained to profess Christ publicly, he passed through a great conflict. A mother in Israel—the widow of Gustavus Munro—said to him:—"If the lepers stayed where they were, they would certainly have died; but when they ventured to go to the camp of the Syrians they got plenty for themselves, and brought good news to the king's house." He was from that day more afraid to stay back than to go forward. There were some known to him in after life of whose godliness he had no doubt, and who refrained from professing Christ before the world, to whom he said more than once:—"Ah, will not His love constrain you?"

In 1893 he cast in his lot with the Free Presbyterian Church. He must have felt his position very keenly, as he was of a modest, humble and unostentatious disposition, and had to separate from a man of the late Dr. Aird's position and popularity in the Church, and more especially in his own congregation. He told

us that the lecture which Dr. Aird delivered to his congregation in 1892 helped him very much. He thought the Dr. gave a very faithful warning to them at that time, and pointed out the revolutionary nature of the doctrines and principles of the Declaratory Act in so convincing a manner that no way was left but separation should the Church adopt it. The Dr. changed his mind, but Alexander Matheson would not change his. He had a well balanced mind—a comprehensive intellect, sound judgment, and tender conscience—and when he saw the path of duty, he concluded that it was the right way, and was more conscientious than to abandon it. Taking the Word of God as a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path, he was kept from swerving to the right hand or to the left.

He was a very serious man, but most enjoyable and free from rigidity in the company of the Lord's people. While speaking to his fellow-sinners about the great concerns of their souls, he was most solemn and grave. The tenderness with which he would, on the Friday, appeal to the young to make good use of their valuable time and opportunities, and to consider their accountability to God for all, was often very affecting. He was a true lover of the godly; but his great interest in the young, his kindness to them, and the delight it gave him to see them attentive on the means of grace, was noticeable to all who knew him. As an office-bearer he was prudent, tender, but very firm, and never consulted with flesh and blood about the affairs of God's house. He went down to the grave deploring the ruin of the Free Church of Scotland. He often said to a friend:—"How thankful ought we to be as a people, and weak Church as we are, that we have gospel ministers, not hirelings."

Two years ago serious symptoms betokening organic disease of the heart caused his own family and the few friends to whom it was revealed a good deal of anxiety. He was quite resigned and composed though realizing the danger, and looked after his business to the last. The last thing he did in the world was about the cause of Christ. He went to a neighbour's house to write notices to the people that the following day was to be observed as a thanksgiving day for the harvest, came straight home, and complained to Mrs. Matheson that he felt pain about the heart. She hastened to procure hot appliances, but was hardly out of the room when he struck his hand across his breast and expired in the arms of his own son. The summons was very sudden at last, but his anchor was within the vail.

He left a widow and a large family to mourn his loss. They have many sympathisers both in the north and south, for Alex. Matheson was a man greatly beloved. May the Lord take the sons instead of the father, and make them noble princes in the earth!

In Memory of George Macleod,

LAIRG.

How! fir tree, for the cedars are falling,
The shadows still thickening come;
From judgments impending the Master is calling
His leal-hearted warriors home.

O rare was his worth of whom death has bereft us,
And straight was the race that he ran;
Few, alas! are his peers 'mong those that are left us,
In him met the saint and the man.

"As a dew from the Lord" on the green hills of Zion,
He shone in the meekness of grace;
But in dark days of conflict he stood like a lion,
Resisting the foe to his face.

How fragrant his words, when in lowliness bended,
He poured forth his pleadings of prayer!
"As the smell of a field" on which blessings descended,
Sweet perfumes distilled through the air.

How kindled his eye as he dwelt on the sweetness
Of Covenant mercy and love,
Or, divinely enlightened, discerned his completeness
"In Him" who is mighty to save.

And long did his voice lead the songs of the people,
And forth in sweet melody swell;
On grassy hill-side, or beneath lofty steeple,
Its cadences soothingly fell.

Deep was his sense of our sinful condition,
And sore lay the weight of his load.
As with steps that were dewed with the tears of contrition,
He pressed up the steep hill of God.

"Large was his bounty," and free from deception,
Sincerity called him her child;
A pledge to the stranger of kindly reception,
Was the beam of his countenance mild.

Like the light of the dawn from the womb of the morning,
Meek saintliness shone from his face;
In Christian fruitfulness richly adorning
The doctrine of God's saving grace.

Friend of the loving heart, tender and loyal,
The last of thy battles is won;
Fair on thy head gleams a diadem royal,
And sweet is thy Master's "Well done!"

Edinburgh, March. 1903.

S.

Brief Notes of a Sermon.

BY THE LATE REV. DR. JOHN KENNEDY, OF DINGWALL.

(Taken by a Hearer.)

“My times are in Thy hand.”—*Psalm xxxi. 15.*

I.—The meaning of the words “My times.” By these words must be meant not merely the several parts of the thread or course of life, but the various phases of experience by which that life may be chequered. Birth-time, life-time, death-time are all in the hand of God, so is each several movement of life between birth and death, coming, as it doth, from the Divine hand, as a new token of goodness and a new product of power. We live, move, and have our being in God. But we speak of good times and hard times, of glad times and sad times, and we must reckon on the latter as surely as we desire the former. All these are under the absolute control of God, and let none of us venture into our future without realizing this truth, The sovereign will of God determined the plan of our life down to its minutest details; and as we are taught that every good and perfect gift is from above, so we may ask, “Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?”

All that is determined in the purpose shall infallibly occur in the providence of God, for His will is His power, and He will accomplish all His pleasure. Without either His permission or His direct operation nothing can occur. How absolute, then, is the Divine sway over us, and over all with whom we are associated. One cannot wonder that souls void of faith and love should shrink from the sternness of the truth; for stern to awfulness it verily is to each. How can they, while hopeless of God’s favour, and swayed by enmity to Him, endure to think of their being so entirely in His power? A very prelude of Hell must it yield to such to think of the Omnipotence of Divine control.

Let no one be satisfied till he can so think of His times being in the Lord’s hand that he is helped to hope and stirred to praise.

II.—The feeling expressed in the text. The Psalmist was content that his times should be in the Lord’s hands. His faith as to this encouraged him hopefully to pray in time of trial, and moved his heart to thankfulness.

To the attainment of this resignation and rest three things are essential.

(I.) A broken heart. — The contrite spirit has made acquaintance, at a sinner’s worst, with Divine love. He knows as others cannot, what Divine grace is, and there is an impression of the Divine name in his heart which inclines him to expect what is good from God. He has been at the cross of Christ, and has looked on a love that passeth knowledge, and has discovered it amidst all the awfulness of an exhaustive expression of Divine wrath. He cannot abandon all hope of help from that love, and he cannot expect an expression of it on the earth not attended

with some share of trial. He cannot be absorbingly possessed by hard thoughts of God as others who know Him only as against them. And his sense of unworthiness disposes him to think favourably of the Lord's most trying dealings. He can see mercy where others cannot, and is disposed in the hour of sorest trial to say, "It is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed."

(2.) Faith fixing a loving eye on the glory of the Lord.—The believer finds in the Lord's name security for the perfectness of all His ways. Shaped by wisdom, bright with holiness, and fraught with mercy are all the times faith sees coming from the Divine hand. Here, at anyrate, is there good ground on which to repose under the efficient government of God. It ought to content us that the way of the Lord must be perfect. He cannot err in judgment. He cannot fail in government. But how rare is peacefulness of heart under such a sway!

(3.) A child's hope in God.—The Divine promise presents to the believer the object of His hope. That promise cannot fail. It declares that all things work together for his good, and that the course all along which the gracious providence of God shall thus take effect is to end in eternal glory. His experience can never furnish any real contradiction of this word of grace. All that God does must be consistent with the great antecedent of the cross, as well as with every word of His mouth. To the Divine eye this harmony is always evident, though, meanwhile, it may be hidden from the child. He may reckon that all things are against him while the current of providence is surely bearing him on to the promised deliverance. But when he can cry, Abba, Father, in faith as he lifts up his eyes to Him who is seated on the throne of grace, he will resign himself without reserve to His wise, holy, and gracious disposal.

III.—The lessons taught by the text.

(1.) Is it true that God has all our times in His hand? Then surely our first care should be to be at peace with Him. How absolute is God's power over us! He has brought that power to bear on us in an expression of wrath, or in a work of grace. Hast thou truly cared to have God on your side. Was there any hour in your past life in which this was your one great anxiety? Your conscience must answer this question though you should refuse to listen to, or to express, the utterance.

(2.) Is it true that our times are in the Lord's hands? Then it is folly to wish to have them in your own. That would be to give to the weakness, folly, injustice and cruelty of a sinful worm the management claimed for Omnipotence, acting according to infinite wisdom, righteousness and love.

(3.) Are our times in God's hand? Then you cannot find fault with them as they come to you without dishonouring God. Think of passing an adverse judgment on the ways of God! Let all who would shrink from presumption and blasphemy seek grace to preserve them from mourning because of the dealings of Providence.

Is it not presumption to pass judgment on the ways of God? Is it not blasphemy to charge Him with having erred in counsel and failed in acting according to His Word? Are your ways in the sovereign hand of God? Then seek to be in His gracious hand yourself. There is One in whose hand is all the Father's pleasure, and His name is Jesus. He came to save sinners, and He calls you to come as a sinner to Him for a free and full salvation. O come and yield yourself into His outstretched arms that He may receive and save you. And from Him, who assures the coming sinner of salvation by His grace, can come no times that shall not be found to have been good when the end of all things shall be reached.

Is e Crìosd na h-Uile.

LE TOMAS UILCOGS.

(Continued from page 432.)

C UIMHNICH air na tha do chomharraidhean gràis ann an neamh. Tha thus a smuaineachadh mar so "Och! cia mòr an comharradh gràis a bhiod ann dhiom-sa!" Tha moran do mhilltibh dhe'n mhuinntir Shaoirte nan comharraidhean gràis cho mòr, agus a tha e an comas dhuits' a bhi. Cha d'éirich cionta riamh os cionn toillteanas fola Chrìosd; cha robh peacadh riamh comasach làmh-an-uachdair fhaotainn air a ghràs uile-chumhachdach-san. Na toir àite do dh'eudochas. Biodh misneach agad fathast. 'Nuair is duirche na neoil, eadhon an sin amhairc ri Crìosd, tha air a chur suas leis an Athair 'sna neamhaibh 'na phost chum a ghradh 'sa ghràs a thaisbeineadh, agus a chum is gun amhairceadh peacaidh a ghnàth air. Ciod sam bith a their Sàtan, no coguis, na d'thig gu co-dhunadh cruaidh umad féin—bithidh am focal ma dheireadh aig Crìosd. Is esan bhreitheamh nam beothaibh, agus nam marbhaibh; agus is e bheir a mach a bhinn dheireannach. Tha fhuil a labhairt réite (Col. i. 20), glanaidh (1 Eoin i. 7), cosnaidh (Gnìomh. xx. 10), saorsa (1 Pead. i. 18), naomhachaidh (Eabh. x. 19), fireanachaidh (Rom. v. 9), fagusgachd do Dhia (Eph. ii. 13). Seas, agus eisd ris an ni a their Dia, oir labhradh e sith ri phobull, chum is nach pill iad ri amaideachd (Salm lxxxv. 8). Tha e labhairt gràs. trocair, agus sith (2 Tim. i. 2). Is e sin cainnt Chrìosd. Feith ri foillseadhachd Chrìosd mar an reult mhaidne (Taisbean xxii. 16). Thig e co cinnteach ris a mhaduinn, co ùrail ris an uisge (Hos. vi. 3).

Tha e cho comasach a ghrian a bhacadh bho eirigh, ri Crìosd, Grian na Fireantachd (Mal. iv. 2). Na seall an ùin is lugha air falbh bho Chrìosd. Na amhairc air peacadh, gun amharc air Crìosd an tùs. 'Nuair a ni thu bròn air son peacaidh, mar eil thu faicinn Chrìosd, is beag is fhiach do bhròn (Sech. xii. 10). Anns gach dleasdanas amhairc ri Crìosd; roimh dhleasdanas air son maitheanas; ann an dleasdanas, air son cuideachaidh; as deigh

dleasdanaìs, air son gun gabhadh e riut. As eugmhais so tha an dleasdanas feolmhor, mì-chùramach. Na tionndaidh an soisgeul gu bhi na lagh, mar gu'm biodh nì air fhàgail dhuitsa ri dheanamh, no ri fhulang, agus gun Chrìosd a bhi ach na leth eadar-mheadh-onair; mar gum feumadh tusa cuid dhe do pheacadh a ghiulan, agus cuid do riarachadh a thabhairt. Briseadh peacadh do chridhe, ach na briseadh e do dhòchas san t'soisgeul.

Amhaire nì's mò ri fireanachadh, no ri naomhachadh. Anns na h'aitheantaibh is àirde biodh do shuil ri Crìosd, cha'n ànn mar fhear-agairt fhiach, ach mar fhear-fèich chum d'uireasbhuidh a leasachadh. Ma dh'amhaire thu ri do rùintean, d'oidhirpean, d'oibribh, do dhleasdanasan, do ghràsan, nì's mò na ri airidheachd Chrìosd, cosgaidh e daor dhuit. Cha'n iongantach do ghluasad a bhi mall; feudaiddh gràsan bhi nan dearbhaidhean dhuit, ach is e airidheachd Chrìosd a mhàin, gun iad sin, a dh'fheumas bhi na steidh dòchais dhuit. Is e Crìosd amhàin dòchas na glòire (Col. i. 27). 'Nuair a thig sinn a dh'ionnsuidh Dhé, cha'n fheud sinn nì ach Crìosd a thoirt leinn. Tha gach nì eile, gach maitheas a bhuineas dhuinn féin, a puinnseanachadh is a truailleadh creideamh. An ti a tha togail air a dhleasdanasan, no air a ghràsan, tha e aineolach air Crìosd. Tha so a deanamh creideamh duilich, àrd os ceann nàdur, oir ann an creidsinn, feumaidh tu gach aon la cùl a thaobh toillteannais a chur ri do shochairan; d'umhlachd; thu bhi air do bhaisteadh; do naomhachd; do dhleasdanasan, do dheoir, d'fhairichidhean blàtha, d'irioslachd agus cha'n fheud àite bhi air a thabhairt ach do Chrìosd a mhàin. Feumaidh d'oibribh, agus d'fhéin-fhoghaintean bhi air am marbhadh gach aon là. Feumaidh tu na h-uile nì a ghabhail o làmhan Dhé. Is e Crìosd tiodhlac Dhé (Eoin iii. 16; iv. 10). Is e creideamh tiodhlac Dhé (Eph. ii. 8). Tha maitheanas na shaor thiodhlac (Rom. v. 16). Ah! cia mor a tha nàdur ag eirigh, agus air chuthach air son so, gu'm bheil an nì uile na shaor thiodhlac, agus nach ceannaich oibribh, deoir, no dleasdanasan nì sam bith; agus gu'm bheil oibribh air an dùnadh a mach agus gun luach, ann an gnothuch an fhìreanachaidh (Rom. iv. 5).

Nan robh làmh aig nàdur ann an dealbh innleachd na slàinte, roghnaicheadh e beatha a chur ann an làmhaibh naoimh is ainglibh chum a reic, na cur ann na làmhaibh Chrìosd chum a toirt gu saor, agus anns am bheil e air an aobhar sin a cur teagamh. Dh'iarradh nàdur a dhoigh féin, 'se sin slaint a cheannach le obair, agus tha e air an aobhar sin a fuathachadh airidheachd Chrìosd, mar nì nach 'eil a caomhnadh a bheatha. Dheanadh nàdur nì sam bith air son slàinte, a roghainn air a theachd gu Crìosd, dùnadh ris, agus a bhi fo fhiachaibh dha air son na h'uile nithibh. Cha ghabh Crìosd ri nì sam bith bho'n anam; ach tha an t'anam ag iarraidh nì a's leis féin a sparradh air, agus is e so aobhar na comh-stri. Tabhair fa'near am fac' thu riamh toilteanas Chrìosd, agus an riarachadh neo-chrìochnach e thug a le bhàs? An fac thu so 'nuair a bha eallach cionta agus corruich Dhia na luidhe trom air do choguis?

Is e sin gràs. Cha'n 'eil aithne air meud airidheachd Chrìosd, ach aig anam bochd ann an trioblaid mhoir. Cha bhi aig dearbhaidhean eu-domhain mu pheacadh, ach meas eu-domhain, suarach mu fhuil, agus mu thoilteanas Chrìosd. A pheacaich ann an eu-dòchas! tha thu ag amharc air do làimh dheis, is air do làimh chli ag ràdh, "co a nochdas dhomh ni maith?" Tha thu cur ri cheile mar is urrainn dhuit luideagan do dhleasdanasan, is d'aideachaidh chum fireantachd d'heanamh suas a thearnas tu. Amhairc ri Crìosd a nis; amhaircibh air, agus bithibh air ar tearnadh uile chriocheaibh na talmhainn (Isaiah xlv. 22). Cha'n 'eil atharrach ann. Is Slànuighear e, agus cha'n 'eil ann ach e. Amhairc taobh sam bith eile, agus is duine caillt thu. Cha seall Dia ri ni ach ri Crìosd; agus cha'n fheud thusa amharc ri ni eile. Tha Crìosd air a thogail suas gu h'ard amhuil mar a bha an nathair umha san fhàsach, chum is gun amhairceadh peacaich ann an iomallaibh na talmhainn, sna h-àiteachan is faide as ris, agus gu'm bitheadh iad beò (Eoin iii. 14-15). Tha an sealladh is lugha airsan, a tearnadh, tha am beantuinn is lugha ris, a slànuchadh. Agus is i toil Dhé gu'n amhairceadh tu ris; oir shuidhich se e air righ-chathair àrd glòire, ann an sealladh nam peacachaibh bochd uile.

Tha na h-uile aobhar ann gun amhairceadh tu ri Crìosd, cha'n 'eil aobhar idir ann gun amhairceadh tu air falbh bh'uaith. Tha e macanta agus iriosal ann an chridhe (Mata xi. 29). Ni e féin an ni sin, tha e ag iarraidh bho a chreutairean, giulainidh e le anmhuinneachdan (Rom. xv. 1). Cha'n 'eil e ga thoileachadh féin, cha'n 'eil e seasamh a mach ann an spiorad laghail. Aisigidh e ann an spiorad na ciuineachd, agus giulainidh e d'ullach (Gal. vi. 1, 2). Bheir e maitheanas ni h-ann a mhàin chum an seachdamh uair, ach achum tri fichead is a deich seachd uairibh (Mata xviii. 21, 22). Thug gu leoir rà dheanamh do na h-abstoil so a chreidsinn (Lucas xvii. 4. 5). Do bhrìgh gu'm bheil e duilich dhuinne maitheanas a thabhairt tha sinn an dùil gu'm bheil e mar sin do Chrìosd. Tha sinne meas peacadh ro mhòr gu bhi air a mhaitheadh, tha sinn a smuaineachadh gu'm bheil Crìosd do'n inntinn sin, tha sinn a tomhas gràdh neo-chriochnach le ar streang-ne, airidheachd neo-chriochnach le ar peacadhne, ni is é an t'àrdan is an toibheum is mò (Salm ciii. 11, 22; Isaiah xl. 15). Eisd ris an ni a deir e "Fhuair mi eiric" (Iob xxxiii. 24). "Ann-san tha mi làn-thoilichte" (Mata iii. 17). Cha ghabh Dia ri ni eile. Cha dean ni eile feum dhuit, is cha riarach coguis ach Crìosd, an ti ud a riarach an t'Àthair. Tha Dia a deanamh na h-uile ni air sgàth Chrìosd. Is e do thoilteanas sa bhi air do chur air cùl, corraich ifrinn. Is e toilteanas Chrìosd air do shon réite, maitheanas, béatha. Buinidh e dha an darna ni dhiubh sin, a nochdadh dhuit, agus an ni eile a thabhairt dhuit mar thiodhlac. Is e glòir agus sonas Chrìosd maitheanas a thabhairt.

Thoir an aire,—nuair a bha Crìosd air an talamh bha e ni bu trice measg chis-mhaor agus pheacachaibh, na am measg sgrìobhaichean agus Phairiseach, a naimhdean aideachail, oir mheas iad

iad féin, a bhi nam fireanaibh. Cha'n 'eil a chùis mar a smuainich thusa, cha'n 'eil staid Chriosd an glòir ga dheanamh dearmadach, suarach, mu pheacachaibh bochda. Cha'n 'eil; tha an cridhe ceudna aige, nis an neamh. Is Dia e, agus cha chaochail e; is e Uan Dhia e tha tabhairt air falbh peacadh an t'saoghail (Eoin i. 29). Chaidh e troimh do bhuairidhean uile, do laigsean inntinn, do dhoilgheasan, d'aithne air folach gnùis Dhé (Mata iv. 3-12; viii. 17; Marc. xv. 3; Lucas xxii. 44; Matá xxvi. 36). Dh'òl esan searbhas a chopain, is dh'fhàg e mhilseachd dhuitse; chaidh an diteadh a thoir as. Dh'òl Chriosd suas corruich an Athar ann an aon deoch, agus cha'n 'eil ach slainte air fhàgail dhuit-sa. Their thu, cha'n urrainn dhomh creidsinn, cha'n urrainn dhomh aithreachas a dheanamh. Ach tha Chriosd air àrdachadh as Phrionns is na Shlànuighear gu aithreachas a thabhairt, agus maitheanas pheacanna (Gniomh. v. 31). Am bheil thu gun ni agad ach peacadh is truaighe! Rach a dh' ionnsuidh Chriosd le'd chridhe neo-aithreachail is le'd as-creideamh, chum creideamh is aithreachas fhaighinn bh'uaithes-san. Innis do Chriosd "A Thighearna cha d'thug mise leam fireantachd no gràs gu bhi taitneach ànn, no air m'fhireantanachadh leis, thàinig mi a dh' iarraidh d' fhireantachd-sa, agus feumaidh mi a faotainn." B'àill leinne ni a thabhairt dh' ionnsuidh Chriosd ach cha'n fheud sin a bhi. Cha ghabhar ann an neamh ri aon pheighinn do'n t'saoibhreas is fearr th'aig nàdur; cha seas gràs ri oibribh (Titus iii. 5; Rom. iv. 5, 6). Tha so na ni duilich do nàdur nach 'eil deonuch bhi air a lomadh do na h'uile nithibh, agus gun aon luideag dleasdanas no fireantachd bhi air fhàgail aige gu amharc air.

Is iad féin-fhireantachd agus féin-fhoghaintes àrd chuspairean tlachd nàdur, ris am bheil e greimeachadh mar ri bheatha. Tha na nithibh sin a deanamh Chriosd mi-mhaiseach do nàdur. Cha'n urrainn do nàdur thachd a ghabhail ànn. Tha e calg-dhireach an aghaidh na nithibh air am measaile nàdur. Deanadh nàdur soisgeul is bhitheadh e ceart aghaidh Chriosd, bhitheadh e do na fireanaibh. do na neo-chiontaich, do'n mhuinntir naomha. Rinn Chriosd an soisgeul air do shonsa 'se sin air son nam peacach, a mhuinntir fheumach, nan daoine an-diadhaidh, a mhuinntir mhi-naomha, iadsan bha air an cassaid. Cha'n fhulaing nàdur a smuaineachadh gur ànn air son nam peacach a mhàin tha'n soisgeul. Is roghnaiche leis eu-dochas na theachd a dh' ionnsuidh Chriosd air na cumhachan sin. 'Nuair tha nàdur air a chur na eigin le cionta, no le corruich, teichidh e gu a sheann aite-dion, eadhon féin-fhireantachd, is féin-mhaitheas. Feumaidh cumhachd neo-chrionnach na daighnich-laidir ud a leagadh sìos. Cha'n 'eil neach ach esan tha ga fhireanachadh féin air a dhùnadh a mach leis an t'soisgeul. Amhaircidh Chriosd ni's luaithe ris a pheacach is gràineile; oir dha leithid sud do neach, cha'n urrainn do Chriosd bhi air a dheanamh na fhireantachd. Cha'n aithne dha a pheacadh, is cha'n 'eil e ga aideachadh (Eoin iv. dr). Tha e furasd a radh gu h'eutrom "is peacach mi," ach is urnuigh ro dhuilich ur-

nuigh a chis-mhaoir, “A Dhia, dean tròcair orm, tha ’nam pheacach.” Tha e furasd a ràdh “tha mi creidsinn ann an Chrìosd,” ach Chrìosd fhaicinn làn gràis, agus firinn, as a lànachd am faigh thu gràs air son gràis, cha’n ’eil sin co furasd. Tha e furasd Chrìosd aideachadh leis a bheul; ach aideachadh leis a cridhe mar “Chrìosd Mac an Dé bhed, an t’aon eadar-mheadhonair;” tha sin os ceann fuil is feoil.

Tha mòran a gairm Slànuighear do Chrìosd; is e aireamh bheag dh’ an aithne e fo’n chliu sin. Gras agus slàinte fhaicinn ann an Chrìosd, ’se sin an sealladh is àirde san t’saoghal. Nam biodh an sealladh ud air fhaicinn dhuiseadh e iarrtus as a dheigh. Is maith a dh’fheudas, nàire bhi air daoine, am measg na tha do dh’ aideachadh air a dheanamh, cho aineolach is a tha iad air fuil Chrìosd, foillseachadh sonruicht an t’soisgeil. Is e aideachadh foirmail gun Chrìosd an sealladh is duithe, ach ifrinn féin. Feudaidd mòran do nithibh maithe bhi agad; agus gidheadh aon ni bhi dh’easbhuidd ort, a dh’aobharaicheas gu’m pill thu air falbh gu brònach bho Chrìosd. Cha do reic thu riabh na bha agad, cha do dhealaich thu riabh ri d’ fhireantachd féin. Feudaidd tu bhi comasach ann an dleasdanas agus a bhi gidheadh a’d fhior nàmhaid do Chrìosd, anns na h’uile urnuigh is ann an coimhead ord-uighean Dhé. Saothraich as deigh naomhachd le’d uile dhichioll; ach na dean Chrìosd dheth chum do thearnadh. Mu ni thu sin, feumaidh e bhi air a thoirt a nuas. Is e umhlachd agus fulangais Chrìosd, agus cha’n e do naomhachd-sa a dh’fheumas bhi ’na bhonn fireanachaidh dhuit am fianuis Dhé. Oir nan d’thigeadh an Tighearna gu h-uamhasach a mach as ionad naomba, loisgeadh tein e mar fheur is mar chonnalach. Is i an diadhaidheachd “gach ni a thogail air beanntaibh siarruidh gràidh agus gràis Dhé ann an Chrìosd, amharc a ghnàth air fireantachd is airidheachd neo-chriochnach Chrìosd, lan.chionta is neoghloine peacaidh fhaicinn air a ghlanadh air falbh ann-san, a dhol an ceann dleasdanasan sna beachdan sin, le aithn’ air thusa is tu neoghlan agus d’oidhirpean laga a bhi taitneach ann-san; anns na beachdan sin saltairt air d’uile fhireantachd féin, agus a bhi air d’fhaotainn a ghnath ann am fireantachd Chrìosd a mhain (Philip iii. 7), chum is gu’m bi Chrìosd a mhain mar eadar-mheadhonair air ardachadh a bròn os cion do dhleasdanasan uile nach ’eil air an coimhlionadh ann am mothachadh is ann an sealladh air gradh Chrìosd.” Mar ’eil fuil Chrìosd air a choguis tha an t’seirbhis uile marbh (Eabh. ix. 14).

Letters of John Sutherland, Badbea.

(V.)

BADBEA, 13th December, 1849.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,—I received your long-looked for favour, for I was very willing to hear of your case and of Mr. Macbeath. I am sorry that the Lord is pleased to keep him silent, whatever the issue will be. He is angry with this generation, and He is

showing that in various ways ; but we may observe the mark of His displeasure since many years by calling home the young that had all appearance of being useful in His Church upon earth. Others He allowed to be tempted in their mind and reason ; and He is calling home fast the wheat to the garner, the fathers and mothers, such as you mentioned. He is gathering them home fast from the evil that hath overtaken us, coldness and indifference among professing Christians. The heathen's plague (cholera) is also cutting down our fellow-creatures in our county and neighbourhood. O how we have provoked and squeezed His compassionate bowels to lay such a scourge on our land. He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men,

I sympathise with you, and wish to bear some of your burden, but I have learned as much in the school of affliction, which I have been accustomed to from my infancy, as that He must cross our desires. for He "shall spoil all the delights" upon the daughters of Zion. You speak of going to a place where you could attend the means. You may get there, and yet you would not be long there when you would desire to be back again to your cottage. It is the Lord who placed you in that spot of His creation; He knew thee before the world was created. There is no place in my acquaintance so unlike my case in every respect as where I am. It is seven miles from any means of the very form ; and I am sickly and delicate ; since many years I am almost confined to house in the winter season, and my only sister that is with me has been in the fiery furnace for 26 years : my niece also is broken in health, as the crofts are so difficult to labour, no plowing, no cart here, and the place is shut in to the rocks, while I am paying four times as much as mother was paying when we came here ; yet I could not think of leaving it, although my niece is always for leaving it ; I got no (Divine) call to leave it.

I am sorry that poor Alexander Stewart is so much tempted ; he will not meet with any nurse like your sister. With my love to you and your sister, and A. Stewart,—I am, your attached friend,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

(VI.)

BADBEA. 21st December, 1854.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your kind favour long ago, and I thank you kindly for it. It was a treat to me in my loneliness, especially when you were stating how that prince, Alex. Stewart, was carried to his Father's house. You were honoured when he was sent from Perthshire to your house to be edified and trained and prepared for glory. You did your duty, and your kind sister, in the space of 24 years' nourishing and cherishing him, until you got his dear remains interred where your dear parents are buried, and you did not spare any expense that was decent and orderly. What you have both done is an everlasting record, as ye may read in the Gospel by Matthew, chap. xxv., v. 40—"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch

as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

I am a poor dark clout under Satan's feet, but the Lord is speaking to me in word and providences from my infancy. I have been at the knee of the Lord's people since nearly 40 or 50 years, and I am in great danger that they will see me upon the left hand, and if they will, surely they will put their seal to my misery, for I got more of their mind and bosom than many that win home to their Father's house with clean garments. I am often thinking of the days of old, and in my bed, when I am reflecting on how I have spent my days without doing anything to His glory or for the good of my fellow-creatures, I dread at thinking of venturing on eternity. O, my ignorance of the Father's Beloved, that came to seek and to save those that the Father gave Him in the New Covenant. At times I will be thinking that if I was to begin anew in the world, I would spend my time more to His glory, but I know that that is a piece of the covenant of works. If profession would do, or speaking and reading, there is not any minister in the Free Church in Caithness, or any in the Established, so long speaking in one place, as I am in this bothy in a remote place. And I am now old and grey-headed, frail and feeble, and am in danger of wanting the one thing needful that men made choice of.

The desolation is daily increasing, and the Lord's hand is stretched out still with much threatening by the sword of that uncircumcised Philistine, the Emperor of Russia, and by the Egyptians' disease, the cholera. And what is more gloomy and sad than this. He is calling home His chosen people, those wrestlers at a throne of grace that the Lord was hearing with delight, and He would grant them their petitions and requests. Dear George Brochie is now glorified. He was a lovely, experienced, and lively Christian, and his removal crowned the desolation in poor unfortunate Thurso. The Rev. John Macdonald, of Helmsdale, is no more. His remains were carried from Glasgow to Helmsdale Burying-ground, but although I got two funeral notices, I could not attend his funeral; I am so tender and the day was so stormy,

I must conclude. I would count it a favour if you would write me by Berriedale. With love and respects to you and your sister,
I remain, dear Friend, yours affectionately,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

(VII.)

BADBEA, 21st December, 1857.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your much esteemed favour of the 2nd inst., and I thank you kindly. Your dear letter refreshed and revived my soul's rusty faculties.

I would have written you long ago, but I feel it difficult now to write any. I am receiving many letters, but alas! my first correspondents have gone home to their Father's house, and I am left and in danger that I will be in the foolish virgins' case when the

midnight cry will come. The blessed people of the Lord were bearing with me, and now I am old, and should I be able to go out, where would I go? The fathers and mothers are called home from this vale of tears, except very few, and there is a set of windy, empty professors that have risen in their place, and have the impudence to stand in congregations speaking of what they know not; they are disgusting to those that saw better days., I dread to think of how the glory is departed. But alas! I have to say my leanness above any; there is not any of them so dark as I feel myself, but I am not the better of them.

I approve of all that you write me, especially when you said that you had come to that of it that you knew not how you came to take upon you to open your mouth, and that you had got that much, "Who can tell but you or such as you may get pardon?" The cause of the evil, you say, is yourself. It is good that you came that way with the fault. I am glad that you mentioned that you were glad you saw so many of the fathers and mothers before they were taken home, but at times you were afraid they would see some in the left hand at the great day. You may leave that to others. I am troubled with the same fear, and if I will be found among the Lord's jewels it will be the greatest wonder, and surely if He puts me among His children, the crown of my salvation shall be on His own glorious head.

I am old and frail, and so deaf that I cannot hear should they take me to the church. I am trying to open the Bible on the Sabbath, as the Free Church is ten miles' distance from here. Dear friend, I must be done writing. I will be glad if you could write a short line, and believe me, my dearest friend,

I am, your attached Friend,

JOHN SUTHERLAND.

P.S.—Please give my kind respects to your dear sister.—J. S.

False and True Faith.

A LETTER BY THE LATE JAMES BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE.

PULVERBACH, 1st September, 1844.

TO THE REV. C. JEFFREYS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I never had a more arduous task than to describe a false faith. It is scarcely possible to pursue it in all its windings and turnings and deceitful ways. In none does it show itself more than in those "foolish prophets that follow their own spirits, and have seen nothing." They are compared to "the foxes in the deserts." Cunning in evading the real truth, superficial in avoiding heart work, and not entering into anything beyond the outside appearance, "they have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the day of the Lord." It is true they see *something*, and such as fear God hope sometimes that it will prove the right thing; but

disappointing are the hopes entertained, for what they have seen is "vanity," and they make others to see the same, and so they and their followers are swallowed up in delusion and error. The Lord says of such as hold this false faith that "they shall not be in the assembly of His people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel," they shall not come into the secret of the righteous, nor shall their names be found in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Ezek. xiii. 3-9.)

False faith is further discovered by the spirit of the world in them that possess it. They can believe anything, trust God for everything, are seldom troubled with doubts and fears; no company brings them into bondage, however vain or trifling, and many hours of giggling lightness never disturb them, but all sweetness returns when they feel disposed to return; and there will be such a sweet, sentimental softness upon the heart as will melt the possessor of this false faith, and assure him it is a holy and heavenly thing. All this while the daily cross is not taken up, nor the world that is in the heart parted with. There is another true token of false faith under all this softness, which is a sly, insinuating, bitter enmity against the true faith; pride and prejudice working more especially against that than against any other thing, and yet with much pretended love, in opposition to a narrow spirit. In these days of gospel light men can form a modern language more refined than that of the Scriptures to suit the taste of people in genteel life, but they are not aware that whoever attempts to alter the true language of Canaan shall in the end, like the builders of Babel, be utterly confounded. False faith will quibble any plain Scripture to suit its base purpose, by which means it retains a confidence in the midst of approaching destruction. It separates itself from the true people of God, and finds an easier way than the path of tribulation; it feels the want of what is called good society, and so it is unawares ensnared, and held in the company of hypocrites of all sorts, and manifestly misses the strait gate; yet it shows such universal charity as to be able to see the worth of grace in the heart of the most ignorant, worldly-minded person.

True faith, the Scripture says, "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." It trembles at God's judgments, especially on hearing, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." True faith is a convincing proof of that truth; and though many subterfuges will be offered, yet will true faith still believe it, tremble at it, and fall under it, and will be taught to say, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and will not so hastily say, "My Lord and my God." True faith will discover the beauty and suitableness of the dying love of Jesus, but at the same time it will see and feel the dreadful evil of sin, and the mountain of difficulty between the sinner and the Saviour; and it is not able all at once to say, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before

Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." True faith chooses rather "to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," or of a deceitful religious life full of flattery; it esteems the reproach of Christ greater riches than the foolish lightness of an empty profession. True faith forsakes Egypt, that is the world and its vanities, and especially the empty religion of the day, "having respect unto the recompense of the reward." In this faith seeing we are compassed about with many witnesses; let us lay aside every weight, and the sins of enmity, pride, and prejudice, which so easily beset us, and let us run the heavenly race, not with an earthly mind, but with a heavenly-born patience, looking not to each other for a testimony of our being right, "but unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." He endured the Cross and despised the shame; but men in these days shun the Cross, and carry their *decided piety* to all sorts of company, and thus get rid of the shame. The apostles tell us these are not possessors of the true faith, but bastards, pretenders, false professors, wells without water, that talk of the word *faith*, and yet neither know what they say nor whereof they affirm. True faith is very transparent, and will make straight paths for its feet "lest that which is lame be turned out of the way," instead of being healed. True faith will seek to obtain grace to worship God, Father, Son, and Spirit," acceptably, with reverence and godly fear," knowing that our God is a consuming fire (Heb. xi. 12).

Thus I have endeavoured, under a great feeling of my incapacity and weakness, to give my mind respecting false faith and true faith at your friend's desire.

Yours, etc.,

J. B.

Church Notes.

Communion.—Greenock, first Sabbath of this month; Lochgilphead and Edinburgh, second; St. Jude's, Glasgow, and Wick, fourth; Oban, Kames, and Lochinver, first Sabbath of May; John Knox's, Glasgow, second.

Tain Church.—Our friends at Tain have bought the former U.P. Church there for the sum of £400. The structure is good, especially the interior of it, and is considered excellent value for the price paid. The opening services were conducted on the 18th March by the Rev. John R. Mackay, Inverness, and were well attended. The collection was £22 os. 6d.

The Late Mr. John Ross, Tain.—We regret to notice the decease of this much-respected gentleman and citizen of Tain. He was a steady adherent of the Free Presbyterian Church, a regular attender at all its services, and a liberal supporter of the cause. He was an ex-Dean of Guild, and twice a member of the Tain Town Council. His death took place in the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, but his remains were buried in Tain. With his

accustomed consideration and kindness, he left in his will a legacy of £50 for behoof of the Tain congregation.

Edinburgh Induction.—The Rev. Alexander Stewart, Oban, was inducted as pastor of the Edinburgh congregation on Thursday evening, the 19th March. The members of the Southern Presbytery present were:—Revs. Neil Cameron, Alex. Stewart, John Macleod, and James S. Sinclair, ministers; and Messrs Angus Macphail and John Auld, Glasgow, and Mr. W. R. T. Sinclair, Edinburgh, elders. The Rev. John Macleod, M.A., Kames, presided, and preached from John vi. 30-32. He then gave a short narrative of the steps taken in connection with the call. Thereafter he put the usual questions, and admitted Mr. Stewart to the pastoral charge of the congregation. Rev. Neil Cameron addressed the minister, and the Rev. James S. Sinclair the congregation. There was a large attendance.

The Late Mr. D. Sinclair, Lochgilphead.—The editor tenders his apologies to friends at Lochgilphead for omitting to notice sooner the decease of Mr. Duncan Sinclair, saddler, which took place on 28th November, 1902. Mr. Sinclair was a much-respected member of our Lochgilphead congregation and an active supporter of the cause, as well as an exemplary gentleman in all the relations of life. He was highly esteemed by the whole community. His presence is much missed, both by his own immediate relatives and by the congregation of which he was a liberal friend, and where he often acted as an efficient precentor. He left a legacy of £10 for behoof of the congregation. Mr. Sinclair was 64 years of age.

Acknowledgment.—Rev. Neil Cameron acknowledges with thanks the sum of 10s. from "A Friend," Gairloch, for St. Jude's Building Fund.

Donation from Australia.—The Rev. Walter Scott, New South Wales, has kindly forwarded the sum of £8 3s. 4d, a collection on behalf of our Foreign Mission Fund, taken by his congregation (Brushgrove-Grafton) of the Free Presbyterian Church in that colony.

Notes and Comments.

Organ in the late Dr. Begg's Church.—The times are full of change. Twenty years have scarcely passed away since the death of the Rev. Dr. James Begg, the doughty champion of pure doctrine and worship in the Free Church, but now the organ, against which he protested so faithfully as a feature of public worship, is erected in the very building where he ministered, and is blessed by his successor who solemnly vowed to maintain the same principles as he held. The only satisfaction that remains—and it is a melancholy one at best—is that Newington Free Church is not Free now, but is in bondage to a degenerate ecclesiastical organisation which is neither United nor Free, though it claims to be both.

A Deed of Horror.—On Wednesday, March 26th, General Hector Macdonald, the hero of Omdurman, shot himself through the head in a Paris hotel. The news fell like a thunderbolt on his countrymen, for the man was a popular idol. He had been for the last year stationed at Ceylon, but was presently in London on some business with the War Office—business whose nature was vague. Latterly rumours were rife concerning grave charges lying against Sir Hector, and it appears that after a very brief stay in London he was sent off again to stand his trial by court-martial in Ceylon. He did not, however, reach Ceylon. His career terminated with a five days' sojourn in Paris and a suicide's death by pistol shot. Over the causes which led to this tragedy darkness at present broods. We, in common with our countrymen, were touched with pride to think of the obscure Highland lad who rose from the ranks by sheer merit and bravery, and our regrets are keen that so much strength and manliness should sink into a grave of shame.

Notes on Romanism.—Under the title of "The Convent Pestilence" there is published a narrative of some of the dubious doings of the Pope's female officers, the nuns. These ladies are shown to be adepts in the direction of deceit, cruelty, and even crime. They are, like that able generalissimo of Satan, the Pope, abnormally greedy, as most of their reprehensible doings tend in the direction of acquiring property, or covering up traces of its acquisition by wrong means. Having divested themselves of the ordinary tenderness of their sex, they appear to have developed some of the characteristics of tigresses. In pursuit of power and wealth the convents have established schools and workrooms of various sorts. These places are not like others, under Government inspection, so that overwork, starvation, and cruelty are known to largely exist in them. In the "Convent Pestilence" instances are given of neglect in illness, enforced confinement, no pay, and bad food. (One worker speaks of having had to pick maggots out of her food; another is pulled downstairs by the hair, beaten till black and blue, etc.) In the matter of keeping up the supply of inmates, the convent superiors show the most resplendent efforts of deception. They cajole the wealthy girls and their parents. They try to secure orphans, and their triumph is complete when they manage to get pauper children boarded with them, thus securing the labour of these children and their aliment at the same time. How the nuns deal with them afterwards let the reader see for him or her self. Moreover, many convents possess burial grounds, and that, coupled with the revelations of escaped nuns, ought to arrest the attention of the most careless. When it is remembered that the convent superior has absolute power over the nuns, and that instances have come to light bearing a strong resemblance to murder, in which the superiors were deeply concerned, it is high time that convents should be declared illegal, and that any congregation whatever of that nature should be open throughout to Government inspection.