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The Value of Good Books.

IT is hardly necessary to say, by way of preface, that when we use the phrase "good books" without further qualification, we mean books that are good in the highest sense, such as are religious, and not secular, in character. It is to the salutary influence of these upon the human mind and conduct that we desire to direct attention for a little.

The value of good books is not to be estimated by their commercial price. In the present age the best of them may be obtained exceedingly cheap, while many literary productions that are not worth buying cannot be had except for a considerable sum. The value of good books is to be reckoned according to the amount of moral and spiritual benefit they are fitted to convey to the understanding, heart and life of men. To affirm that they are in this respect extremely valuable is to make a statement that everyone who has any respect for religion will at once agree with. At the same time, if the doctrine on this point, as on others, is to be judged by the practice, we shall have difficulty in concluding whether many who profess a reverence for divine things really attach any value to good books at all. If they have them, they seldom read them; if they have them not, they are at little pains or expense to procure them. This state of matters is to be deplored, for a good book is a more valuable possession than most are aware of. By the blessing of God, the priceless treasure of eternal life may be found in it.

As there is no end of religious books in the world which are far from good, it may be useful to show how a good book may be known, and what tests can be applied to decide the matter. The grand fundamental test is, of course, Does the book agree in its statements with the teaching of Holy Scripture? The Bible is the book of books, the divine, infallible standard of truth. The best books are therefore those which are in closest harmony with this unerring standard. On the other hand, no book, however intellectual in conception, or however finished in literary form, is truly

good if its teachings are contrary to or not in harmony with God's Word. All the skill lavished on it only makes it a more powerful instrument for the propagation of error. Intellectual cleverness and literary grace do not in any way prove a book to be good in the noblest sense. Every religious book must, therefore, be brought to the touchstone of the Bible and tried by it. This is an infallible test, and every piece of religious literature must stand or fall by its decision. Seeing, however, there are many erroneous authors who claim that they find their views in the Bible, we would submit a further test that is quite in harmony with the former one. It is as follows:—Is the book in agreement with the Calvinistic Reformed Faith? If it is, you may be confident that it is good in the main. The Creeds of the Reformation, we believe, are the nearest approaches we have got to infallible expositions of God's truth. We do not affirm, however, that all Calvinistic books are free from error, or all Arminian ones entirely devoid of truth. But we do undertake to assert that truth largely preponderates in the former, while error is rampant in the latter. The vast majority of the best writers, ancient and modern, belong to the class of which John Calvin may be regarded as the central figure. The great Calvinistic writers are of world-wide celebrity among lovers of truth; and while we do not claim perfection for any one of them, yet we hold that, taking them all in all in their various fields, we can find no Arminians that are to be named in the same day with them. It may, therefore, be laid down as a handy general rule that that book merits the title good which is in harmony with the faith of which those eminent men have been the defenders and expositors, and which is so accurately set forth in the Creeds of the Reformation.

Let us now proceed to notice some of the benefits that may be derived from good books.

1. The first benefit to be mentioned is this: they supply a *profitable way of employing spare time*. Most persons have seasons of relaxation from the ordinary duties of life. At such times the mind needs something to direct its thoughts into a profitable channel, for it is apt to wander away to things that are foolish and hurtful. There is, then, no better way of profitably occupying one's thoughts than to take up some good book or other. This can be done by the reader whether at home or on a journey. Things may thus be learnt that may prove useful on other occasions. In summer, the time of freedom, the bee lays up stores of honey for the winter. Reading good books is an excellent way of spending periods of relaxation.

2. *They extend knowledge*. Man is an intelligent creature, and his understanding was given him not for waste, but for use. The world of books opens up a great field for the exercise of his mental powers. Diligent readers acquire an extensive knowledge of truth and error, of men and things, of God and His works. They become familiar with the Divine scheme of redemption, and can

detect departures from it ; they are capable of taking an enlarged view of the character and experience of men ; and in respect of the Church's history they become acquainted with the Lord's doings throughout the world, Thus their minds are expanded beyond limited and local views of things that may pertain to their own special corner of the vineyard ; and they become large minded and large hearted, in the best sense, if the things they read are attended with a Divine blessing. Knowledge is an attribute of God ; in knowledge as part of His image, He created man at the beginning, so that ignorance in any form—except that of evil-doing—is unworthy of a creature possessing such a high origin. Let knowledge of truth and righteousness be then cultivated to the full.

3. *They elevate character.* We refer not as yet to conversion, but to the ennobling influence which wholesome literature has even on natural men. It is possible, we know, to over-estimate moral attainments ; many substitute them for vital godliness ; but it is possible, on the other hand, to undervalue them. It is most desirable not to be guilty of this, for it is a great boon to a community when its members are strictly chaste, upright, and honourable in their lives, strong in all the natural virtues. We would consider our country a semi-paradise if all its inhabitants bore this character. Now, the reading of good books tends to the formation of lofty principles. We know that natural men cannot have any real liking for books of a purely spiritual cast, and may find it very difficult to read them ; but there are good books in history and biography that they should find it comparatively easy to read and study. Young people should very specially be exhorted and encouraged to read such books. Parents should not give too much place to their children's tastes in this matter. There is no doubt a wise discretion to be observed. Extreme coercive measures may only end in disastrous results. But, on the other hand, a lax compliance with carnal preferences is also injurious. It has been observed that a little gentle firmness may lead young people into the reading of books that they would at first recoil from. Besides, it should be remembered that it is those thoughts and ideas—such as are associated with the law in its holiness and the Gospel in its spirituality—which the carnal mind most disrelishes, that are most fitted to exert a powerful influence for good. We believe the people of this country have derived incalculable moral benefit from the reading of literature which in their heart of hearts they had no real love for. The very thoughts of God and eternity, that did not kindle any loving response in their souls, exerted a restraining and directing influence on their life and conduct. A famous worthy in the North, Alexander Gair, when asking for the Bible at family worship, used sometimes to say—"Give us the Book we don't like." The divine Book and other books "we don't like" have done many people more good than they will ever realise. But

for such literature we would have been in the darkness of the grossest heathenism to-day.

4. By the blessing of God they sometimes *produce conversion*. This circumstance has been noted in the spiritual history of godly men. Books have been used by God for the awakening and conversion of souls. The biographies of eminent Christians have been much blessed. We cannot commend too highly the reading of these books. There is something in them that is fitted to attract even the most careless and unconcerned, and that something may prove the bait whereby the Divine Fisher effectually hooks the fish and brings it to land. The reader is led on from one stage to another in his reading the biography by its peculiar attractiveness, the less spiritual part carrying him into the more spiritual; and he is thus constrained to reflect upon what he otherwise might never consider. The hook of divine truth, at the most unexpected moment, penetrates his soul, and he is brought to put the question, "What must I do to be saved?" In a good book he also may get the deliverance that he requires, and find himself safely landed by the Spirit of God on the Rock, Christ. In these remarks we are not to be understood as implying that it is the sentiments of men in any book that produce these marvellous results; but rather the word of God, the truth as it is in Jesus. How useful have proved such books as Boston's *Fourfold State*, Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, Fraser of Brea's *Memoirs*, and Scott's *Force of Truth*, among many others, in connection with the production of spiritual experience in the souls of sinners!

5. Lastly, *they promote spiritual edification*. This statement is a mere common place of Christian experience. The Bible is the divine book which is the very seed and sustenance of the life of God in the gracious soul. But God has been pleased to use other books also for the comfort and edification of His people, books that have derived their origin and vitality from His own Word as the grand repository of divine truth. He has been pleased in all ages to make use of human instruments in the advancement of His kingdom in the souls of men. He sent apostles and prophets to declare and record His truth; and He makes use of the writings of His ambassadors and preachers still for the instruction and encouragement of His children. The latter are not of equal authority or value with the inspired Word, but they are useful as expositions of it in doctrine and experience. No one can tell how often distressed and afflicted souls have been enlightened and comforted by reading the words of some godly divine. They have got light for the path of duty; they have obtained comfort in trouble; they have tasted divine pardon in their consciences through the blood of Christ; and they have enjoyed some sweet moments of fellowship with God the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost.

Let us be diligent readers and students of all that is sound and good in religious literature, and let us seek, above all, the divine blessing that can make our reading profitable, not only for time, but for eternity.

A Sermon,

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(Continued from page 334.)

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."—Isa. iii. 10-11.

II. We now proceed to notice the solemn message of warning in the text, and in doing so let us observe—

1. The persons to whom this message is sent. They are called "the wicked." When the word "wicked" is applied to a person or persons, apart from an immediate contrast with "the righteous," it is generally understood as referring to such as are openly or exceptionally depraved, but when it is used in connection with this contrast, brought out in the words before us, it is commonly designed to describe all sinners in their natural estate, whether moral or immoral in their lives. In respect of relation to God, there is no middle class in the human race. All must be ranged under one or other of the two great classes—the righteous or the wicked. There are no doubt varying degrees of wickedness among natural men, but all such at their best are described in God's Word as "dead in trespasses and sins." The apostle Paul himself, when unconverted, was one of the fairest samples of morality that could be found, yet he bears testimony, by the Spirit, to the fact that in time past he was among those who were dead in trespasses and sins, and children of wrath (Eph. ii. 1-3). Let me notice that the wicked are so called on, at least, three accounts.

(1) They are called wicked because they are destitute of righteousness. The Scripture, as already quoted, testifies that "there is none righteous, no, not one." God made man upright at the beginning, but in the person of his representative, the first Adam, he broke the law, as a covenant of works, and came under its curse. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." All mankind lost their original righteousness, and incurred the sentence of death. Being destitute of the Spirit and image of God, they have now no will or ability to meet the just requirements of His holy law, either in its precept or penalty. This is sufficient to deserve the name wicked. For when men are so depraved that they neither will nor can give to God the

obedience, satisfaction, and glory justly due unto His name, they are truly wicked, whether they believe it themselves or not. Not to love and serve our blessed Creator, King, and infinitely bountiful Benefactor, is as surely a crime as to positively hate and disobey Him. Sad to say, both things are too true of our fallen race. Every unrenowned sinner is filled with unrighteousness.

(2) They are called wicked because of the entire wickedness of their nature. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" This is the testimony of the divinely-inspired prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament, and with it agrees the testimony of the equally inspired apostle Paul in the New. He says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. viii. 7.) God's word in general clearly shows that the natural man is dark in his understanding, defiled in his conscience, perverted in his will, and depraved in his affections. He is destitute of all that is spiritually good, and is completely opposed to God and holiness. The sinner may be sublimely unconscious of all this, or he may deliberately disbelieve it, but our unconsciousness or unbelief will not alter the truth in the least. If we were wise for ourselves and for eternity we would seek to make haste to receive the whole testimony of God about our fallen and lost estate as sinners, for it is by the acceptance of the truth, through the Spirit, concerning both sin and salvation that we alone can be saved.

(3) They are called wicked because of the general wickedness of their works. The Lord Jesus Christ says, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within and defile the man." The wicked are known by their fruits; the polluted fountain bubbles forth impure water; the corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.

One outstanding form of iniquity in Isaiah's time, and during the Old Testament dispensation, was *idolatry*. The people were prone to go after the gods of their heathen neighbours or to worship the true God in ways He had not appointed. Idolatry was a very grievous sin in Israel. God had proved His absolute being, universal government and almighty power, as well as His infinite goodness, by His wonderful works towards the chosen people, and it was the most malignant form of unbelief as well as the basest ingratitude to give any place whatsoever to the false gods of the heathen or to depart in any particular from the true worship of Jehovah. Does anyone imagine that the sin of idolatry has ceased to exist in these latter days? If anyone does he or she is greatly mistaken. The same sin continues under new forms. It is not only to be found now in the Church of Rome with all its ceremonies and mummeries, but wherever a wrong conception of God or His Son Jesus Christ is held forth and

accepted. There are false gods and false Christs to-day not a few. And many people who may be otherwise moral and respectable in their lives are showing the wickedness of their hearts in practice by the idolatry of which they are guilty. Idolatry is certainly not confined to the sphere of religious worship. Every natural man is an idolater in one way or another. He gives to self, or friends, the world or lust, the place that belongs to God and Christ; he worships and serves "the creature more than the Creator," and so is guilty of a subtle but ruinous form of idolatry.

A *second* branch of evil doing is *transgression of the law*. There only a few, a very few, of the human race that may be strictly put in the same category with the Apostle Paul, who, in his natural estate, was as "touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Even those persons keep the law, in the letter and not in the spirit. Their obedience is rotten at the heart, and is counted naught in the court of heaven, so far as spiritual acceptance is concerned. No man can give a true and holy obedience to God's law without regeneration. Many, on the other hand, are guilty of open breaches of the commandments of God. They show their disobedience by such crimes as murder, drunkenness, uncleanness, blasphemy, falsehood, or theft. Sabbath desecration is also a crime, though it has come to be condoned and white-washed at the present day. The Sabbath command stands in the centre of the moral law; Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it; it is of perpetual obligation. Believers are delivered from the law, as a covenant of works, but are still under the law, which embraces the whole preceptive will of God, as a rule of life; they are "not without law to God but are under law to Christ;" and so those who profess to be Christians and at the same time treat lightly the fourth or any other commandment of the law entirely call in question their Christianity. The Word clearly declares that the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, cannot be subject to His law, and there is abundant proof of its wickedness in the lives and practices of men.

A *third* and very decided way in which sinners show their wickedness is in their *disobedience to the gospel*. The prophet Isaiah in his own time was commissioned to say to a sinful people, "Come now and let us reason together saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool." (Is. i. 18.) By his mouth the Lord exhorted sinners to turn from their evil ways and to come to Him for pardon and cleansing. In word and sacrifice Christ as the true Messiah and Saviour of sinners was constantly set before them. The gospel was preached unto them as well as unto us, though "the word preached did not profit" many of them, "not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." And what is to be said to sinners in New Testament times? Christ came in the fulness of time and finished the glorious work

of redemption by His obedience and death, and His servants are now commissioned to go forth to all the world and "preach the gospel to every creature." They are directed to say, "Repent ye and believe the gospel." Disobedience to the gospel call is a very heinous form of iniquity. It implies contempt for the glory of God as surpassingly revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, and for the spiritual and eternal welfare of the precious immortal soul. "How," exclaims the apostle, "shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Unbelief is the crowning condemning sin. Thus it is written "the fearful and unbelieving" will be cast into the lake of fire.

2 The second point to which I desire to call attention in connection with this message is some reasons why the wicked need to be explicitly warned.

(1) The first, I may state, is their self-security. Though under God's holy displeasure and righteous curse, they are at ease. As contrasted with the people of God, who are sometimes too ready to be alarmed, they are greatly disposed to speak peace to themselves when there is no peace. Though God lifts up His hand in threatening, they refuse to see it, and though He proclaims coming judgment by the mouth of His servants they refuse to believe it. If they find success in business, or enjoy social comforts, they imagine God is well pleased with them, not realising that temporal prosperity is often given with a curse and not with a blessing. The man in the parable who had goods laid up for many years is an illustration of this. He thought that all was well with him, and that he would have a good time of it in worldly pleasure, but at that very moment his soul was required of him, and he was called to a sad account. God warns self-secure sinners in our text that it shall be sooner or later ill with them.

(2) A second reason why they require to be warned is their presumption. Even when they hear the words of God's curse they are ready to bless themselves in their hearts, saying "I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Many are disposed to presume upon the mercy of God. They choose to forget that God is righteous as certainly as He is merciful, and they concentrate their thoughts upon the fact of His longsuffering and compassion towards sinners. They reflect, perhaps, that He has pardoned great sinners at the point of death, and so they comfortably conclude that He will deal so with them. They also forget, in connection with this, that God only shows His saving mercy to those who repent and believe the gospel, and that all who continue to the end impenitent and unbelieving will be for ever under the just wrath and curse of God. It is very few indeed that get repentance and pardon at the last moment. There is only one example given in Scripture—the thief on the Cross—teaching us that while none may entirely despair of mercy on this side of time, yet none may presume. To make the

mercy of God an occasion of continuing in sin or going deeper into it is to turn His grace into lasciviousness. Such presumptuous sinners, if ever they are to be roused out of the sleep of death, must be loudly and particularly warned of their guilt and danger. And it shows the great kindness of God that He commands them thus to be spoken to by His messengers. "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

3. The third thing to be observed is the message of warning itself, "Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him."

(1) It appears from this that there is a *woe* or curse pursuing the wicked. This is not the woe of men, but of God. Men may pronounce woes and curses upon their fellow creatures for little or no reason whatsoever, but these will have no more value or effect than an empty blast of wind. We have no reason to fear anything men may say unless the authority and truth of God are behind it, though they should use the language of Scripture in abundance. Christ says : "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) In the text we have God's commission to His servants to proclaim, "Woe unto the wicked." There is nothing more terrible in all the universe than the curse of God, which will yet overtake impenitent sinners in all its fulness. Even now, it is at their heels, and distresses them with the miseries of this life. They are here solemnly warned that the woe is their just and final portion if they continue in their sins. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

(2) Notice, further, it shall be ill with the wicked *in time*. "The way of transgressors is hard." They do not escape pain and suffering in this world. It is very often to be observed that those who do not fear God, though they should be high in rank and rich in possessions, do not escape very severe afflictions in the present life. And even when they get off for a time, and all things seem prosperous with them, suddenly the hand of sorrow is laid on them. The impenitent have no reason to look for anything but ill even in time, and it is only of God's infinite longsuffering that they experience so much freedom from trouble as they do. But they are here solemnly warned that if things are comfortable at present they will not be so always. And though, notwithstanding this warning, their worldly comforts should seem to be increasing, they ought to consider that it is only ill with them as long as these do not lead them to God and repentance. In any case, they do not know the day or the hour when "many sorrows" shall justly overtake them. (Ps. xxxii. 10.)

(3) It shall be ill with them *at death*. At death the people of God pass into the kingdom of bliss, but the wicked fall into the abode of misery. Death seizes on them, and they "go down quick into hell." (Ps. lv. 15.) It is written of the rich man,

who neglected Lazarus that, when he died, "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." This is the portion of the wicked, whether rich or poor, at death. Sometimes we find that poor people who have much trouble in this present life seem to imagine that their present suffering will entitle them to heaven at last. But this is a great mistake. Poverty, of itself, will not prepare a man for heaven, nor will riches, of themselves, keep him out of it. Poverty without Christ shall go to hell, while riches with Christ will go to heaven. The matter lies deeper than outward circumstances, though these have peculiar dangers attached to them. It shall be inexpressibly ill with the unconverted sinner, whoever he be, at death. In the times in which we live almost everyone is spoken of as going to heaven at death, whatever their previous character may have been. And this fearful delusion is fostered by professed ministers of the gospel almost universally. But though all should combine to send an unregenerate sinner to heaven that will not change the absolute certainty—let us say it with trembling—of his eternal misery. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." (Prov. xi. 21.)

(4) It shall be ill with them *at judgment*. As already indicated in connection with the righteous, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Sinners may escape punishment from men, but they cannot escape the righteous judgment of God. His hand will find them out at last, and they must all appear before Him to answer for their iniquities. Who can describe the awful solemnity of that day? Christ shall then come in glory with all His holy angels around Him, and shall sit on the throne of His glory. The despised and crucified Jesus of Nazareth, who was covered with the veil of humiliation in this world, will then appear in all His divine majesty to judge the world in righteousness. "The dead small and great" shall stand before Him, and while He sets the righteous on His right hand, He puts the wicked on His left. At that solemn and tremendous tribunal all who died in their sins, whatever their profession may have been in this world—some of them may have been reckoned true, yea, eminent Christians—shall hear the dread and final sentence that no power of men or devils can ever cancel, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." No excuses or palliations of iniquity will then avail. The Judge will give justice to each one. Kings and great men who despised the day of mercy will then have their portion with the lowest of mankind "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

(5) It shall be ill with them *through eternity*. The punishment of the wicked is everlasting. Not a few attempt to deny this truth at the present day, but they are engaged in a vain and futile task. There are no stronger words in the Greek language to set forth

the never-ending character of future punishment than those so used in the New Testament. Besides, such persons are landed in a dilemma out of which they cannot extricate themselves. For example, in the passage where the Redeemer Himself personally speaks, and where He declares that the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal," it is the same word that is used in connection with life as in connection with punishment. Thus such unbelievers must, on their own reasoning, limit the duration of the future happiness of the righteous as well as that of the future misery of the wicked. All such attempts to deny the eternity of future punishment we regard as due to an inadequate knowledge of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of sin, as well as a fleshly pity for the hell-deserving. Souls that have been deeply convinced of sin in their consciences have felt that hell was the only place good enough for them, and to which they deserved to go; and they were no worse than others in their lives. There is a false love as well as a true for the souls of men, and that love which overlooks the righteousness of God and the just desert of iniquity is of the devil and not of Christ. No one declared with greater clearness and solemnity the never-ending punishment of the lost than did He who was eternal love incarnate. O you, my friends, who are still without Christ, and still in your sins, turn a deaf ear to the ensnaring voice of the devil who endeavours to deceive you with false hopes for the future, and hear the voice of God saying, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die!" Be assured in the very depths of your souls that there is an awful day coming, to which the Word of God bears unerring testimony, a day "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe." (2 Thess. i. 7-10.)

4. The fourth point we observe in the text is the grounds on which it is declared it shall be ill with the wicked. "For the reward of his hands shall be given him."

(1) Notice that it is sin, and not God, that is the immediate cause of a sinner's punishment. God is the just judge who must condemn transgressors, but it is our own sin that is the meritorious basis of the punishment. Sin deserves wages, and "the wages of sin is death." Many in our time, in their infidelity and blasphemy, misrepresent this doctrine as that of "a cruel God tormenting His creatures," forgetting that God is not angry with us as creatures, but as sinners. The right way of putting the matter is "a just God punishing sinners." Does not the Lord Himself with infinite tenderness and authority give this message to His servants to declare: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that

the wicked turn from his way and live ; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die. O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxx. 11.)

(2) Observe that every man will be punished according to the guilt of his deeds. The Lord Jesus says "And behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his works shall be." (Rev. xxii. 12.) He will give justice to each one. The duration of the punishment is everlasting, but the severity of it is not equal in every case. The heathen who never heard the gospel will not be punished with the same rigour as gospel hearers in Christian countries. The greater the privileges the greater the guilt if neglected and despised. Christ said that it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon, who had not seen His mighty works, than for Bethsaida and Chorazin who had seen them. (Matt. xi. 22.) It is God alone who can apportion the exact guilt of every sinner that shall appear before His bar, and we may rest absolutely satisfied that no one will get greater or less punishment than he deserves. The guilt of rejecting the gospel and of a hypocritical profession will both appear terrible in that day. Christ will say unto many who made a high profession of Christianity in time, "Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity."

(3) Sinners will be compelled to acknowledge at last that they are to suffer the reward of their own transgressions, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." (Ps. ix. 16.) Some are very much disposed to put on the devil or their fellowmen the guilt that belongs to themselves. Adam, at the beginning, fell into the snare of putting the blame of his sin, not only on his wife, but on the Lord Himself—"the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"—and his descendants have still the same spirit. But at the last day every false refuge will be swept away, and sinners will find that the burden of their eternal condemnation falls on their own shoulders. They heard the threatenings of God's holy law ; they listened to the gracious invitations of the gospel ; Christ, as the sinner's true and only refuge, was brought to their very door in the word of salvation ; but they disregarded all their privileges. They refused to repent and believe the gospel ; and now their condemnation is just. And, moreover, you, my friends, who are at this moment neglecting salvation, will find that your present total inability to repent or believe of yourselves will be no valid excuse in that day. For you will see your inability to have been your sin, and your sin, your guilt. O, sinner, "thou hast destroyed thyself."

5. Our fifth and last point from this branch of the text is that it is the duty of preachers of the Gospel to warn the wicked concerning sin and its punishment. They are to encourage the righteous and warn the unrighteous. Sometimes preachers omit the latter duty for fear of incurring the displeasure of their hearers. The fear of man only brings a snare. It is the duty of the servant of Christ to deliver His message, whether men will

hear or forbear. Better to retain the favour of a holy and gracious God than that of sinful dying men. Again, preachers are to be helped to perform this weighty task by the consideration that it is often a message of mercy in disguise. The Lord may sometimes send a word of warning in judicial judgment, but He often has a gracious purpose in it; He has the purpose of awakening some soul or other out of the deep sleep of spiritual death and unconcern. Therefore, let the preacher, with all affection and solemnity, lift up his voice in faithful declaration of God's truth concerning the end of the unconverted. The ambassadors of Christ must warn the people of the sword of divine vengeance that is coming, otherwise they will not be innocent of their blood. It is their duty and privilege to cry "Flee from the wrath which is to come." And the question may be put to hearers, who resent the voice of warning, by those who speak the Word in all love to their souls' good, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" Surely they are indeed the enemies of precious never-dying souls, who never mention that there is such a place as hell from the pulpit. Many such preachers there are at the present day who, self-secure themselves, refuse to warn their hearers of the awful danger of being lost for ever. Such ministers and people will have a dreadful meeting in eternity. We, who speak in the name of Christ, are commanded to say, "Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

Application.—(1) A word to the righteous. Sometimes the children of God cannot recognise themselves under this name. They are afraid when they examine themselves that they are wholly unrighteous and corrupt, no good thing in them or about them. Well, it is right to have a humble estimate of ourselves, yet if there is grace in the soul, the creature will not willingly give up all hope, yea, is at his lowest secretly cherishing a hope that will not be allowed to perish. A great man once said that there are two classes of people in the world—the righteous who believe themselves to be sinners and the sinners who believe themselves to be righteous. If you are truly among the righteous, one mark of you is that you are deeply sensible you are a sinner by nature and practice, yea, that you cannot do one thing that is spiritually good without divine grace. Another mark is that you base your hope for eternity upon the everlasting righteousness of Christ. It is His merits and not your own that afford you the hope of being able to stand with acceptance before the bar of a holy God. And a third mark is that it is the honest desire of your heart and effort of your life to do, in the strength of grace, what the Lord requires of you—His revealed will for duty. Here, no doubt, you feel you come far short of the glory of God; but, nevertheless, though you see yourself such a vain creature, ready to get giddy over any little thing you do in the name of Christ, yet cast not all away as counterfeit, but seek to give the praise to Him

who is the author of all good. If you have the true marks of the righteous upon you it shall be well with you in time and eternity in spite of sin, Satan, the world, and unbelief.

(2) But what shall I say to you who are among the wicked? You know, or ought to know, in your own conscience that things are not right with you before God. Your best doings are but filthy rags in His sight. Time is short, death is near, and an endless eternity is fast approaching. If you die as you are you must inevitably be lost. You are not fit for heaven. Many want to go to heaven who know not what they want. Heaven would be worse than hell to an unconverted sinner. The heaven of the natural man is a happy place without holiness, but the heaven Christ has prepared for His redeemed is both a holy and a happy abode. There is nothing the unbeliever hates so much as holiness. O then, be warned in time of the awful eternity that awaits you if you die in your sins, and seek God now with all diligence if haply for Christ's sake, He may wash you from your sins, make you a new creature in Christ, and prepare you for the enjoyment of an eternal inheritance beyond the grave. Unless you now repent of your sins and believe the Gospel, your pleasant lusts will make eternity endlessly bitter for you. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

May the Lord bless to us His own Word!

Twenty Reasons for not going to a Concert.

BY THE LATE JAMES SMITH, CHELTENHAM.

1. I CANNOT go to a concert because I do not believe that the Holy Spirit inspired godly men to write the Scriptures in order that they may be set to music to gratify the carnal taste and animal senses of men.
2. I cannot go to a concert because I do not believe that God, who is jealous of His honour, and who has magnified His word above all His name, can look upon such a desecration of that word but with displeasure and disapprobation.
3. I cannot go to a concert because my property and all I possess is the Lord's, and I do not feel justified in taking the Lord's money and giving it for such a purpose.
4. I cannot go to a concert because I am commanded to redeem time for good and godly purposes; but while I go to a concert I cannot do so.
5. I cannot go to a concert because I believe that I should please God more by using the money that my ticket would cost in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, or procuring comforts for the sick poor.

6. I cannot go to a concert because I believe that the time would be much better spent in visiting the sick, in self-examination, in reading God's word, or in private prayer.

7. I cannot go to a concert because I believe that my example in going there would do harm; for if I go to a religious concert others may conclude that they would be justified in going to a dance, a ball, or a theatre.

8. I cannot go to a concert because that the Lord Jesus has told me that He will come *soon* and *suddenly*, and has commanded me to watch and be ready for His appearing; and I should not like for Him to come and find me at a concert.

9. I cannot go to a concert because the Church of God generally is in a very low state; the Spirit of God appears to be grieved with us; and I fear that the worldly conformity, self-indulgence, and love to carnal pleasure which characterise many professors is very much the cause of it, and I do not wish to be accessory thereto.

10. I cannot go to a concert because millions of my fellow-creatures in heathen lands, and thousands of my brethren in this land, are perishing for lack of knowledge; and all I can *do* and all I can *give* are required to assist in sending the blessed Gospel to them.

11. I cannot go to a concert because I do not think that when I come to lie on my dying pillow I shall be able to look back upon the money spent and time squandered at a concert with either pleasure or satisfaction.

12. I cannot go to a concert because I am commanded to do all that I do in the name of the Lord Jesus and with a view to the glory of God; and I do not see how I can go to a concert in Christ's name, or promote the glory of God thereby.

13. I cannot go to a concert because I am required to imitate them who honoured God, served their generation, and are now inheriting the promises; and I cannot think that either Peter, Paul, or John would have gone to a concert after the day of Pentecost.

14. I cannot go to a concert because I am commanded to copy the example of the Lord Jesus, who went about doing good, and I am persuaded that he never patronised such a profanation of sacred things as is witnessed at a concert.

15. I cannot go to a concert because I am directed to live in the Spirit; and if I am constantly under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit I am satisfied that I shall not be found at a concert.

16. I cannot go to a concert because as it is I have but very little of that religion which stands in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and going to a concert is not the way to increase it.

17. I cannot go to a concert because my spirit is naturally carnal, and is very easily wrought upon by carnal things, and is thereby unfitted for spiritual duties and privileges; and I fear that

the tendency of the excitement of the concert is only to carnalise and incapacitate for close walking with God.

18. I cannot go to a concert because I have publicly professed that real religion is happiness, and that there is more pleasure in the duties and privileges of religion than there is in everything beside ; and going to a concert would be likely to leave the impression on the minds of carnal persons that this is not true, and therefore I must go to the concert for pleasure and satisfaction.

19. I cannot go to a concert because on the night of the concert family religion must be neglected, the hour of dismissal being late every family would be wearied out ; and I do not feel justified in neglecting such a duty for the mere gratification of the sense of hearing.

20. I cannot go to a concert because I am expressly told that I must give an account of myself to God ; and I do not feel that I could present at the judgment-seat of Christ a satisfactory reason for going to a concert.

In a word, whatever will conform us to the image of Christ, increase in us the power of the Holy Spirit, lead to high and holy communion with God, make us useful in life, prepare us for death, and meeten us for glory, should be preserved with all our might ; and whatever would hinder us in such a course should be avoided. Which will the concert do?—*Casket of Odds and Ends.*

Acknowledgment.—The treasurer of Tain F.P. Church Building Fund gratefully acknowledges receipt of £5 from Mr. Alex. Ross, Parbold, Lancashire.

The Terrible Affair in Chicago.—On Wednesday afternoon, December 30, a fireproof theatre in Chicago, crowded with fashionable citizens seeing the pantomime, suddenly took fire. The entire audience, numbering 1300 persons, made a rush for the doors, and in the pell-mell panic that ensued nearly 900 persons, mostly women and children, were trampled to death. The flames, generated by a spark from the electric lighting, had caught the flimsy draperies of the stage, and in a few minutes were raging through the entire building. The wise of the press are very sorry about the matter, and are earnestly inculcating more scientific workmanship in theatre construction. By no means are they repenting of their Sadduceeism and long disregard of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the theatre and other works of the flesh. The multitude of funerals all at once in Chicago is a thing that made the citizens very emotional. It is reported that by general consent of all the ministers the mangled and disfigured victims of the god of pleasure were sung to their graves to the strains of Newman's nebulous hymn, "Lead kindly light." A Puritan revival is sorely needed in the land of the Pilgrim fathers and among the children of Jonathan Edwards and Thomas Shephard.

Emilia Geddie.

A CHILD OF THE COVENANT.

(Continued from page 345.)

The whole time of her lying on a sick-bed it was observed that she heard and received the word at all times with much life and vigour, notwithstanding her heavy sickness and sharp pains of the stone. All these, together with the weariness of her body, were made light and easy, "In regard," she said, "they are but momentary afflictions." Being asked what supported her, she answered, "First, I look on my trouble as the fruit of my sin, and do think it my duty to bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him. Secondly, I am made to wonder that it is not and hath not been always so with me. Thirdly, I am helped to bless the Lord that it is not worse. Fourthly, means are used for my health, and I look up to the Lord that He would bless them in so far as He shall see meet for His glory and my comfort. Fifthly, I submit through grace to the will of God, whether for life or death. Sixthly, I have the faith that it will be better, for I reckon that the afflictions of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed."

During the six weeks of her last sickness there was not one night that passed wherein she neglected to pray twice with her attendants, unless she was discomposed by pain, in which case she moved one of them to do it; and so soon as she got any little breathing from the agony of pain she would say, "Now it is fit we pray." While she was in health it was her custom to pray every night with any who lay with her, and when she happened to awake in the night she sat up a little in bed and prayed, and afterward she lay down again, composing herself to sleep till the morning. Every day when she arose it was her custom to wrap herself in a night-gown and retire to her closet before she would clothe herself, dress, or converse with anybody, unless on necessary occasions.

The last month of her life she would say in the mornings to those that were with her, "I have had a rich and sweet cluster this night!" and would have named the Scriptures. Take for instances these few of many: "In the 103rd Psalm, which," said she, "I had by heart in metre, I found somewhat concerning my bodily diseases which was matter of praise, but I got not so much of strengthening for my soul." But on one night afterward, being much taken up with the thoughts of death, she was greatly strengthened against the fears of it from that sweet passage (Matt. ix. 2), "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." She thereupon expressed her joy, yet mixed with fear. The next day another passage was set home upon her spirit, namely, "Know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Mark

ii. 10). "This Scripture," said she, "came both by way of reproof and also to persuade me to believe; and that joy which flows from believing so filled my heart that I cannot express it." Then was that Scripture borne in mind, "Speak comfortably, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and her iniquity is pardoned" (Isaiah xl. 2). This passage comforted and confirmed her to such a degree that she found the fear and sting of death thereby removed. And another Scripture served to strengthen her further—namely, "Because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you" (John xiv. 19). "This," said she, "I shall fully understand at the day of death." At this time she caused them to sing the 23rd Psalm, but said, "My weakness is so great that I cannot sing aloud, yet my heart joins with the words, and I have such a feeling and experimental knowledge of that whole Psalm as helpeth me to sing it with great joy and love to the Lord." Much about that time the passage was borne in upon her, "Give Me thy heart" (Proverbs xxiii. 26), to which she replied, "O reasonable demand! If I had a thousand hearts Thou art worthy of them all who art the Lord my God, and none hath right but Thy great Self. Yet," said she, "when I consider the nature of my heart I wondered that ever He should have sought such a filthy puddle as that deceitful and desperately wicked heart of mine."

On Saturday night before her death she often said, "This following Sabbath will be my last in time;" and hereupon she expressed her vehement longing after an everlasting Sabbath. In the morning of that Lord's day she slept till eight o'clock; and when awakened for a little she asked the hour, and being told it, she replied, "I thought to have spent this Sabbath in another manner than to have slept so long." After this she employed some time in secret prayer and meditation, and then broke forth into many excellent and significant words in commendation of the Lord Jesus from His nature and offices, and particularly from the names which are given Him in Scripture. For instance—the bright and morning Star, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, the Rock which bath followed His people in all ages, the Chief of ten thousands; and she added, "The chief of all to me. O," said she, "Paul had great manifestations of the Lord Jesus which could not be uttered, and Rutherford had right manifestations of Christ, but I can get nothing." Notwithstanding, sundry judicious and godly persons who were with her thought that she scarcely missed any one of the names and titles which are given to our Lord Jesus in the Word. She also spoke somewhat concerning everyone of them, to the edification and astonishment of the hearers. Thus employed she that sabbath, excepting the time of secret worship.

About eight at night, before her departure, a little defluxion troubled her; whereupon her attendants called for a light, thinking she was just breathing out her last, which perceiving, she smiled,

and said, "I shall not die just now." They answered, "How know you that?" To which she replied, "I missed that promised presence¹ which for many a day I have believed I shall get in the moment of death." Thus she rested, trusting in the unchangeable faithfulness of the God of truth.

A little while after, she said, "I would fain speak to my comrades, but it can have little weight with them as it comes from me, for I am a child." She said briefly to them, among other things. "O learn a life of holiness, spend more of your time in seeking God, and be not idle and slothful, but work with your hands." Some of them answered, "It may be said of you, 'You have been diligent in business and fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'" But she reproved them for speaking so of her, and commanded them to hold their peace, whereupon they left speaking at that time.

Afterwards she called her aunt and desired her to entreat her mother to take supper, "for," said she, "she may have work to do she knows not of, and it is necessary she should eat." She also entreated her aunt not to go home, but to tarry with her that night. This was contrary to her custom, for she had before this still² desire her to go home at night.

The last thing more particularly observable which we remember relates to something she had spoken about six hours before concerning what she wanted of the Lord's promised presence, and it was eminently made out two hours before her death. She had not for some time lifted up her body without help, but then she arose and sat straight up.

Having lifted up her hands and eyes towards heaven. she prayed in the hearing of the company, pleading the promises, saying—"Now let it be according to thy precious word to my soul, for there is nothing in me!" and entreated that the Lord would not deal with her as she had deserved. She added—"It is only upon the blood of the Lord Jesus, and the unchangeableness and faithfulness of God, that I rest." And several times she repeated, "There is nothing in me." Then she prayed for the suffering people and church of God, for her parents and the family; but her speech fell so low that she could not be understood. Then a little sack³ was given her, and she said, "Now, no more of the creature," and immediately she desired her mother to pray. When her mother was giving her up to God she was observed to smile; and as prayer ended she lifted up her eyes with a pleasant countenance and spoke a word which we could not hear. Then she closed her eyes and lips as one falling asleep; and having stretched down her body she had no motion, but slept with her fathers.

* * *

¹ Probably referring in her mind to such passages as Isaiah xliii. 2—"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; or Psalm xxiii. 4—"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no ill, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

² Always.

³ Sack-wine.

Thus (says Dr. Bonar) did this young saint take her flight to "the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense," on the 2nd day of February, 1681, in the sixteenth year of her age. There she rests with her Lord in joy unspeakable, waiting till "The Day break," when she shall appear with Him in glory.

She was born in times of persecution, and died when the furnace was even seven times heated, yet hers was an end of undisturbed peace. At that time Scotland was wet with the blood of her holiest men; women, too, were dragged to the scaffold for no crime than refusing to abjure the truth set forth in the Covenant. The month before Emilia Geddie died she no doubt heard of the triumphant end of Isabel Alison, a native of Perth, who gave her life, saying, "I lay down my life for owning and adhering to Christ's kingly office, His being a free king in His own house." Along with her died Marion Harvie, scarcely twenty years of age, singing the 23rd Psalm, and saying, "I'd rather die ten deaths than want an hour of His presence."¹ But, on the other hand, Emilia was taken home without violence, the Lord, who hid Jeremiah and Baruch (Jer. xxxvi. 26) keeping her from the hand of the oppressor. Her life was like a stream that gently flowed between green banks, often ruffled by wild winds, and at times reflecting the forms of armed persecutors and weary martyrs. She was in spirit a martyr, and shall have a place in the Resurrection with those who never worshipped the beast nor his image, nor received his mark on her forehead or in her hand (Rev. xiii. 16).

Tradition has honoured her memory as if she had been one of the greater worthies. It is told of her that "she walked always in whites"—a curious tradition, arising from facts probably, but which seems to be somewhat like a mixing of the literal with the symbolical, her life being a walking with God in white.

Her tomb may be seen in the churchyard of Falkland. It is in a small enclosure (about which the kirk-session went to law with Mr. Geddie in 1682) at the east end of the church-yard, surrounded by a balustrade railing on three sides, the wall forming the other part of the enclosure. It is the burying-ground of the proprietor of Hilton or Templand.

The inscription on her tomb is not elegant, but it is expressive:

"In sepulchre within, Emilia Geddie lies
By faith in Jesus, her death did not surprise.
Because by grace [she] had virtue great in store,
Her will² renewed, her life did sin abhor.
She walked with God; in spirit worshippt true,
Exemplary to all her sex, age, and you.
Born in the year 1665,
Whom troubles then did greatly drive,
Her course was finisht in 1681,
And entered glorie in due tyme."

¹ The year before, 1680, Richard Cameron had fallen at Airmoss. Emilia would feel peculiar interest in him, he being a native of Falkland.

² i.e., Her whole mind.

In the "Miscellany of the Abbotsford Club" (vol. I.), at the close of the Memoires of John Geddie, another epitaph is given, not as written on her tomb, but as composed by some friend, and runs thus :—

" Most cruel death, thy hand hath no compassion
Of sex or age, of quality or fashion.
Thou hast bereft us of the richest gem
That ever was extracted from her stem,
(Though truly good and of a virtuous race,
Not any from it capable of disgrace.)
Emilia's gone to her eternal rest !
Earth's ornament and nature's frame the best.
Her tender years fled from these horrid times,
And left them to the punishment of their crimes,
Her nimble fingers were to virtue prone ;
Her prudence was inferior unto none.
Her beauteous face was too good for to be
Made prize by mortals of her chastity ;
So that her pious, prudent, beauteous face
Did so insinuate in her Saviour's grace,
Her soul's bridegroom esteems her worth to be
His handmaid, even to all eternity ;
Yielding her soul's bridegroom her virgin bed,
Even unto Him her soul and maidenhead."

From all this it would appear that she was even famed in her day for beauty and accomplishments.

In the same Miscellany the following verses are given as her own composition, and the reference to "bees," of which her father was so fond, countenances that idea, though the Glasgow copy gives it as wrtten in her name. It may be her own in prospect of death.

" When flowers do seed, the blossom dies.
Young women all I do advise
Their time on earth aright to spend,
That living well, so they may end.
The bees in season food provide,
Which makes them winter storms abide :
Strive in your hearts grace for to plant,
Death you'll surprise, if faith you want.
The trees in spring do flourish fast ;
When autumn comes their leaves they cast ;
So whilst in youth you beauty have,
It seedeth ere you go to grave.
When death doth come and sceptre sway,
Flowers, bees, and trees with me decay :
Nothing on earth but change you see ;
Seek God in fear, and He'll set you free.
Parents, forbear to mourn your loss !
Christ taken hath from me the cross.
I hope in heaven meet we shall
And joy of our memorial."

We close by giving an acrostic made upon her at her death by one who admired her godly character. It has been printed in some of the earlier copies, and is found in the Miscellany already referred to, the compiler remarking that she deserved it well.

E mblem of wit within this coffin lies ;
 M ade peace in time, death did not her surprise.
 J esus redeemed her ; Abraham hath received ;
 L iving in 's bosom, hell she hath deceived.
 I n soul and body, of virtue was great store ;
 A ll vice refrained, all crime she did abhor.

 G race in such bulk no more could be contained ;
 E nding her life, true Presbytery maintained,
 D eterred at Popery, she prelates would supplant,
 D esired adherence to the good Covenant.
 I n heaven with saints, though not by her own merit,
 E ternal rest her soul doth now inherit.

THE END.

A Sermon

BY DR. JOHN LOVE, DATED LONDON, DEC. 7, 1789.

The whole verse run thus :—"I am sought of them that ask not for me ; I am found of them that sought me not : I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."—ISAIAH lxx. 1.

THE words principally in my view are these in the latter part of the verse, "I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

The distressed circumstances of the Jewish Church previously to the Messiah's coming are strongly marked in those prayers, which the prophet in the two foregoing chapters lays up in store for their use. He was far from flattering his countrymen with prospects of temporal prosperity, but warns them that their sins would be sharply chastised and their faith in God's promises severely tried before they should see the expected Redeemer. It is God's general plan to cast down and purify before he comforts and exalts.

Besides the fervent expostulations which the prophet puts in the mouths of the afflicted Jews, while they should hang in suspense between the desolations of the typical temple and the rearing up of that eternal fabric of which Jesus Christ is the foundation ; besides these expostulations (with which the former chapter concludes) he bears up and animates their faith by holding forth to them the prospect of the future glorious enlargement of the Church by the admission of the heathen nations into it, which should attend the Mediator's appearing and happy reign. For this purpose Jehovah himself is introduced as expressing his triumphant joy in this great event. This the apostle

Paul points out as a very bold stroke on the part of the prophet, who herein spake directly in opposition to the selfish spirit and malignant prejudices of his countrymen. They, prompted by devilish pride and malice, then wished, as they do to this day, to monopolise the blessings of God's favour and to exalt themselves at the expense of the damnation of all mankind. "But," says the apostle, "Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not: I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."

From this application of the words by an inspired man it appears that we sinners of the Gentiles are specially concerned in this sublime declaration of infinite grace. Our conversion, if indeed we are savingly converted, forms a part of that extensive work of mercy which God had in view when, by the mouth of Isaiah, he pronounced these words. If any of us are afraid that they still remain in the pit of an unconverted state, the cords of salvation are in this passage let down to them, that, taking hold thereof, they may, through the blood of the covenant, come up out of that pit in "which there is no water."

I have fixed on the latter part of the verse as suited to furnish proper counsels and encouragements to those who desire, agreeably to the commandment of Christ, to sit at His holy table. We may consider these words as now in the mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "Jehovah our Righteousness," the fountain of our salvation, the object, the author, and finisher of our faith. We may listen with faith, wonder, and gratitude to Him as now addressing us in such strains as these:—"Behold me, behold me;" yea, if we are already the subjects of His grace we may hear him triumphing over it as an event already past—a triumph in which, surely, it becomes us to hold communion with Him. "I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

The full illustration of these words, I apprehend, requires that we should do the three following things:—

First—Consider the nature of that spiritual exercise which this Divine call and exhortation points forth: "I said, behold me."

Second—Explain what is signified by the pressing, pathetic manner in which the call is issued out, "I said, behold me, behold me."

Third—Show the beauty and force of that which is mentioned as an aggrandising circumstance of the call; it is addressed to those who were not called by God's name.

I.

Let us, my brethren, consider the nature of that spiritual exercise which this Divine call and exhortation points forth: "I said, behold me."

It is because of our estrangement from the spiritual world that objects and duties, which in their own nature are very clear and plain, seem to us intricate and unintelligible. Language must be employed therefore for illustrating them, taken from sensible objects and the familiar actions of animal life. The gracious exercise of the soul towards God, as manifested by His Word, is, for this reason, here and in other places, expressed by the action of one of the bodily senses. We know what it is to fix our eyes steadily on any extraordinary or pleasing object which commands our attention and draws us off from regarding other surrounding objects. Like to this is that spiritual exercise of the soul in contemplating Jehovah, to which mankind are in the text solemnly invited. It contains in it the following things:—

1. That the understanding opens and closely applies itself to take in just, realising, and enlightened views of God, agreeably to Divine revelation. The exhortation is sometimes expressed in direct reference to this, as Ps. c. 3, "Know ye that the Lord he is God." Job xxii. 21, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." The understanding is the leading faculty of the soul, as the eye directs the motion of the body. The other faculties cannot duly move towards God until He is presented to the view of the soul in a clear and affecting light. Conversion is therefore in Scripture expressed by "our being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light." And though in a certain sense it may be justly said that the soul is passive in receiving this illumination, yet there is room for the soul's activity in searching for this light, in admitting, cherishing, and improving it, both before conversion, in the time of it, and afterwards. Hence men are, in general, commanded to seek the Lord. And the prophet Hosea introduces the Church, as speaking thus:—"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." And in the verse where the text lies the seeking and the finding the Lord are joined together.

These views of God which are to be sought for and entertained are of a large extent. What is the sum and centre of them may be learned from the following passages:—Jer ix. 24—"Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth." John xvii. 3—"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." 1 Cor. ii. 2—"I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Agreeably to the tenour of these and similar expressions, we may observe that this knowledge hath respect to the essential perfections of the Infinite Godhead; the relative characters of God as the Creator, Lord, Lawgiver, and Judge of all; the distinction of Persons in the Godhead; and the distinct offices sustained by the three Divine Persons in accomplishing the salvation of lost men. But though this knowledge takes so wide a range and reaches to every revealed truth concerning God in its proper place and order,

yet it peculiarly fixes itself on the justice and mercy of God as displaying their mingled glories in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Such, my brethren, is the extent and subject of this sacred knowledge which the text calls us to pursue after. But there are two things further respecting this knowledge of God which must be attended to with peculiar care, otherwise our knowledge will only serve the purpose of a dark lantern to light us down into the very depths of hell. What are these things so very important? They are these two. The kind or quality of our knowledge and its strength or influence. I mention them distinctly, though they are inseparable from each other, and go always together. It is not merely knowledge, but knowledge of a particular kind that will save us. It must be not only a strong persuasion or conviction of the truth concerning God, but it must be a spiritual insight into the glory of the truth. In other words, he who savingly beholds or contemplates God has a perception in God which no human language can fully express—something which makes the whole nature and perfections of God appear infinitely excellent. He sees a holy beauty, an amiable sweetness, a boundless glory, universally, as it were, diffused over the perfections and nature of Jehovah, but especially shining forth from the cross of Jesus Christ. And this kind of knowledge has a proper kind of strength and influence. For it so fills the soul as to take the command of all its active powers and to set them effectually in motion towards God. This is that teaching which draws the soul to God through the Mediator. When such knowledge of God is attained by us we have such expressions as the following fulfilled in our experience:—"He endured as seeing Him who is invisible;" "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Such knowledge will not be asleep in the soul, but will rouse every principle of action into proper exertion. I have nothing farther to do on this part of the subject but briefly to point out the effect and influence of this genuine and saving light.

2. To behold God in the sense of the text is to fix the whole confidence of the soul upon him so as thoroughly to renounce and forsake every other confidence. "They, that know thy name," says David, "will put their trust in thee." As soon as God shines upon the soul in His true splendour the glory of all idols is eclipsed and extinguished. The concerns of the soul and of eternity appear too vast to be rested safely anywhere else. A happy proportion is perceived between the boundless perfections of God displayed in Christ on the one hand and the vast capacities, wants, and miseries of the fallen creature on the other. There then appears no room for a choice between God and idols. One Infinite good is sufficient to swallow up the whole soul and to sink into contempt millions of imaginary gods.

The soul, therefore, in drawing near to this glorious object of trust, brings with it many idols, but it brings them to be sacrificed, to be disclaimed, and trampled under foot. The soul loathes its former idols and itself for its vain dependance on them. This renunciation of other confidences stands connected with sincere trust in God in the following words:—Isa. xvii, 7-8—"At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel: And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made;" Isa. xxx. 22—"Ye shall defile also the covern of thy graven images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast they away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, get thee hence." Then it appears to the soul an intolerable insult to reserve any idol to share with God the confidence of the heart. The soul echoes amen to that curse, "Cursed be the men that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord."—Jer. xvii. 5. But the kind of false confidence which sticks closest and is renounced with the greatest difficulty is that which rests on an imaginary righteousness of our own, which the heart secretly wishes at least, as it were, to establish. I consider the expressions of the text and of similar passages as being in this view peculiarly emphatical. For when salvation is held forth to be obtained by looking to God, our desperate situation and the entire exclusion of the works of the law, in the sense of the covenant of works, are intimated in the strongest manner. It is not said, "Do this and live." But the way of salvation is, in such expressions, thus stated, "Despair of help by your own efforts: look away from everything in yourselves, excepting your guilt and vileness. Stand still like men desperate in yourselves, and cast a greedy look to me, the only Deliverer, and ye shall be saved: it shall be counted to you for righteousness." "To him," says the apostle, "who worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."—Rom. iv. 5.

To be continued.

Archibald Crawford.

IT has been our mournful duty, and yet our privilege, since the issue of this Magazine began, time and again to record the removal of those from our midst that were the salt of the earth and the light of the world; and in connection with the record of their removal to give some sketch of their life and character. In so doing we have made an effort to keep the righteous in remembrance, and to stir up those they have left behind to follow their faith and to practise their works. On no occasion in the past have we had greater reason to do this than we have now in the case of the late Archibald Crawford of Tighnabruaich.

Mr. Crawford was born in the month of May, 1815—about a month before Waterloo. His birthplace was the farmhouse of Largimore, on Lochfyneside, in the extreme north of the parish of Kilfinan. Until he was twelve years old this was the home of his father, Duncan Crawford, who was one of the elders of the parish. Archibald was the youngest son and the second youngest child of the household. From Lochfyneside his father removed to Lochstrivenside, to the farm of Trouston, which he held in lease for nineteen years. The youngest son, when he grew up, acted as his father's shepherd, and as the older members of the family settled for life, on him devolved the management of the farm as increasing years told on his father's strength.

Up to the age of twenty-two the subject of our notice lived a stranger to the grace of God. There was nothing to mark out his conduct from that of his neighbours. He was neither better nor worse than those about him. His natural character was forceful. He was a born leader of men. In those early days this feature showed itself in the way in which he was the life of every company and the leader of his companions in fun and frolic. At an early age his superior talents appeared. At the age of eight he made some verses to the setting sun. The poetic vein was worked from that time until the whole current of his life was changed. So strong did the faculty of versifying grow with exercise that, to quote his own remark on the subject, there was scarcely anything his eye could light on that did not call forth a verse. The poems of these days he wrote down, and they filled a thick volume, but when the change came over him, the idolised gift was kept in check, and to the end of his days he never again devoted any attention to its cultivation. Nay, he burned the volume that contained his youthful effusions, and did what he could to secure that this chapter of his life should be blotted out. Fragments of these pieces still survive, however. They were remembered by his acquaintances, and so handed down by oral recitation. One piece extends to more than two hundred and fifty lines, and with the rest, serves to show the ease he had acquired in the use of tuneful words and the general mastery he possessed of the art of Gaelic poetry.

Archibald Crawford, however, was destined for something nobler and better than the honours that local good neighbourhood or poetic talent can confer. When the set time came, the Lord called him by His grace and made known His Son in him. The great crisis of his life was in the year 1837. In those times there was an evangelical revival spreading over Scotland. But the ministers of the district in which he lived did not seem to be much affected by it. It is true that in Dunoon Dr. Mackintosh Mackay was then preaching, and to name no other, Peter Macbride was a minister in Rothesay. The Jews and the Samaritans, however, had almost as little in common as the Evangelicals and the out and out Moderates, and it was Mr. Crawford's lot to be brought up

under a "moderate" ministry, so that in the parish of his residence he had few opportunities of hearing gospel preaching.

His first spiritual exercises were very searching, and in his own neighbourhood he was long before he discovered any that were acquainted with anything like them. The first people he met with that were capable of sympathising with him were some survivors of the Baptist body that followed Donald Bàn Macarthur, of Port-Bannatyne. Before, however, he made the acquaintance of any exercised Christians, he was providentially put in possession of Bunyan's "Grace Abounding." In this narrative he found a picture of his own experiences. There were scattered throughout Cowal and Bute aged followers of Macarthur, some of them Baptists and others not. These countenanced no ministry that they did not count a gospel one. But they went long distances to the communions and preachings of those they looked upon as sent by the Head of the Church. Thus they waited on the ministry at Lochgoilhead of Rev. Donald Macgilvray, who, after spending a number of years in Cowal, went in 1831 to Kilmallie, where he died. Some of them waited on the gospel preaching at Rothesay, where, at least from the days of Mr. Robertson, of Kingussie, there was a succession of men that determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

After some time of struggle and loneliness, Mr. Crawford discovered that the gospel was preached in Rothesay. Accordingly he began to cross every Lord's day to Bute, walk into Rothesay, and there wait on the ministry of Mr. Macpherson of the Gaelic charge. Week after week his exercises seemed to be known to the minister, and under his teaching he was led and fed. About the beginning of these Sabbath journeys to Rothesay, when first his presence in the congregation began to be noticed, he was waylaid by one of the elders as he hurried away at the close of the service. This man accompanied him part of the way, and to him in conversation he communicated some of his soul's trials. Next Lord's day Mr. Macpherson had occasion to come across some of the very matters on which his exercised hearer and the elder were conferring on the previous Sabbath. Mr. Crawford concluded in his youthful simplicity that the elder had told the minister what he had confided him with, and so, as the elder met him again when service was over, with a view to accompanying him on his way, he was told at once that, as he had not kept to himself what he had heard the previous week, he should have no more of Mr. Crawford's mind.

When our friend gave up hearing the minister of his parish, he did not do so without speaking plainly to him about the character of his preaching and ministry. At first when he crossed to Bute to go to Rothesay he had to row the boat alone; but the influence that even at this early period of his career he wielded is shown in the fact that, before he had been long going, two boat loads of people accompanied him on his journey. The gospel had begun to become precious to many.

In the year 1846 Mr. Crawford removed with his now aged parents to Kilbride, a farm in his native parish. Here he spent 19 years. At first he held himself very much aloof from those that were about him, but through time he discovered some like-minded with himself in the district. Especially he used to speak of a godly old woman who by the time he came to know her was on her death-bed. She had been awakened under the teaching of Finlay Munro, and brought to the light of the gospel under that of one of the Haldane preachers settled at Clachan in Kintyre. As we are now but giving a sketch of his career, we do not enter into details. Other hands will probably contribute accounts of many incidents in his history, and perhaps if there are any to be filled in by way of supplement to these the writer may assay the task of taking up his pen again to relate them in these pages.

Noticing the spiritual destitution of those about him soon after his settlement at Kilbride, he began to keep a Sabbath school, but officious tyranny stepped in and put a stop to it. Henceforward for the space of about twelve years Mr. Crawford took no active part in public work. But at the expiry of that period he was led to take steps that had important results. He was known as a serious, thoughtful, intelligent man, and some of his neighbours and acquaintances on the occasion of a movement among them in which unsound doctrine was prominently brought forward came to consult him with regard to the things they were hearing. Week after week they came, until at last every Friday evening he had a meeting of his neighbours and servants to whom he opened up the Word of God and the way of salvation. This meeting was soon transferred to the church at Millhouse, where for two years a crowded congregation waited on his instructions. These were times of refreshing. A quiet, genuine, solid revival work was in progress, and many to the day of their death, and some we believe that still remain, were the fruit of these meetings. There was no excitement or crying out. There were no sensational measures employed, but the pure word of the Lord was applied to the consciences of the people, to a great extent in the form of proposing questions and answering them, and only the floor and desks wet with tears after the congregation went home testified outwardly to the emotion called forth at this blessed time. Many were then born in Zion. The burden of opening up the Scriptures to his fellow-sinners lay heavily on Mr. Crawford's spirit, and at this period he would sometimes, in spite of all the demands that his worldly position made on him, spend whole days with his Bible in private. At last the season of steady spiritual work came to an end, and, kept down in his own inward experience, he found it hard to meet the craving that was all around him to break the bread of life to his spiritual children. At this juncture he made the acquaintance of the late Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall alike in his ministry and in his person. This acquaintance proved one of the turning points of his outward life.

When his lease of Kilbride was out, Mr. Crawford lived for some time in Kames, and while there he stately held Sabbath services at Kilfinan, seven miles away. These services were in Gaelic, as it was seldom that he undertook to conduct any public exercises of worship in English. In the year 1866 he went to the North country and made the acquaintance of many of the worthies there at Communion gatherings and in their homes. Dr. Kennedy and worthy Mr. Macdougall, Fodderty, secured his services for Strathpeffer while the Skye railway was being made. Here every Sabbath evening for a considerable period he kept meetings. For five months on end he was in charge of the congregation in Strathconon, and for that time he lived with worthy Hector Jack, for whom to the end of his days he had the highest regard. Thus, with intervals which he spent at home in Tighnabruaich, where he now had built a house, two or three years had passed away. The Union question was then coming to a critical stage, and on the suggestion of Dr. Mackintosh Mackay, formerly of Dunoon, Mr. Crawford was appointed an agent for the Anti-Union party throughout the Highlands. In this capacity he travelled through a great part of the North Highlands, Perthshire, and Argyllshire. Though Caithness was not in his district he turned aside to view the land. Here he came to know godly David Steven, who more than any man whom he met on his travels impressed him and won his heart.

After his work in connection with this mission was over, he retired to his native district, where, however, he did not long remain, for in the year 1872 he went to live in Greenock, where for fourteen years his home was. Here he was the centre of a knot of excellent men that were connected with the Gaelic church. One of them in particular he was much bound up in—Dugald Gray, a native of Jura, a man like himself, of independence and steadfastness. In the year 1886 he returned to Tighnabruaich, where he resided to the end of his days. In all the concerns of the Church of Christ at large he took a most lively interest—particularly was his interest intense in all concerns relating to the Free Presbyterian Church. The signs of the times he viewed with undisguised alarm. The state of the generation lay heavy on his spirit, and now that he is removed one of the wrestlers with the Angel of the Covenant has been taken from our midst.

Mr. Crawford was a man of very unusual mental power. Along with the faculty of close reasoning he had a well-balanced judgment, and what is not common in connection with much mental outfit he had a great power of illustration. This, we might say, was the form that his poetic imagination assumed on being repressed in its ordinary manifestations. One could gather from the choice figurative language he at times used that behind it there must be a good measure of the poetic temperament. Strong as his reasoning powers were, there were few that leaned so little as he to the broken reed of human understanding. The logical out-

come of certain elements, taken by themselves, that enter into the system of revealed truth, is apt to get undue prominence from those that go more by system than by Scripture; and to the end of his days he was the declared opponent, and that in an increasing measure, of the custom of driving theological schemes to one-sided, ill-balanced conclusions. There was a caution, along with a certain largeness of view and wide outlook, characteristic of him, that made him a valuable counsellor. Along with this he was possessed of a fearless independence such as left him steadfast in his judgment whatever human authority might be brought in array against him. His memory was strong and retentive, and all his faculties were vigorous, so that he was a very all-round man. He was a man of considerate kindness, but great resolution—a strong and altogether sterling character.

As a spiritual man, perhaps his most outstanding feature was his solemn reverence for the authority of the Word of God. It was given to him to realise it as sharper than any two edged sword, and to its voice he submitted himself with childlike simplicity. At an early stage in his career he was much tried with the system of those that emphasise the sovereignty of grace so as almost to lose sight of the sinner's responsibility in view of the Gospel. Those that enjoyed the conversation of his later years may well remember how careful he was to resist any tendency towards higher Calvinistic views in theology. It was his great fear a few years ago that the danger, to which our ministers as a class were liable, in their rebound from the fashionable Arminianism of the day, was to be entangled by the views of those that refuse to insist on the free grace of the Gospel and the open door set forth therein, whereby sinners as sinners may draw nigh to God through the death of His Son. Latterly, however, he was persuaded that the responsibility of sinners to respond to the command of the God of all grace was brought into due prominence, and this afforded him satisfaction. In connection with this aspect of things he used to dwell much on the method the Lord Jesus took to deal with the demoniac's father, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Again, "Search the Scriptures: . . . for they are they that testify of Me, and ye will not come to Me that ye may have life," was a passage that he frequently emphasised.

In connection with the easy going use of the means of grace in which multitudes rest, he used to insist much on the direct plain-spoken message of the Baptist, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" and also on the words of Isaiah, "Who hath required this at your hands?" "Let sinners," the outcome of it was, "but consider the profession their presence in the house of God involves. Their formality in sitting as His people and hearing as His people but grieves the Holy Spirit and increases the blackness of the dark cloud of judgment that overhangs us." There is such a cloud, and in homely yet expressive

phrase he would say, "Smoke from our chimney has gone to make it." "While the blood of souls goes down, men dance in the Holy Place of God." Zeal for orthodoxy unaccompanied with a chastened contrite spirit he spoke of as "soldiering," and he lamented the extent to which this prevails. Some preachers of this kind he once compared to Highland cattle with plenty of horn but very little milk. One thing he missed above everything else in the generation he found rising up about him, and that was a reverential awe of the Eternal.

We have almost unwittingly glided into a description of what manner of man Mr. Crawford was, but as further opportunities may be afforded to enter on this subject, we shall not prosecute it further at present. While he was engaged in public service he discouraged the action of those that came to consult him about their spiritual case. This he did in order that any treatment their cases might receive in public they might take in a proper spirit. In his later days, when he no longer engaged in public work, he was much resorted to by those who had spiritual exercises, and in these years he became much more free, communicative, and accessible than he had previously been. Indeed, any one that paid attention to his instructive conversation in these years might derive from it much guidance, as from that of a veritable Greatheart. His treatment of Scriptural characters and incidents was most refreshing. Perhaps Abraham would be the subject or, as was more common latterly, Job or Jonah. Once the veteran got his sail spread he made great way in connection with these themes. His staff would be balanced as he balanced his positions or measured as he measured his words, and the hearer had himself to thank if the conversation ended and he had derived no clear and vivid views of truth from the graphic utterances of the sage.

Mr. Crawford was much given to self-examination, and one of the passages that for years kept him at a standstill was the words in Philippians iii., "being made conformable to His death." With regard to this he was quite clear at last, and quite characteristically he found the key that opened the lock in the narrative of Jonah. With his questioning, searching spirit, he was much kept down, and much distressed, at the inward experience he had of the power of sin. This served to keep him abiding in Christ, esteeming all his own righteousness as filthy rags. But, much as he was kept under for years, the end was triumphant. He was concerned as it drew near that he might have the full use of his faculties to the last, and this was granted him. Inquiring one day during his last illness as to how a neighbour was, whose end was being daily looked for and who was still alive, he remarked, on being informed of this, "He keeps the world hanging on a hair's breadth of His purpose." The old pith and vigour were in the words.

A few days before the end came, a question was put to him pur-

posely to draw out his views in prospect of what was before him, and his answer was—"The Life that is above, that death could not seize, that is my Portion, if portion I have." The "if" clause of this answer was needless at last. A day or two before the end the difficulties that oft beset him melted away, and the time of the singing of birds was come, "O," said he, "that He would say to my soul 'Arise, my love, and come away.'" In this he seemed to rest and to rejoice; "My Beloved is *Mine* and I am *His*." He laid stress on the Mine and on the His. In the delightful enjoyment of communion with the Lord he was eager to depart, "to be with Christ, which is far better." With all this personal comfort and assurance as to the future he forgot not the care of the generation he was leaving behind; and what he often expressed his ardent longing to see, showers of grace descending for the refreshment of the Lord's garden, he prayed for to the last. In these last days words that had often exercised him were sweetly on his lips—"Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" He was now on the eve of seeing and enjoying the blessing of him that believes to whom there shall be a fulfilment. Thus as a shock of corn fully ripe, a patriarch has been removed from among us.

On Monday, December 21st, 1903, he entered into rest, aged 88 years, and on the 25th he was buried with his fathers in Kilfinan Churchyard. Beside him lies the body of his old friend and fellow-believer, Hugh Douglas, who, also at a good age, preceded him but a few weeks to the eternal world. "The faithful fail from among the children of men." There they lie, till the trumpet shall sound, in the glorious hope of a blessed resurrection.

J. M.

Notes on a Highland Worthy.

GEORGE CAMPBELL, GAELIC SCHOOLMASTER, SCOURIE.

IN our notice last month of the late Mr. William Campbell, preacher, Wick, we made reference to his father, George Campbell, who finished his course in Scourie, Sutherlandshire. He died shortly after, and not before the Disruption of 1843, as stated in the above notice. He came out with the other witnessing worthies at the Disruption, but, while clear as to the duty, he discharged it (as we are told by his only surviving son, Mr. George Campbell) with heaviness of spirit, realising the great importance and value of a national Church. The following is the portrait of him given in a description of a pre-Disruption "Men's Day" in Durness by the late Rev. Eric Findlater, of Lochearnhead, and quoted in Brown's *Annals of the Disruption*:—

"George Campbell, a Gaelic schoolmaster, and a native of Sutherlandshire, renews the discussion. He is a man about 60, dressed in a camlet cloak, and with a head of long steel-grey hair

parted in the midst, and falling down in a mass behind. His features are well proportioned, and a quick intelligence courses over them, as the aurora borealis does across his native sky. He is one of nature's orators; and so well toned was his voice, so harmonious his periods, and so graceful his action, that it was like music to the ear. But all this was sanctified; and as he discoursed of what the Lord hath done for his soul, they would be indifferent indeed who could do else than listen; and though in general he showed the harmlessness of the dove, there were occasions when he could testify that he had the spirit of the lion. . . . Our testimony to him would infer that he was a man who knew divinity not only experimentally but systematically."

Searmon.

LEIS AN URR. ARCHD. COOK A BHA 'N DEIMHIDH.

May 26th, 1861.

"Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as 'ur measg."—Ios. vii. 12.

THUSA anns nach 'eil eagal gu'n caill thu lathaireachd Dhe bidh siorruidheachd uamhasach agad as easbhuidh. C'airson nach 'eil eagal anns an t-saoghal gu'n caill iad lathaireachd an Tighearna? Do bhrìgh nach do shealbhaich iad 'fhabhar riamh. Bha an creutair air a ghintinn sgarichte o lathaireachd Dhia agus cha d' ionndruinn e riamh E. Ach cha-n e so siorruidheachd. 'Nuair a theid d'anam a sgarachadh o'n chorp agus thusa dealaichte o Dhia gheibh an t-anam siorruidheachd gu smuaineachadh air do chall. Tha d'anam an diugh air a ghnathachadh mu na nithibh a bhuineas do'n chorp. Ach 'nuair a theid dealachadh eadar an t-anam agus an corp gheibh thu siorruidheachd gu smuaineachadh air do chall.

Bha clann Israel ann an so air dol thar Iordan a shealbhachadh tir a' gheallaidh. 'Nuair a thuit Iericho bha buaidh aca air an naimhdibh 's cha-n 'eil teagamh nach d' fhag sud iad ni-eigin ladarna. Cheadaich an Ard-uachdaranachd do'n chreutair bho chd so (Achan) peacachadh. Thainig iad gu bhi 'nan sluagh mall-aichte agus dh' fhag E iad dhoibh fein. Thionndaidh iad an cul r'an naimhdibh a chionn gu'n robh iad mallaichte. Nis, ciod an anmhuinneachd a dh' oibrich sin ann an sluagh Dhe?

Ann an eaglais an Tiomnaidh Nuaidh tha sinn a' leughadh air gnìomh sanntach Ananiais agus Shaphira agus mar a sgrios Dia sin a' eaglais. "Thainig eagal mor air an eaglais uile agus air na h-uile a chuala na nithean so." Agus ciod a leanas? "Cha robh chridhe aig aon de chach e fein a cheangal riu ach bha mor mheas aig a' phobull orra,

Iarraidh sinn a nis bhi 'nochdadh o na briathriabh so,

I. Gu'm feud an Tighearn an eaglais fhaicsinneach fhagail agus a radh, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh ;"

II. Cuid de nithibh airson am bheil an Tighearn a' treigsinn 'eaglais fhaicsinneach ;

III. Mar a tha na nithe sin gu bhi air am faotainn a mach agus gu bhi air an sgrios, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as ur measg."

Faic, co luath 's a bha an ni mallaichte air a sgrios mar a phill an cumhachd agus a thainig e 'g an ionnsuidh. Tha moran ag radh gu bheil iad a' cleachdadh nam meadhonan agus nach 'eil iad a' faireachadh cumhachd no lathaireachd Dhe annta. Thusa, a tha mar sin tha aobhar eagail gu bheil ni mallaichte agad agus co fhad 's a dh' altrumas tu sin gu la do bhàis cha tuig thu cumhachd anns na meadhonan.

Feudaiddh an Tighearn 'eaglais fhaicsinneach fhagail agus a radh, 'cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as 'ur measg'. 'S ann e dhoimhneachd 'arduachdranachd a bha e gu'n do chuir an Tighearn sluagh air bith air leth dha fein mar eaglais. Tha e air a radh ri Israel, 'cha do ghradhaich an Tighearn sibh ni mo a thagh E sibh a chionn gu'n robh sibh ni bu lionmhoire na sluagh sam bith eile ; oir is sibh bu teirce de gach uile shluagh ; ach a chionn gu'n do ghradhaich an Tighearn sibh, agus a chum gu'n gleidheadh E na mionnan a mhionnaich E d' ur n aithrichibh, thug an Tighearn mach sibh le laimh chumhachdaich agus a shaor E thu a tigh nan traillan a laimh Pharaoh righ na h-Eiphit.'

B' aithne dha truaighe na staid dh' ionnsuidh an do thuit an duine agus 's ann o ghaol ann fein a dh' eirich e gu'm foillsicheadh E a ghaol. "An trà ghabh mise seachad dluth dhuit agus a chunnaic mi thu salach ann ad fhuil fein, thubhairt mi rint agus thu ann ad fhuil, mair beo ; seadh, thubhairt mi ruit agus thu ann ad fhuil, mair beo." Rinn E so ann an rathad do'n eaglais fhaicsinnich agus mur robh ni innte gu sin a tharruing a mach nach 'eil E cho saor gu a fagail ?

Feudaiddh mi radh gur ann o dhiomhaireachd saor ghras ann fein a shruth e, oir cha robh sonas Dhe a' cur feum air an duine, bha E uil' iomlan ann fein e shiorruidheachd. 'Nuair a chruthaich E an duine cha robh ann ach foillseachadh dhe ni a bha ann fein mu'n robh an saoghal ann. Dh' fheadadh E a ghloir fhoillseachadh ann an toirt pheacach a ris air an ais : ach mu'n comasach am peacadh aon smuain mhaith a smuaineachadh feumaidh an Cruithear cruthachadh nuadh a dheanamh anns an anam. Mar sin 's ann o dhoimhneachd saor ghrais a ta e gu bheil an Tighearn a' cur air leth aon air bith dh' an deanadh E e fein aithnichte anns an t-saoghal. Thusa, nach do smuainich riamh air sin cha-n iongantach ded a gheibheadh tu ifrinn theth agus gheibh thu sin.

'S iongantach, mar tha Dia a' giulan le 'eaglais fein 'nan salchar oir tha am peacadh cho fuathach na lathair Dhe 's a bha a' cheud pheacadh a chaidh a ghnìomhachadh anns an t-saoghal. Cha-n

'eil peacadh eile aig nach 'eil aonadh ris a' pheacadh ud airson an do chaill an duine naomhachd agus gloir. Their moran gu h-eutrom, "co nach 'eil a' peacachadh?" Ach minichidh siorruidheachd peacadh dhoibh fathasd. 'S e fad fhulangas iongantach ann an Dia a tha 'giulan le creutair a' peacachadh. Tha E a' labhairt air 'fhad-fhulangas ri 'eaglais agus mar gu'm biodh E direach a' togail a laimh gu'n sgrios ach air sgath gloir 'ainme fein tha E 'g an caomhnadh, "Is mise Iehobhah, cha chaochail mi, air an aobhar sin cha-n 'eil sibhse, o chlann Iacoib air 'ur sgrios. Eadhon o laithibh 'ur n.aithrichean chlaon sibh o m' reachdaibh-sa agus cha do choimhid sibh iad." "Cionnus a bheir mi thairis thu, o Ephraim? Cionnus a bheir mi seachad thu, o Israel? Cionnus a ni mi thu mar Admah? a chuireas mi thu mar Sheboim? Tha mo chridhe an taobh a sghìgh dhiom air tionndadh, tha m' aithreachais air lasadh le cheile, cha chuir mi 'n gnìomh mo dhianchorruich, cha phill mi a mhilleadh Ephraim, oir is Dia mise agus cha duine." Tha so direach mar gu'm biodh cogadh ann an Dia os an cionn, a cheartas ag agairt an gearradh as agus 'fhad-fhulangus agus a throcair ag iarraidh an tearnadh. Ach o! c'àite am bheil iad an diugh a tha 'gal os cionn mar a tha sin? An iongantach ged a theireadh E, "cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as 'ur measg?" A ris tha E a' labhairt mar gu'm biodh E a' fas sgith dhe 'eaglais, "Ciod a ni mi ruitt o Ephraim? Ciod a ni mi rints, o Iudah? oir tha 'ur maitheas mar neul maidne agus mar an druchd moch a shiubhlas air falbh." Feudaidd mi radh airson 'eaglais fhaicsinnich gu'm feud crìoch tighinn air a mhaithas agus 'fhad-fhulangas Thainig crìoch orra do'n t-seann saoghal, "agus thubhairt an Tighearn, cha bhi mo Spiorad a' stri ris an duine a gnuàth." Bha 'fhad-fhulangas direach mar gu'm biodh stòras ann a bhiodh a' caitheamh a mach. Ach airson cuspairean a ghaoil shiorruidh cha tig crìoch air, cha-n e stòras a th' ann doibh ach cuan neo-chrìoch-nach. "Oir dealaichidh na sleibhtean ri'm bunaitibh agus atharraichear na beanntan as an aite, ach cha dealaich mo chaoimhneas riutsa, agus cha-n atharraichear coimhcheangal mo shith, deir an Tighearn aig am bheil truas dhiot."

Feudaidd mi radh gur ann air a thoillteanas fein a tha e gu bheil Crìosd a' fantuinn anns an eaglais fhaicsinnich agus gu'm bi a ghloir air a h-ardachadh tre'n t-siorruidheachd ann. Bidh iongantais air na h-ainglibh 'nuair a bheir Dia gu solus mar a bhuin E ris an dream a bhiòs air an laimh chli. 'S iomadh brosnuchadh a thug an creutair do Dhia mu'n d' thug E an gnoc mu dheireadh do'n anam agus gu'n d' thug E thairis e do chruas cridhe. Ach tha cuid ann do'n tabhair E an gnoc mu dheireadh 's ris an abair E, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh." Nis 's e truaighe nan truaighe gu'm fagadh an Tighearn sluagh no creutair air bith. Cha'n 'eil ni anns an t-saoghal a bu choir a leithid a dh' eagal a chur air aon ri sin, gu'n teigeadh an Tighearn e,

Ma tha an Tighearn aig neach tha comhfhuètachd aige ann an

cor air bith anns am feud e bhi. 'S e an Cruithear ughdair a h-uile comhfhurtachd a tha creutair a' sealbhachan. Ma tha Dia aig neach, cionnus is comasach e bhi truagh? Tha sinn a' leughadh air aon aig nach robh comhfhurtachd ach na madraidh agus leis am bu mhiann a bhi air a shasuchodh leis an spruileach a bha 'tuiteam a bhord an duine shaoibhir, gidheadh cha-n 'eil sinn a' leughadh air aon smuain mhonmhor a bhi aige. Tha sinn a' leughadh air dream a dh' fhuiling call nan uile nithe agus a ghalh le luathghair ri creachadh am maoin, seadh, a shabhadh as a cheile, a bha 'nam fogaraich ann am fasaichibh agus ann an slochdaibh na talmhainn, dream air nach b' airidh an saoghal. Gidheadh cha-n 'eil sinn a' leughadh air aon mhonmhor. C'airson? Bha fios aca ann ta fein gu'n robh Dia aca mar an cuibhrionn spioradail. Nam biodh esan uatha ged a biodh an saoghal uile aca ciod a bhiodh ann ach plaosgan agus falamhachd?

'S e an Tighearn aon didean a' chreutair. Ged a bhiodh carraig agad co ard ris na neamhan cha-n fholaich sin thu o choguis chiontachibh agus a do pheacaidhean a bhi mar ghathaibh teine ann ad anam. Ach bidh an duine so "mar ionad-fasgaidh o'n ghaoith agus mar dhidean o'n doinninn, mar shruthaibh uisge ann an aite tioram, mar sgàile creig moire ann an tir airsnealaich." Agus "tha amhainn ann le sruthaibh seimh, 'ni caithir Dhe ro ait," is "Dia 'na meadhon innte steach, mar sin cha ghluaisear i." "Is tur laidir ainm an Tighearna." Nis nach truagh an creutair no an sluagh ris an abair E, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh."

'S e an Tighearn millseachd a h-uile comhfhurtachd a ta an creutair a' sealbhachadh air an talamh. Ciod a chuir comhfhurtachd ann? Nach e an Ti a chruthaich e? Agus ma dh' fhagas esan e c'aithe am bheil a' chomhfhurtachd no a' mhillseachd ann an ni air bith? Am bi ann ach falamhachd mo chairdean? 'S e Dia millseachd nam flaitheanas; fagadh E flaitheanas agus fagaidh comhfhurtachd, fagaidh beatha, fagaidh millseachd agus gaol na flaitheanas. Thusa, aig nach 'eil ach an saoghal, cha-n 'eil agad ach falamhachd, cnamhean tioram, agus plaoisg. Thusa, a ta 'gabhail ni air bith thairis air solus do choguis, cha shealbhaich thu Dia ann an sin gu brath. "Cha bhi mise maille ribh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as 'ur measg." Cha-n e a mhain gur e Dia millseachd nam flaitheanas ach 'se anam an anama e, "anam do cholmain na toir suas do chuideachd mhoir nan daoir," do'n fhiadh-bheathach; 's e sin siol grais anns an anam agus bha an t-Abstol a' guidhe gu'n gabhadh Criosd comh-nuidh 'nan cridhe tre chreidimh. Thusa, aig nach 'eil Criosd, am bheil agad ach falamhachd? Ach c'aithe am bheil an gal airson na falamhachd so? Faic an diugh, airson a h-uile h-aon a gheibh thu a' gal airson a bhi dh' easbhuidh lathaireachd Dhe gheibh thu a dha dheug 'nan codal. 'Nuair a ta Dia air falbh, cha-n 'eil ni anns an anam ach smuaintean diomhain agus sruthaidh iad 'nan tuiltean a mach as an anam. C' airson? Tha an t-anam falamh. Ach feudaidd mi radh gur e lathaireachd an Tighearna neart an anama.

'Nuair a tha an Tighearn ann a ghras anns an anam, 's e sin neart an anama. 'Nuair a thainig an Tighearn air falbh o'n t-sluagh ann an so, cha b' urrainn iad seasamh roimh an naimhdibh; bha iad mar am feur rompa. Mar sin bha Samson, 'nuair a dh' imich an Tighearn uaith bha e cho lag ri daoineibh eile, "Oir sealbh 's an tìr cha d' fhuireadh leo, le'n claidheamh no le'n loinn."

Feudaidd mi radh nach 'eil ni a dh' ulluicheas an creutair airson a' bhais ach so. Ach o! 'nuair a sheallas mise air creutairean og anns an eaglais so, cho falamh, gun churam mar nach biodh anam aca; leumaidh iad a mach à 'n leapaichean gun urnuigh mar chuilean r. adaidh agus leumaidh iad a mach as an eaglais mar chu dhe teadhair. Ach o! tha mi 'gam faicinn a' crìonadh airson a' bhàis shiorruidh. Ach 's ann mar so a tha bochdan Chrìosd a' seinn buaidh chaitheam air a' bhas, o' bhais, c'àite am bheil do ghath? O uaigh, c'àite am bheil do bhuaidh? Thusa, aig am bheil Dia, ciod a tha dh' easbhuidh ort? Nach 'eil naomhachd agad annsan? Nach 'eil fuath do pheacadh? Nach 'eil a h-uile ni a sheasas aig a bhreitheanas annsan? O! ma ta, nach 'eil e 'na aobhar eagail gu'm falbh nn Tighearn agus gu'n abair E, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh mur sgrios sibh an ni mallaichte as 'ur measg." Ach tha cuid ann agus 's fhearr leo bhi dealaichte o Dhia tre'n t-siorroidheachd no dealachadh ri'm miann. Agus foillsichidh Dia sin fhathas agus their E riu, "Cha bhi mise maille ribh tuilleadh,"

(Ri leantuinn.)

Church Notes.

Communions.—Dingwall, 1st Sabbath of this month.

Northern Presbytery.—This court met at Dingwall on the 8th January—Rev. D. Macfarlane, moderator. There were also present the Rev. Ewen Macqueen and Messrs Thomas Forbes and William Maclean, elders. The plans of the new Free Presbyterian manse, Dingwall, were examined and approved of. The Presbytery resolved (*D.V.*) to meet again on January 29th at Inverness. In last issue a mistake was made as to the moderatorship of this court.

Southern Presbytery.—This court met at 110 Hill Street, Garnethill, Glasgow, on Thursday evening the 14th January—the Rev. John Robertson, moderator, in the chair. There compeered Messrs John Maclean and Archibald Brown, as commissioners from the kirk-session and congregation of Greenock, begging the Presbytery to appoint a day to moderate in a call to the Rev. Alexander Macrae, Portree, to be pastor over that congregation. After Messrs Maclean and Brown were heard on behalf of the petition, the Clerk intimated that he had had a communication from the Rev. John Macleod, Kames, interim-moderator for

Greenock, who was unable to be present, to the effect that he had received word from Mr. Macrae, who unmistakably indicated that he would not consider a call at present. Thereupon the Greenock commissioners agreed to leave the matter meantime in the hands of the Presbytery. The court then examined several congregational financial statements and session records. They adjourned to meet again (*D.V.*) on the 11th February.

A Brief Account of Gustavus Adolphus.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 319.)

THE victory of Leipsic (September 6, 1631), as narrated in our December issue, was a surprise both to friends and foes of the Protestant cause. The king piously acknowledged the hand of God therein, and appointed a day of public thanksgiving to be observed throughout the army. The Jesuits and the heads of the Catholic confederacy cut short their programme of jokes and made panic-stricken preparations to withstand this snow king who showed no signs of melting as he came south. The town of Leipsic lies in the centre of Germany, about 200 miles south from the landing place of the Swedish conqueror. Several marches to the south-east lay Vienna, the political capital of the Catholic world. It was a practicable thing to strike home at the heart of the hostile confederacy by a rapid march to Vienna before the Emperor Frederic could marshal his forces. But the well-advised resolve of Gustavus was to march westward towards the Rhine. His pathway thither lay through a number of Protestant cities and provinces which needed liberty and encouragement, where also he could rest and recruit his army. He also desired to make some rich bishoprics of the Catholic League feel the privations and distresses of war. Accordingly he spent the winter of 1631-32 in this region of the Upper Rhine, consolidating the Protestant cause and exacting tribute from the sees and corporations of the Romish party. In February, 1633, he put his army in motion to accomplish the eastward march to Vienna. At the river Lech in Bavaria he found Tilly and his army remarchalled after the defeat of Leipsic, and resolved to dispute his passage. It was disputed in a council of war whether the passage of the river against the Catholic army was advisable. But Gustavus, ever prone to valorous feats, exclaimed—"What! have we crossed the Baltic, the Oder, the Elbe, and the Rhine to stop stupefied before this mere stream, the Lech. Remember that undertakings the most difficult are often those which succeed best, because the enemy supposes them to be impossible." Noticing that his bank of the river was higher than the opposite one he mounted a battery of fifty cannon, and under the advantage of this offensive fire he built a bridge and accomplished the feat of passing the supposed impassable river.

The enemy, shattered by the cannonade, and discouraged by the loss of their leader, Tilly, did not abide the onset of the Swedes, but fled, leaving 2000 dead upon the field. The dominions of Maximilian, Elector of Bavaria, were thus exposed to the conqueror, and this was a most notable stage in the progress of the contest, for Bavaria was the hot-bed of Jesuitism, where many evil designs against evangelical Christianity were hatched. The Pope's political party had two heads—Ferdinand, Emperor of Austria, and Maximilian, Elector of Bavaria—and it was Gustavus' destiny to come successively into collision with both these dragons, and ruin the military power of both on well-fought fields. At Leipsic, and finally at the Lech, he broke the sword arm of Maximilian, and scattered the butchers of Madgeburg to the four winds. With a Swedish garrison in Munich, the capital of Jesuitism, and all their sees and corporations laid under tribute to the "heretic" King, the troublers of Germany had a salutary taste of the terrors and privations so plentifully endured by the Protestant world during the last hundred years.

A striking incident of this stage of the career of Gustavus was his triumphal entry into Augsburg. Here, a century before, Melancthon had presented to the Emperor, Charles V., the Protestant Confession of Faith. Here, still later, by the peace of 1555, the power and importance of the Lutherans had been tacitly acknowledged and a limited toleration for their religion legally secured. The city was kept by a Romish garrison, and there was a Romish party among the citizens, but the place surrendered without bloodshed, and on the 14th April, 1632, the King made his public entry, and proceeded straightway to the Church of St. Ann, where the Lutheran form of worship was resumed after many years' suppression, and Fabricius, the King's chaplain, preached from Psalm xii. 5—"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him."

While Gustavus, going from strength to strength, was thus threatening to overturn the whole political fabric of Romanism, the heads of the confederacy at Vienna were not idle. By great efforts Ferdinand, the Emperor, and his Jesuits had organised an army under Wallenstein the master-spirit of the Catholic military system, who had been in retirement, but was now launched anew upon a career of ravage and bloodshed. Driving the Saxon allies out of Bohemia and afflicting Protestant towns and interests as he went forward, he was now threatening to interpose between Gustavus and Sweden, and so cut off his supplies. Gustavus marched northwards to Nuremberg and awaited the appearance of Wallenstein and his confederates, who numbered 40,000 men. The King, though much inferior in numbers, had skillfully entrenched himself, and when Wallenstein surveyed the position, he resolved not to attack, but to sit down and wage a campaign of famine.