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"Hold Fast the Form of Sound Words."

(Continued from page 3.)

IT is quite evident that, when the Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words," he desires him to hold fast *the doctrines* embodied in that form. He does not lay stress upon the words without the doctrines, or the doctrines without the words, but he urges the duty of firmly adhering to both. Thus he expected that the whole counsel of God would be properly and securely maintained by Timothy and by the Church in general. To cleave to the words of Scripture without any enquiry into the truths they convey would be childish folly; it would be of no benefit to those who held them. On the other hand, to receive the doctrines only, which they were supposed to express, without a faithful regard to the words themselves, would imply an intellectual contradiction, and would land those who professed to accept the truth in the maze of vague uncertainties. The first kind of adherence to the form of sound words is the germ of superstition and Popery; while the second is the parent of infidelity and Rationalism. It is our duty and privilege, therefore, in the interests of sound Christianity, to hold fast both the words and doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

The Scriptures teach us, among other things, the true doctrine concerning themselves as infallibly inspired of God, concerning the creation of the world, concerning man in his original estate of innocency and the covenant of works, concerning the Fall, concerning the ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, concerning the covenant of grace, concerning the adorable Person of Christ and the work of redemption, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification, concerning the Church, its worship and discipline, concerning the State, its laws and duties, concerning eternal judgment and the future states of the righteous and the wicked. It is ours to hearken to what God the Lord speaks to us on these and other great subjects through

the lively oracles of His Word, and to cherish and maintain the vital doctrines He thus teaches us. He has led His real Church into the knowledge of the truth in all ages, and has commissioned His servants to preach the gospel and expound the Scriptures to every creature. It has been found necessary for the edification of the Church and for the preservation of the truth in its purity, that creeds, confessions and testimonies should be drawn up, as subordinate standards of faith and practice. Where these are founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, they impose on us an obligation to hold them fast. Such we believe to be true of the Confession of Faith and other standards of our Church, and it is therefore our bounden duty and highest privilege to maintain and proclaim the doctrines set forth therein, not because they are the beliefs of men but because they are the teachings of God's unerring Word.

"*Hold fast,*" says the apostle, "the form of sound words." This exhortation implies that there was a danger of letting go the sound words of the faith. False teachers had arisen even in apostolic times, and these had very probably plausible and insinuating ways of casting discredit on one or other of the accepted doctrines of the Church. Paul urges Timothy to resist the erroneous ideas of these men who had departed from the faith, and to use every Christian argument and persuasion to bring them to renounce their errors and to acknowledge the truth. There are many nowadays who hold that ministers of the gospel should introduce no controversial matter into the pulpits, and should simply preach the doctrines of salvation without exposing or condemning heresies. Let such persons examine the inspired epistles to Timothy, which are full of instructions as to how a minister of the gospel should deliver himself to his hearers, and they will see that such was not the mind of the Apostle Paul, who had the mind of Christ. No man was ever more devoted to preaching the glorious gospel of salvation to perishing sinners than he, or was more on fire with the love of Christ, and yet he was faithful in denouncing error as well as preaching the truth. He also counsels Timothy to the same work. Not that we think he recommends controversial discussions as the staple theme of pulpit discourse. Far from it; but he sees the great dangers to which the souls of men are exposed from erroneous conceptions of divine things, and so he will have the loving and faithful minister of Christ to warn sinners away from the rocks of error and unbelief upon which they are liable to make shipwreck for eternity. The apostle says in effect to Timothy, "No matter who may try to entice you to give up the form of sound words, or what temptations you may be assailed with towards this end, hold it fast with your whole heart and soul; it is more precious than any earthly treasure; by these sound words your own soul and the souls of others will be edified and saved; they are the words of eternal life." And there is no doubt that by the exhortation the Apostle also recommends Timothy to

seek an ever-deepening acquaintance with and attachment to the truths of revelation. Where there is spiritual life, there ought to be spiritual growth, and so the Christian ought to grow in his knowledge of the truths of God's word, in the solidity and strength of his attachment to them, and in his willingness to suffer for their sake and Christ's sake, who is "the way, the truth, and the life."

Notice, lastly, *the manner* in which "the form of sound words" is to be held fast, "*in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*" The apostle is writing not to a mere intellectual believer in the truth, but to a living Christian and true minister of Christ, and so he exhorts him to hold fast the system of sound doctrine he had heard of him as his teacher in the exercise of the graces of faith and love.

He recommends Timothy to hold fast the truth in faith "which is in Christ Jesus." Not in the mere grasp of intellect, or even conscience, but in the grasp of faith, a living faith which abides in Christ as its object, author, and sustenance. It is good for men to have an intellectual or conscientious conviction of the truth when they have nothing more, though such cannot save their souls for eternity. They may yet obtain saving faith. At the same time let none rest satisfied without the latter, or they are undone for ever. It is saving faith that the apostle wrote of to Timothy, and it does not rest short of Christ as its object. The true believer receives "the form of sound words" at Christ's mouth, and sealed with His authority as the Mediator between God and man. Thus he is here exhorted to continue, as he began, to hold the system of sound truth with a constant regard to Him who is the giver of it, and whose sanction it bears. It is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the gracious soul has become the possessor of the truth as a precious treasure committed to his care, and he must firmly adhere to it in the face of all gainsayers under the abiding impression of this great reality. Again, it is Christ who is the author of His people's faith. "The Son quickeneth whom He will." Every spiritual gift, faith, repentance, love, etc., all come through Him, by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the souls of sinners. He is also the life or sustenance of faith, and it may be said that saving faith has its dwelling place in the bosom of Christ. "It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell;" and the fulness of spiritual life that supplies all the graces of the soul is to be found only in Christ. The Apostle therefore shows Timothy that it is not with a strength derived from intellectual conviction merely that he must or can hold fast the truths of the gospel, but with a strength that is drawn by living faith out of the divine and unsearchable fulness that is in Jesus Christ. In dependence upon Christ and Christ alone must he maintain his integrity in the life of godliness, resist all erroneous doctrines, and worthily acquit himself as a defender of that "form of sound words" that the Lord has committed to his trust.

"*In love which is in Christ Jesus.*" The Apostle exhorts

Timothy also to the exercise of love. "Hold fast the truth in love as well as faith," he says. In love to the truth itself, as one who discerns its inherent beauty and its admirable suitableness for the ends it subserves; in love to the souls of men, seeking that spiritual and eternal good of sinners which the words of truth are fitted to secure: in love to Christ Himself who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and whose grace and glory are so richly unfolded in it. This love is "*in Christ Jesus.*" Christ is its chief object as the mediator of the new covenant. Christ is also the fountain from which it springs. "We love him, because he first loved us," says the Apostle John. Christ is the sustenance of it. It is by meditation upon Him, and by spiritual views of the excellency of His character and the marvels of His work and sufferings unto death on behalf of sinners that love is begotten and nourished in the souls of believers to Him. The Apostle exhorted Timothy then to hold fast "the form of sound words" in the exercise of these graces of faith and love in Christ Jesus, whereby he would truly glorify God, benefit men, and secure an eternal victory over sin and error, Satan and the world.

What the Apostle Paul said, by the Holy Ghost, to Timothy, his own "son in the faith," he says still to all who have, by grace, embraced the whole counsel of God, unfolded in His word, as their chart for time and eternity, "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

The Free Church Law Case.—This case, which has been *sub judice* for more than a year, and was argued before the Bench of the House of Lords some months ago, is not yet settled. The Lord Chancellor has ordered a fresh hearing to be made, and the date fixed is for the 9th June.

The Premier on Holiday.—The present Prime Minister is a very sad character; and we heartily wish he were relegated to private life. His latest outbreak is in the way of flagrant Sabbath-breaking. Having occasion to take a holiday, the papers report that he crossed to Calais on the Sabbath, and thence to Paris per his motor car. His Sabbath golfing procedure is notorious. Our verdict on him is, that he is a dangerous man to rule the nation.

The Late James Murray, Rogart.—It is with deep sorrow that we briefly notice this month the death of a beloved and eminent father in the Church, Mr. James Murray, catechist, Rogart. Mr Murray, who had reached the advanced age of over 90 years, was a man greatly beloved; and though he had been long confined to the house in failing health, yet his removal leaves a great blank in the district in which he lived, and in the Church at large. A man of much understanding in the truth, he also combined in rare proportions the Christian graces of courage and humility. He died on Sabbath, the 8th May. We hope to have a much fuller notice in a future issue.

J. S. S.

Notes of a Sermon.

By the late Rev. CHRISTOPHER MUNRO, Strathy.

Preached at Kilmuir, Skye, in February, 1861.

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 "Thus said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army."—EZEK. xxxvii. 9, 10.

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A leaf is wanting in the MS., but at the point where it starts the preacher evidently represents Ezekiel as addressing the Lord.

"I AM sensible of my weakness, and feel the responsibility of the duty so much that I fear I may not be able to do justice, to deliver Thy message as correctly as possible, and that I may be the cause of the work failing, if it be necessary to observe such accuracy in speaking Thy word." "If afraid of this, Ezekiel (the Lord may be implied as answering), I shall go with thee, and direct thee, teach thee and keep thee right, which surely is not more difficult for Me to do than put life in the dry bones."

Ezekiel goes and declares and speaks the words put into his mouth, speaks to the bones and declares unto them that it was the Lord's purpose to restore them to life, and describes the process or the order in which the work was to be accomplished. Supposing two or more unbelievers as rationalists were to hear him, such a colloquy as this might take place between them. "See this man in the garb of a prophet, in yonder glen, down below, as if he were preaching. Let us go and see what he is about, and hear what he says, for, if it be no other benefit, it will while away so much time." They agree to go. As they approach, they begin to hear his voice, and they say, "Now, let us listen. "Ah," says one, "he seems to be speaking to *bones*. Are there any bones here?" "Yes, I see the valley full of bones," says the other." He says he has a message from God to the bones. Surely he must be mad. Would the Creator, who is wise, ever think of sending so absurd a message? The thing is impossible. It is so contrary to all reason and to all experience that no sensible man could give heed to what he says. Shall we go up to him and remonstrate with him concerning his foolish procedure? We may; if it serve no other end, we'll have some amusement, or get materials for turning the man and his doings into ridicule."

Well, they come near, and accost the prophet, and ask him what he is doing there. "I am prophesying," he replies. "To whom?" "To the dead bones you see all around." "Who sent thee to prophesy? Surely you must be a false prophet, or else a man destitute of all common sense, when you spend time speaking to

bones." "I would say so too, but *the Lord* sent me and commanded me to speak to them His word." "What did He command thee to say?" "That He will put life into them, and make them living men as they were at the beginning." "Do you think that the all-wise Creator would send a message to bones, or that He will depart out of the ordinary course of nature to quicken men who have been long dead? We never heard of such a thing happening since men began to die, and we cannot believe that it is to take place now." "I have no doubt (replies the prophet) of having been sent here by the Lord, and of having received this message, and I believe He is able to do what He has promised regarding them." "But we question the fact of His sending you, and of His promising any such thing. And may you not see yourself that we have good ground for our opinion. It is contrary to reason to expect what you say is about to happen, and, moreover, we see no sign of any life among them, after all your prophesying and your pretensions to a heavenly message." "All your reasoning and objections (the prophet again answers) do not move me, and if you have nothing more to state, you had better go your ways, and let me proceed with my work." "There is no use speaking to this man; he is evidently of an unsound mind, a weak, fanatical, superstitious being, and so we better leave him and allow him to proceed in his own ways."

Ezekiel proceeds with delivering his message, and it is possible he might have seen no effect upon them at first. Supposing he had not, he might have repeated it again and again, yet without any effect, and so begin to doubt himself and say unto the Lord, "I have now again and again declared Thy message, and see nothing of the result that I was led to expect. I am now beginning to grow weary, and to think it useless to speak any longer." "Thou art very impatient, Ezekiel; why despair so soon? Did I say *when* your prophesying would take effect? Did I mention a day or an hour?" "No," replies Ezekiel. "If not, what makes you think of giving up? Dost thou doubt My word, my power, my purpose, my promise?" "No, Lord." "If not, why despond; why not exercise patience and hope, and why not wait until my time comes?" "True, I have been guilty of impatience, and will now proceed in Thy name and wait."

Before he gave up prophesying, the Lord's work began; proofs of His power being at work began to appear. There was a stir among the bones. A noise was heard, a shaking was observed, and a movement was taking place; a bone here and there moving, and taking with great precision its own place in the skeleton. This was a sight worth seeing, wonderful when considered, and surely the prophet would be glad and encouraged, and would with peculiar interest observe what was taking place. He had, however, to continue prophesying, for he was not to desist till the work was done. And as this was so, he did not give way to wonder and curiosity, and run about and take notice how the work was going

on, or hurry away to tell others that they might come and see the movement going on among the dry bones, which resulted from his preaching. He knew his work better, and so continued at the post of duty. It is likely the prophecy and the word kept pace with each other.

The first part was, "O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." The effect of hearing was a noise and a shaking, and each bone came to its bone. The bones now show symptoms of hearing. The whole of the message is summed up in one sentence, "Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live." This was good news to the dead. And it is to be noticed that its message consists of what the Lord was about to do, and not what they, or any other creature, could do. What He does comes of His goodwill, of His sovereign mercy and love. The bones could have no hand in the matter, no share in the work. Neither could Ezekiel; all he could do was to speak the word of the Lord. In putting breath into them there was something more necessary than merely to breathe on them. Therefore, He says, "I will lay sinews upon you, and bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." This work proceeded in a regular order, as all God's work does. The hearing came in consequence of the call, "Hear ye the word of the Lord;" the sinews in connection with the promise that He would lay sinews on them; the flesh and the skin in the same manner. Thus the promise was fulfilled, and they were now ready for the last step—for the vital breath. The manner in which this took place is more minutely described, and must be deferred for consideration to some future time, if the Lord grant any.

Let me then, at present, direct your attention to some of the more important lessons taught us in this part of the chapter.

1. We may find here a general notion of that which constitutes the gospel. To express more correctly what I mean, we have the import of the gospel stated in a short compass, namely, a sovereign purpose on the part of God to save a people for Himself from among sinners of mankind, who are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and the manner in which He executes it, together with its results. This purpose includes all that it was necessary to contrive and to execute in order to save sinners consistently with the glory of God. In one word, it contains all that is meant by the covenant of grace—the fixing on the Son to be its head, the work given Him to do, the promises also given Him by the Father as to the fruits of His work, as well as those given Him in reference to the support needed by Him in carrying on His work. The end of all this was to bestow life on them; this was the command given Him by the Father, even to bestow eternal life on His people.

2. We thus learn, seeing sinners are dead, how entirely salvation is from God. Nothing can be more evident than that the dead

cannot come to life, except through the exercise of divine power, and as clear is it that the sinner's salvation must come from God, and not from any other quarter.

3. We may also learn what external means the Lord has appointed for applying this salvation—namely, the preaching of the gospel by human instrumentality, by men sent by God Himself, to whom He commits the message of reconciliation and life.

4. We have here an intimation of the view in which God sees man by nature, and according to which they are to be addressed as dead souls, as “dry bones.” “O, ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.” This is similar to the command, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “Thou art lost—sinful—dead in sins; hear, ye dead, hear, ye dry bones.” It was evident to the prophet that they were dry bones, so that he could not apply any other name to them. Men must be addressed as sinners, not as good, righteous people, or as people who need only advice, persuasion, and entreaty, but as individuals who need divine power to quicken them. Men now, as in former times, may not believe this, but it is the teaching of God's Word throughout. If men are so dead, the preaching of the word by itself cannot quicken sinners more than the words of the prophet could cause life to enter the bones. If it is, however, God's appointed way, it must be employed and persevered in, because He commands it.

5. We have an account here of the effect produced when God sends forth His power. The dry bones come to each other; then come the sinews, flesh and skin, and then life which is accompanied by faith and knowledge of the true God. So is it when He sends forth His power to convert sinners by the preaching of the gospel. There is just a noise and a shaking among them. There is produced conviction of sin, faith in the existence of God and of His being lawgiver, king and judge. The sinner at this stage is led to consider, to lay to heart and realise his relation to God, his duties towards Him, his chief end, and his destiny as an immortal and responsible being, and sees that he has sinned as to all his duties to God, and believes that he is therefore under the wrath and curse of God. He considers himself lost and undone, and is found exercised or occupied with the question, “What must I do to be saved?” He abstains from open sins; he endeavours to conform his conduct to the word of God; he studies and examines the Scriptures; he prays, and he uses all the means of grace. He is no longer a trifler in this matter; he carries about with him a sense of divine and eternal things; he makes progress in knowledge, not only of the law but of the doctrines of the gospel. The understanding is enlightened, the reason is exercised, the conscience asserts its place and performs its office. The necessity of a change of heart and will is not only believed but felt. Thus the man is brought into some shape, and moulded intellectually and externally according to the truth, but there is *no life*. Evangelical

hope, repentance and love are not present till the soul is quickened. There may be much stir and noise where there is yet no life. There may be much conviction, brokenness of spirit or hope, much conformity without, much use of means, where there is no union to Jesus, without which there is no life, and consequently no salvation. This life, however, is to be communicated, and where this great change takes place, it is followed by the knowledge of the true God.

This knowledge is spiritual, for God is a spirit. Man lost it, as was observed in the first discourse on this vision. Adam was possessed of it at his creation, but none of his posterity has it in the least degree by nature. The creature's obtaining it is to him like coming to a new state of existence. In Scripture this change is compared to one passing from darkness into light and from death into life. All old things pass away, and all things are made new. *The Bible* is to him a new book. Formerly he read it but understood it not; he felt little or no interest in it; he had no delight in it, and was ready to get weary and listless, when he either read it himself or heard another read it. But now it is to him the word of the living God, the word of the blessed Saviour, the voice of the good Shepherd, of his beloved One, the words of eternal life. He therefore becomes earnest in studying it that he may know it and do it. He sees light here to guide him, and looks in it for all that can be known in this life of divine things, of God's character, will and salvation, for all also that can be known here concerning the world of spirits, concerning the future state of all living. He seeks not to false gods or visions. To the law and to the testimony is now his rule, and all others are laid aside as useless and sinful.

Prayer is a new thing. Formerly he might have been satisfied with going through a form, but now he looks upon this duty or religious exercise in the light of a means whereby intercourse with God is maintained, in which there is access to Him, or to His throne where the soul can make known his wants and find mercy and grace, or the supply of all his need. *The means of grace* are likewise new. He uses these that he may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *The Sabbath* is new. He formerly felt it a burden, and considered it hard to be restrained from vanity and worldly talk and conversation; now he is disposed to call it a delight, the honourable of the Lord: he delights in it as a season which the Lord has sanctified for Himself and commands to be devoted to His service. He delights in the Lord's house and in the meetings of His people; he is joyful when it is said unto him, "Let us go up into the house of God." He aims at walking in the ways of all the divine commandments, endeavours to give new obedience thereto. He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus. as the Saviour, receives Him and trusts on Him alone for salvation. He needs Him as his mediator, as his prophet priest and king. He believes in Him in this prophetic

office as one whose office is to reveal the Father, to reveal His will and to teach the way of life. He needs Him in His priestly office as one who made an atonement for sin, for the creature feels that he is a sinner and can have no intercourse with God but through this atoning Mediator. He needs Him in his kingly office to save him from iniquity, from all evil and from his foes which he finds increasing continually. "O Lord, how are my foes increased? Against me many rise." The soul sees in Christ an all-sufficient fulness. He hears Christ inviting the like of him to come to Him, and he comes and trusts in Him. The Lord Jesus is infinitely worthy of all this: the sinner believes Him to be so, rejoices because of its truth, and esteems Him altogether lovely.

Here then we see in what state sinners are, and how they can be delivered out of it, and the effects that follow this deliverance, from the consideration of which each here may learn whether he has been delivered or not.

Have you been awakened in any measure to a sense of your sinful and miserable condition? According to this portion of Scripture, have there been any noise and shaking among the dry bones? Have you been led to consider seriously what sin is, and what are your relation and duty towards God? Have you been led to study the Bible as the Word of God, and to conform your life to its precepts and directions? If not, there is as yet no life in you. You are dead, and, if so, how sad to think of your despising God, His truth, and salvation! Some, I fear, never think of Him at all, never think of calling on His name, of bowing before Him for mercy to their souls, for being delivered from death or from sin. How long are you determined not to have anything to do with your Creator, while sitting on a throne of mercy, while inviting you to come and to reason with Him, that your sins may be cleansed away, and that you may live. There is no folly like this. Harken diligently, then, to His word, till He may render it a life-giving word, and that thus you may be made a partaker of eternal life.

Have you been moved and awakened, and life breathed into you? Then you must know the Lord God in Christ Jesus. This is the result, as you read here of being quickened unto life. And if you know Him, then you trust in Him, you fear Him, and endeavour to obey Him and love Him. You must acknowledge the fact that you are not your own, but His, that you are not at liberty to act as others do, or as the world without God do; but be ready to say, "Whatever others do. I and my house will serve the Lord." If you thus know Him, grow in knowledge and in grace. Follow closely in the footsteps of the flock, in the footsteps of Him who is their chief shepherd and great ensample, and when this Shepherd shall appear, then you shall be acknowledged as His, and obtain the reward, even that crown of glory that fadeth not away. To be crowned by Him with a crown of this description is of infinite blessedness.

Some of low degree in this life are apt to be elated if the high and honourable take any favourable notice of them, and more so if they bestow favours upon them, if they confer honours that are in themselves empty and perishing. But what are all favours and honours and rewards bestowed by men, however high and rich, compared to what Christ shall bestow on them who are His? And what disappointment like theirs who are vainly expecting to enter heaven when they shall be separated from his people and moved away to His left hand, which will at once deprive them of all hopes for ever and ever!

Is He not coming, is not the great day of the Lord fast approaching? Is not the time given for preparing for this greatest of all events rapidly shortening? Is it not near its termination with not a few? O, who can bear it, if unprepared for it? None.

The world seem to be becoming more and more forgetful of this day, and to live as if it were not to take place. Their indifference, however, shall not prevent its approach, for it is ordained by Him whose counsel shall stand, whose word shall not fall to the ground, but abideth for ever and ever. Be not deceived then as to its truths. Slumber not, lest you be found sleeping without oil in your lamps, and so be shut out, and dwell in the blackness of darkness for ever.

A Sabbath-Breaker's End.—The case of Dawson Reid, which had for some time been pending before the Sheriff, was decided towards the close of last month by a sentence of eight months' imprisonment. The accusation laid and proved against the offender was forgery of two documents—the one a cheque, the other a receipt. What renders the case significant is that Reid was the secretary and moving spirit of the profane Sabbath Steamboat Company, whose beginnings were chronicled in this magazine four years ago. Churchgoers who had occasion to cross Jamaica Bridge on their way to the forenoon service were constantly grieved during the summer months by the spectacle of Reid's steamboat with her steam up and a string of ungodly persons making for her with necks stretched out as for a precious boon. The Sadducean press of our country have made a conspiracy against the Sabbath, and the whole scheme of life and thought that the Sabbath involves. But in Dawson Reid they have a manifestation of the folly and danger involved in this return to paganism. The Sabbath is the keystone of the Decalogue, and if this be removed, the whole fabric of the moral character is in danger of sudden collapse. In Reid's case Sabbath profanation culminated in theft and forgery—crimes that have made him a menace to society, and resulted in changing his vision of affluence as a shipowner into the prospect of the dismal career of a jailbird. "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth, the sinner is snared in the works of his own hand."

Searmon.

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

21st July, 1861.

“Saor e o dhol sios do'n t-slochd, fhuair mi eiric.”—Iob xxxiii. 24.

CHA'N 'eil e 'na shith do neach air bith bhi faireachail air gu bheil e 'na pheacach. Ach mur tig neach gu bhi ann a fhaireachadh 'na pheacach, gu la a bhais cha chluinn e na briathran so ann an rathad comhfhurtachd d'a anam. Theid la nan gras seachad agus 's ann anns an t-siorruidheachd a chi e ciod an roghainn a rinn e. 'Nuair a sheallas sin air cia lionmhor iad anns an t-saoghal a tha gun smuain mu'n anam, ciod an comhdhunadh gus am feum sinn teachd ach gu bheil iad a' dol sios do'n t-slochd, “mar bhiadh do'n bhas gun iochd?”

'Nuair a labhair Elihu na briathran so ri Iob bha nithe air tighinn gu airde aig Iob, mar gu'm biodh Dia a' deiligidh ro chruaidh ris. Ach labhair Elihu ris mu mhaitheas a' Chruitheir agus anns an 23 rann tha e ag radh, “ma bhios teachdaire aige, eadartheangair, aon am measg mile a nochdadh 'ionracais do dhuine—cha-n e ionracas cruthaichte, ach 'ionracas fein—tha e grasmhor ris, gabhaidh e truas dheth agus their e, Saor e o dhol sios do'n t-slochd, fhuair mi eiris.” Faiceadh neach a pheacadh agus cha bhi iongantais air ciod an smachdachadh a dh' fheudas coinneachadh ris: ach gus an tig an t-anam gu sin cha bhi a bheil duinte. Ach 'nuair a thig e gu sin, cha bhi e fad o na bhriathraibh so, “Saor e o dhol sios do'n t-slochd, fhuair mi eiric.” Ann a bhi labhairt beagan air na briathraibh tha sinn a' runachadh, ma bheir an Tighearn comas, bhi nochdadh

I. beagan mu'n t-slochd,

II. gu bheil anns a' pheacadh na tha toilltinn an creutair, a tha ciontach dheth, a dhol sios do'n t-slochd,

III. beagan mu'n eiric—“fhuair mi eiric,”

IV. ciod a tha air a ghabhail a steach anns an t-saoradh—saor e o dhol sios do'n t-slochd.

'S iad so briathran an Athar shiorruidh mu'n taghadh.

I. Gu bhi fosgladh a' bhriathair—slochd, cha-n 'eil teagamh nach e sin, ifrinn. 'S iomadh ainm a tha aig ifrinn ann am focal na firinn agus 's e aon de na h-ainmean, an slochd—slochd gun ghrunn. 'S e ifrinn an t-aite a chomharraich Dia anns am biodh peacadh air a pheanasachadh ann am foirfeachd. Tha moran a' deanamh luaidh air ifrinn anns an t-saoghal ach cha-n 'eil iad ach gle thearc a tha 'tuigsinn ni air bith dheth. Air mo shon fein cha chomasach mi air samhladh a thoirt air. 'S e an ni a's fhaighe air is aithne dhomh, coguis chiontach air a dusgadh agus trocair folaichte o'n anam. 'S e ifrinn direach an t-aite a chomharraich Dia anns am biodh peacadh air a pheanasachadh ann am foir.

feachd. Tha iomadh peanas air peacadh anns an t-saoghal ach cha-n 'eil a h-uile truaighe a thig air peacadh ann an so ach mar sgobadh cuileig an coimeas ri ifrinn. 'S e ifrinn foirfeachd peanaid agus cha chomasach sinn ach gle bheag dhe foirfeachd a ghabhail a steach aon chuid de thruaighe no de shonas, ach mar bhoinnean. Nan tuigemaaid a bheag de nadur ifrinn cha bu mhaith leinn na diabhail fein, mar chreutairean, bhi air an tilgeadh ; ach do bhrìgh gur peacaich iad gloraichidh sinn Dia airson ifrinn. Feudaidd an saoghal bhi 'cluich ri ifrinn.

Cha-n 'eil moran air 'innseadh san sgrìobtur mu chruthachadh ifrinn ; ach tha aon aite ann far am bheil e air a radh, gu'n d' ulluicheadh e airson an diabhail agus 'ainglibh. " Imichibh uam, a shluaigh mhallaichte dh' ionnsuidh an teine shiorruidh a *dh' ulluicheadh* airson an diabhail agus 'aingle." Chunnaic an Cruithneach o shiorruidheachd gu'm biodh peacadh ann agus dh' ulluich E ifrinn gu coinneachadh ris ; agus cha-n 'eil ni ann an ifrinn ach na tha glòir Dhe agagairt. An Ti a bha comasach le focal air neamh agus talamh a chruthachadh nach robh E comasach an cruthachadh le 'fhocal na bha glòir a bhuadhan ag agairt an aghaidh peacaidh ?

Ifrinn—'s e a th' ann ni anns am bi uile bhuadhan Dhe a' dealradh. Tha iomadh peanas air peacadh anns an t-saoghal, ach gle bheag de Dhia air 'fhaicinn anns na peanasan sin. Cha-n 'eil iad ach tearc anns an t-saoghal a tha 'faicinn ni air bith de Dhia anna. Ach 's e a th' ann an ifrinn aite anns am bi glòir Dhe a' dealradh, glòir naomhachd a naduir, glòir uile-fhiosrachd, glòir arduachdaranachd. Cha-n 'eil buaidh ann an Dia nach bi a' dealradh ann agus 's e sin a ni ifrinn. Thubhairt an Salmadair, "ma ni mi mo leabaidh ann an ifrinn tha thu fein an sin," seadh, bidh glòir a throcair a' dealradh an sin mar a bha a throcair agus fhad-fhulangasairan lot leis na h-aindiadhaich. Cha chomasach sinn ach gle bheag de nadur ifrinn a ghabhail a steach. Cìod na tommasan feirge a dh' fhuilingeas aon anam ann an cuig mionaidean, cha chomasach aon anns an t-saoghal a ghabhail a steach. Ach cìod ann am bliadhna ? Cha chomasach duine a ghabhail a steach do bhrìgh nach comasach e an t-Uile-chumhachdach a ghabhail a steach.

Seall mar a tha focal an 'Tighearn a labhairt air ifrinn, "dorchadas an leth a muigh," far am bi "gul agus giosgan fhiacal." Bidh ni's leor de sholus ann an ifrinn leis am faic suilean an anama truaighe a staide. Ach c'arson a theirear dorchadas ris ? Do bhrìgh an eudochais, Bi thusa cuig mionaidean ann an eudochas agus gheibh thu sin dorchadais leis ; ach neach a bhi tre 'n t-siorruidheachd ann an eudochas cìod an dorchadas sin ?

"An slochd gun ghrunn." C'airson ? Tha do bhrìgh agus nach ruig iad tre'n t-siorruidheachd air iomlanachd am fulangais no sin a riarachas ceartas ; nan ruigeadh iad air sin ruigeadh iad air crìch am fulangais. Ach bidh iad tre'n t-siorruidheachd a' dol fodha, a' dol fodha. Lean thusa peacadh. Buanaich thusa mar a ta thu agus gheibh thusa an dol fodha so.

“An loch theine,” a tha losgadh le teine agus pronnusc ni a’s e an dara bas. ’S iongantach am focal a thubhairt an Salmadair an sud, “Na tilg mi a do shealladh agus na toir do Spiorad Naomh uam.” Nach ’eil ifrinn fosgailte do shuil Dhe? Ach tha anam air a thilgeadh a mach o’n chomh-fhulangas shiorruidh mar gu’n tilgeadh tu cairbh shalach a mach as do shealladh. O nach uamhasach an sealladh a gheibh creutair dhe’n pheacadh ’nuair nach comasach e a radh gur e Dia a chuir an sin e ach a dhroch ghnìomhara fein? Nach uamhasach an sealladh a gheibh e de’n pheacadh ’nuair nach comasach e tre’n t-siorruidheachd a radh nach e ceartas a tha e ’faotainn?

Is eagalach mar a bhios peacaidhean an t-saoghail air an toirt gu solus. Tha e air a radh gu’m bi deatach am peine-san ag eirigh suas gu saoghal nan saoghal agus cha bhi fois aca a la no dh’oidhche. O nach sguir thu dheth? Tha e ag radh gu bheil aoibhneas an lathair aingle Dhe os cionn aoin pheacaich a ni aithreachas. O sheann diabhuil, buanaich thusa ann ad shlighibh agus gheibh thu deoch theth mu dheireadh.

Cha mhaith leam dol air aghaidh air so. Ach tha ann am broilleach a’ chreutair fein na ni truagh ni’s leor e. Cha-n ’eil buaidh anns an anam nach bi ’ga chruidhneadh. Tha a’ chuimhne iongantach mar a chumas i nithe anns an robh an creutair ciontach, na cothroman a mhi-bhuilich agus na tairgsean a dhiult e. Tha an tuigse iongantach farsuinn. ’S mor a ghabhas i a stigh de nadur na siorruidheachd. O air sgath d’ anama neobhasmhoir cuimhnich siorruidheachd.

II. Gu bheil anns a’ pheacach na tha ’toilltinn an neach a tha ciontach dheth a dhol sìos do’n t-slochd.

Gu’n gleidheadh an Tighearn mise o bhi lot aon anam qhochd ann an so an diugh. Ach tha mi cinnteach mur lot Dia thusa airson peacaidh gu’m bi an loch theine agad mu dheireadh. ’S iomadh anam bochd a bhios tre’n t-siorruidheachd a toirt taing do Dhia agus ag radh mur biodh gu’n do lot Dia mise le faireachadh air mo pheacaidhean bhithinn ann an sud tre’n t-siorruidheachd. Ach gu bhi ’fosgladh so.

Tha ann an dol air falbh aigne an anama o Dhia agus an socruchadh air cuspair cruthaichte olc nach comasach duine air a ghabhail a stigh. Oir tha ann an Dia na tha airidh air aigne nan creutairean a’s airde air neamh agus talamh; agus ’nuair a tha aigne gaoil an anama a’ falbh o Dhia agus a’ socrachadh air cuspair cruthaichte tha Dia a’ faicinn an dimeas a tha air a dheanamh air fein airson an ni sin—agus O! na tomhasan feirge a tha glòir Dhe ag agairt an aghaidh sin. “Is Dia eudmhor mise.”

Tha anns a’ smuain is lugha de shuarachas air Dia no air Crìosd olc nach aithne do aon ach Dia. Tha e ’na aobhar eagal mar a tha eadhon clann Chrìosd a’ teachd gearr ann an so. Cha-n e a h-uile smuain a riaracheas an lagh. Ach tha thusa ann an sin agus thu, math dh’fheudta, trì fichead bliadhna agus nach

d'thainig smuain airidh air Dia tre d'anam ; nis ciod an fhearg a tha sin a' toilltinn ? 'S ann o'n t-suarachas so a tha e nach fiu le moran an glun a lubadh no beannachd iarraidh air am biadh. Nis ciod na tomhasan feirge tha gloir Dhe ag agairt an aghaidh sin ? "Threig iad mise tobar nan uisgeachan beo."

Tha smuain mhonmhor an aghaidh bith na Morachd a' toilltinn feirge nach aithne do aon ach Dia. Co fhad 's a tha 'bhith aig duine o Dhia agus e an crochadh air Dia airson a bhith tha ann am monmhor 'na aghaidh na tha dusgadh feirge a loisgeas gus an ifrinn is iochdaraich. Nach e monmhor a rinn na diabhuil 'nan diabhuil. Tha sinn a' leughadh air "luchd monmhor" fa chomhair am bheil duibhre an dorchadais air a thasgadh gu siorruidh.

Tha ann am peacadh na tha 'g aicheadh uile-fhiosrachd Dhe. 'S iongantach 'nuair a tha an uile-fhiosrachd a' leanmhuinn a' chreutair anns a h-uile ceum mar a tha e air a lot le daoine. 'S ann mar sin a tha iad a lot Dhia. Nach 'eil e ag radh, gu'm b' aithreach leis gu'n do rinn e an duine air an talamh agus gu'n d' thug e cradh dha 'na chridhe.

Tha anns a h-uile anam miann an aghaidh uile aitheanta Dhe ; seadh, chan 'eil anam neo-iompaichte anns an t-saoghal anns nach 'eil miann airson an cailleadh e Dia agus gloir agus am biodh e tre'n t-siorruidheachd fo fheirg Dhe. Tha iomad aig a' bheil sin 'nam broilleach airson an cailleadh iad Dia agus gloir agus mheantradh iad air ifrinn.

(*Ri leantuinn.*)

Outlines of Lectures on the Bible.

BY THE REV. NEIL MACINTYRE, GLENDALE.¹

(*Continued from page 39.*)

WE now proceed to consider *how the Bible has come to us* in a language which we can understand.

It has been already pointed out that the Old Testament was written in Hebrew by Moses and others. Is it a fact that the art of writing was known so early as the time of Moses? Yes! It is now ascertained beyond doubt that the art of writing is very old—that long before the time of Moses men knew how to write. The chief materials on which they made their impressions were stone, clay, wood, papyrus, and parchment. The oldest documents which we possess have come to us from Babylon and Egypt. The Babylonians wrote on blocks of soft clay. These blocks, when soft, were easily impressed, and when impressed, were dried in the sun, and by this process the writing was well preserved. *Papyrus*, from which our word "paper" comes, was used mostly by the Egyptians. It was made from the papyrus plant, which grows upon the banks of the River Nile. It has a very tender stem, and when cut into thin slices, it can be fastened together by a certain kind of gum which it contains. A few specimens of this

Egyptian paper has been found in tombs, but not many, as the material was difficult to preserve, being so brittle. *Parchment*, which was chiefly used by the Jews in transcribing the Scriptures, consists of dried skins, and these, when fastened together, make splendid sheets, which can be rolled up on poles.

The oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament which we possess only date back to the eighth century. This, no doubt, will appear strange to some, for the question may be asked, How are we sure that we have a correct version unless we can appeal to the original manuscript? This may easily be explained. It can be proved that the manuscript from which our translation of the Bible is taken is a faithful copy of much older manuscripts. It is a well-known fact that the Jews, "to whom were committed the oracles of God," had an almost superstitious regard for the exact letters of Holy Scriptures. So careful and minute were they in copying the manuscripts that, if there happened to be a letter written in a different size from the others in the text before them, they did not allow themselves to correct it, but copied it, large or small, as it stood. To prevent the possibility of making a mistake, they counted every word, and every letter in every word, and a note of the number was taken at the end of each book. So marvellously scrupulous were they in transcribing the Scriptures, that, if a mistake were observed, the copy was rejected, and the work was commenced afresh. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." "Not one jot or tittle"—not the smallest particle of a letter, penned by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—"will pass away."

The New Testament, which was written in Greek, was completed during the latter half of the first century. Of it we have several manuscripts dating back to the fifth century. The original documents which came from the pen of inspiration were generally either of parchment or papyrus. The Apostle Paul seems to have used parchment in writing his epistles (2 Tim. iv. 13). The Apostle John, on the other hand, evidently used papyrus (2 John 12).

About the second century the Bible was translated into Latin. This translation was made for the benefit of the Christians living in North Africa, who could not understand Greek. It was necessary to give them the Scriptures in the language they could understand. At the end of the fourth century Jerome, who was born about 340, produced the Bible commonly called the "Vulgate." It was partly a version of the first Latin translation, but the translator, being a great scholar, also used the original languages freely. We would draw particular attention to this translation, because it was from it that John Wycliffe's famous translation was taken, which was practically our first English Bible.

Let us notice the religious condition of the people of the British Isles before the introduction of Christianity. They were then immersed in the superstitions of Druidism. In the first centuries

the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, like the greater part of mankind, were lying in darkness and in the shadow of death, worshipping images and sacrificing to idols, and altogether ignorant of the living and true God. It is painful to reflect on the general sad condition of the world even in our advanced age. It is calculated that supposing the population of the whole world consists of a thousand millions, only one hundred and seventy-five millions are even nominal Christians. One hundred and sixty millions are Mahometans, nine millions are Jews, and the large remainder of six hundred and fifty-six millions are still idolaters. Thus the vast majority of the human race lie in wickedness, and are without Christ, without God, and without hope. Amid this gloomy scene should not we, who were once in the same condition as they are, praise the Lord that in His wonderful mercy He has caused the light of the Gospel to shine upon us? It was in the sixth century, according to any positive account, that the gospel came to Britain. Columba, who was the first missionary that brought the glad tidings of peace to Scotland, sailed along with twelve other missionaries from Derry, Ireland, in the year 563. It is supposed that they first landed on the island of Colonsay, for in this island there is a hill called "Carn-cul-ri-Eirinn." Concluding, however, that they had not yet reached a point where they might be said to have entirely forsaken their own country, they put to sea again, and landed on the island of Iona. Columba did not confine his labours altogether to Iona, but often crossed over to the mainland, where he was instrumental in setting up many places of worship. There were no doubt many things connected with his mission which we cannot at this date regard with approval. Nevertheless it is not possible to deny that he and his labours brought a great blessing to Scotland. Columba found the people quite illiterate, so that though they should have had the Bible presented to them in their own language they could not read it. It was necessary therefore for the people to be educated, as well as to have the Scriptures in their own tongue.

The translation of the Bible into the English language was a momentous undertaking, and occupied several hundred years ere it was fully accomplished. Perhaps we may be allowed, as we pass through this wide field, to give a short narrative of the lives of those men who spent their time and strength in accomplishing this great and glorious work. "It is the more necessary to hold up to public view the lives of them who have exerted themselves honourably in active, in public life—of them who have done worthily in Israel—when fictitious character is obtruded on the public in such abundance, and so earnestly and successfully solicits the attention of the present age, especially of the youth of both sexes."

The first attempt at translating any part of the Bible into English was by John Bede. He was born in the county of Durham about 673, and died 26th May, 735. He translated the

Gospel of John only. The well-known story of how he finished the last sentence of the Gospel is very touching, and casts a ray of light on the serene and simple piety of his life. He was left alone with his scribe. "Dearest master," said the scribe, "there is one chapter yet to translate, and it is hard for thee to think." "No," said he, "it is easy; take thy pen and write quickly." Some time after, the scribe said, "Master, there is one sentence more." "Write quickly," he replied. Then the scribe said, "Now, master, it is finished." "Well," said the venerable Bede, "thou hast spoken truly, it is finished;" and, turning round in bed, he died. Many changes have taken place in the world since Bede's first attempt at translating the Bible into English, but perhaps the greatest change is in connection with the Bible itself. It is now to be had printed and published in 150 languages and in nearly 200 versions. It is computed that there are about 40,000,000 Bibles in circulation, yet there are still about 656,000,000 souls without the Word of God.

Others, after Bede, translated parts of the Bible, but we pass them over, and come to one who stands by himself in high position in life—we mean King Alfred the Great. He was born in 849. Though the youngest of five sons, he succeeded to the Crown of England in 871. He died in 901. Alfred is the only one in the long line of English Sovereigns to whom the title "Great" has been accorded, and he certainly gave proof of his greatness by desiring that his subjects should know the Word of God. He rendered the "Law," part of the "Psalms," and the "Lord's Prayer" into Anglo-Saxon.

Again, years rolled away, and with the flight of time great changes took place in the condition of the British people. The Normans were victorious at the battle of Hastings in 1066. The conquerors introduced a new element into the English language, which gave it that shape and being it has manifested ever since. When the language thus attained a degree of perfection God raised up a man to use it in His own service. This man was John Wycliffe. To John Wycliffe, who has been called "the morning star of the Reformation," belongs the special honour of giving the the English-speaking population a complete translation of the sacred Scriptures in their own language. He was born at Hipswell, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about 1325. At an early age he entered Oxford College, where he greatly distinguished himself, and latterly became one of its teachers. Unlike the other professors, he taught the students out of the Word of God. In his controversies with the Popish monks, and in exposing their morals and doctrines, he constantly appealed to the Word of God. He laid down three fundamental principles—(1) That there should be no Pope between the King and the people; (2) no priest between the sinner and the Saviour; and (3) that there is no doubt but the truth will prevail. Two years before his death he finished the translation of the Old and New Testaments, and thus pre-

sented to the people the first English Bible. It is told of him that on one occasion, when he was very ill, his enemies thought he was dying, and a party of "begging friars" entered his room and pressed him to recant, but raising himself in bed he exclaimed, "I shall not die but live and declare the evil deeds of the friars."

The Papal party sought again and again his life, but he was protected from their malice by the powerful intervention of the Court, and of several nobles, such as the Duke of Lancaster and Lord Percy, both in high position in the Government. In 1377. Wycliffe was cited to appear before the Archbishop in St. Paul's. He obeyed the summons, but before his case was proceeded with, the Bishop of London and the Duke of Lancaster quarrelled, and the meeting broke up in disorder. Later in life, he was condemned at the Blackfriars Priory in London, yet by some means he was saved from being put to death. On 28th December, 1384, while preaching in his church at Lutterworth, he was stricken by paralysis, and passed away on the 31st of the same month. Thus died a great servant of God. Thirty years after Wycliffe's death, the Council of Constance condemned his writings, and ordered the bones of the heretic to be dug up and burned, which was done.

Where to-day are the maligned saints of God, who were the means of doing so much for the benefit of Church and world? In glory at rest from their labours and sufferings. What about the Book of books, for which they laboured and suffered? It is offered now to us at the cost of a few pence instead of at the vast price of £30 or £40. We must bear in mind that Wycliffe's Bible was not printed but written. Printing in his time was unknown.

The Late Roderick Kennedy, Lochcarron.

MR. Roderick Kennedy, Strome Carronach, Lochcarron, Ross-shire, died on the 20th day of March, as has been noticed already in the *Magazine* for April.

We have not been able to ascertain the period of his life at which he underwent a saving change, but all who knew him were fully satisfied that he was a pious man. His father was a godly man, whom the Rev. L. MacKenzie called "the private Christian." Undoubtedly, he would have instructed his family in the fear of God. This was not lost on Roderick, for he seemed to have had sharp convictions when very young. He went, when a young man about twenty, out to Australia, where he spent nine years of his life. After he came back it was evident that the concerns of his soul were uppermost in his mind.

Twenty years prior to our separation from the so-called Free Church, he had lost confidence in her ministers to such an extent that he went to hear only the few who stood faithfully by God's

truth. He went always to Dingwall at Dr. Kennedy's communion seasons, and went to hear the Rev. Alexander MacColl, Lochalsh, as often as he found it possible owing to distance and strength of body. These two men he greatly admired and esteemed; but such was his extreme modesty and humility that he never spoke to either of them. While admiring firmness for truth and conscience in others, and while possessed of a goodly measure of that spiritual fortitude which caused him to abhor compromises, or surrender, in matters of truth and conscience, he found it extremely difficult to speak or pray in public. Once, at the Shieldaig Manse, the Rev. D. Macdonald pressed him to return thanks after dinner; he begged to be excused, and as Mr. Macdonald persisted, he began to weep, which left an impression on all present that he was a man who realised the gravity of approaching God.

He grieved at the advance of irreligion, Sabbath-breaking, and Popery in the land, and declared that bitter fruits would be reaped of our backsliding from God and Reformation attainments. He mourned after the Lord's people when he heard of the death of any of them, and took particular notice of how few were raised from among the young to fill the gaps thus made on the walls of Zion. But he had a good hope through grace. Speaking of true faith, he said:—"Those who have true faith find themselves often on their back, and at such times, O! the need they feel of the Spirit's breathing, as faith is the gift of God. Though my faith is often exceedingly weak, I would not give it up for the whole world." In speaking of the old and new heart, he said:—"The old heart will not accept the Christ of God; but the new heart *will* receive Him."

The last year of his life he scarcely ever spoke of the things of this world. Last October he asked to be assisted out of doors. He was assisted, and when he looked on the surroundings, he said:—"Do you not see a beauty on the works of God's hands; O! the beauty of the hills as the sun shines upon them." He then spoke a while about Jephthah's daughter. He died on Sabbath, 20th March, at the age of seventy years. He was buried in the Lochcarron Churchyard on the 24th. "Thy brother shall rise again."

N. C.

Memoir of Rev. D. Macdonald.—Orders for this memoir may now be sent direct to the Rev. D. Macfarlane, F.P. Manse, Craig Road, Dingwall. The price is 2s. 6d. per copy, postage 3d. extra.

The readers of the *Magazine* will be pleased to learn that a beautiful tombstone has been erected at the grave of the late Rev. D. Macdonald, Shieldaig, by his widow. Mr. Macdonald's remains were buried at Applecross. We beg to thank Mr. Bain, the Applecross estate manager, for the great kindness and heartiness with which he assisted its erection.

N. C.

The Duty of Giving Away

A STATED PROPORTION OF OUR INCOME.

By WILLIAM ARTHUR, A.M.¹

(Continued from page 26.)

BUT though we do not believe that the letter of our Lord's precept was ever meant to prevent His servants from accepting such increase of their goods as His bounty might give them while they glorified Him with their first-fruits, we deeply feel that in the spirit of that precept many weighty lessons lie. It seems to say, "*Do not resolve to be rich.*" To you, young man, it seems clearly to say, "Do not make up your mind to die worth thirty thousand or a hundred thousand pounds." Any such resolution is evil, and out of it woes will come. "They that *will be* rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."—(1 Tim. vi. 9.) It also says:

Do not make haste to be rich; even without formally resolving to win a high prize of wealth, do not follow after riches eagerly, or long to see yourself encircled with abundance. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall *not be innocent*. He that hasteth to be rich hath *an evil eye*, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him."—(Prov. xxviii. 20, 22.)

Do not adopt selfishness as a means to wealth. Our natural reason and the carnal mind prompt us to say, "If I am to be rich, all that I get I must keep. Holding, nursing, guarding all that comes into my hands, it must grow to be of some account at last." Such a mode of calculating is confronted by the spirit of faith and love which breathes all through the Bible. Viewing a Power infinitely above the petty advantages of hoarding, it cries, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Take this proverb to your heart. There is joy and glory in it. It links your hope of personal comfort with the Father of all benevolence. Say, "If there is wealth to be gotten by greed, by holding, by shutting my heart against gushes of generosity, and my hand against self-forgetting acts of goodness, then such wealth be to others, and its fruits be far from my children!" Say, "Wealth so gotten is no wealth: it is but a metal coffin for the affections. If wealth come to me, let it come from the Great Giver, at whose bidding I cast my bread upon the waters!" "The blessing of the Lord, *it* maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it."

Do not trust in riches. In the forms of popular speech we may often trace real and important distinctions. Nothing is more common than to hear persons speak of a man idolising various objects of earthly affection. Yet of many such objects we never

¹ This excellent address was delivered about fifty years ago in the Victoria Hall, Belfast, the Bishop of Down, in the chair.—ED.

here it said they are made gods. We often hear of a man making an idol of his child ; but people do not say he makes a god of his child. With regard to money, however, it is quite otherwise ; they readily say, "He makes a god of his money." Yes ; for he not only loves the money, and doats on it, but he puts his trust in it. All the faith he has centres in it. It is his Providence ; on it his future depends ; it is his hope for his children ; his hope of name and honour after death. Assail it, and you assail his rock, his strong tower, his reward. Take it away, and in his own feeling you have bereft him of *all his dependence*. Surely this is idolatry ! "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, *nor trust in uncertain riches*, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

—(1 Tim. vi. 17-19.)

These seem to me to be some of the chief lessons taught us in this precept of our blessed Master ; and he who cordially follows these, glorifying God, and benefiting man with liberal first-fruits of all his increase—on him, for my part, riches and plenty may freely come. In his progress all good men will rejoice ; the poor will bless his riches. If, like Abraham, he has an old servant, he will say, with smiles, "The Lord hath blessed my master greatly ; and he is become great ; and He hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses."—(Gen. xxiv. 35.)

We do not mean that Christians are bound to draw a line, and say, "Beyond this limit, no matter what the bounties of Providence may be, my possessions shall never go." Oh, what a blessing it had been to thousands had they adopted such a resolution ! Many who prospered up to a point which they would have once thought affluence, not then content, pressed forward, and by a few errors dispersed the gatherings of a lifetime. Many for years employed their growing wealth to do good ; but at length they had outgrown their religious strength, and, like a youth falling under his own stature, their virtues died of decline. Happy would it be for many did they set a limit to their aims, and add nothing beyond ! Whenever this is done in the spirit of humble faith, surely it is good and acceptable to God. But I cannot undertake to teach that it is laid down in Scripture as an incumbent duty.

Away, on the very horizon of sacred history, in the glory of its dawn, we see—shall I say a group?—three personages ; the first, shrouded with that excelling light which no man can approach unto ; the second, dark with that darkness which, thank God, neither our words nor our imagination can picture ; the third, a man of like passions with ourselves. To this man, the Maker of all points the tempter of all, and says, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like Him in the earth, a perfect

and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" And who is this of whom we have such testimony as never was borne to other man—who is held up to the accuser of saints as a triumphant instance of the redeeming power of grace? He is one of those whose wealth is almost countless, who has distanced every contemporary, and is the greatest of all the men in the East. It is plain that his immense possessions were no stain upon his "record," which was "on high." But ere you exult, in the belief that you may innocently accumulate to an indefinite amount, carefully mark how he employed his wealth.

While his children were holding family feasts, and the joy of abundance was in all their homes, he was "continually" rising early, going to the altar of God, and offering up offerings in large number. And how did he live among his neighbours while thus honouring his God? "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out."—(Job xxix. 11, etc.)

Go thou and do likewise. Thus continually and liberally offer unto God; thus bountifully and actively distribute to man; and so long as we see you so doing, "may your garners be full, affording all manner of store!" I, at least, will cheerfully leave it to Providence to fix the limit of your increase. But one word: as you proceed upwards, one earnest word: Walk warily on those heights! Heads are often turned up there; and fearful gulfs yawn under you if you fall!

While, however, we do not contend that to let "riches increase" is forbidden, or even that to permit that increase to an indefinite amount is contrary to clear Scripture, we do contend:—

That not to give away any part of our income is unlawful;

That to leave what we shall give to be determined by impulse or chance, without any principle to guide us, is unlawful;

That to fix a principle for our guidance by our own disposition, or by prevalent usage, without seeking light in the Word of God, is unlawful;

That when we search the Scriptures for a principle, the very lowest proportion of our income for which we can find any show of justification, is a tenth of the whole;

That, therefore, it is our duty to give away statedly, for the service and honour of our God, at the very least, one-tenth of all which He commits to our stewardship.

These are my views as to the duty for which I am now pleading; and are, I presume, however shades and points may vary, in substance the views of the gentlemen by whose call I stand here.

AS TO THE GROUNDS ON WHICH THIS DUTY RESTS. Let us suppose that it does not rest on any grounds whatever; that the idea of such a duty is without foundation; that we are each at liberty to choose what proportion of his possessions he shall give away, from the nearest approach to nothing, upwards; so that if one give a tenth, another a ninetieth, and a third one thousandth part, they differ not in this—that the one is liberal, the other covetous, and the third a wretch; but in this—that the one is liberal, the other less liberal, and the other less so still; each of them practising a virtue, a voluntary virtue, only in various degrees. This is the plain meaning and practical application of a notion which floats in undefined thought, and is often expressed in vague language by many excellent people—a notion about Christianity leaving the amount of liberality to the private will and disposition of each individual.

If this view be correct, then it follows that in Christian morals we have *one virtue which has no minimum limit*, no expiring point; which continues to be a virtue down to within a hairbreadth of nothing, no matter how largely mixed with the opposite vice. Shall we apply this principle to the other virtues?—for instance, truth? Are we not apt to think that, however much truth may be in a statement, if mixed with a little deception, the virtue of it is gone? And as to honesty, do we not feel that whatever amount of honesty may be in a transaction, if mixed with any cheating, the virtue is destroyed? And are we to hold that any miserable gift, somewhat short of nothing, which a covetous man may give, is yet an act of liberality, though in a low degree? Is liberality the one virtue which Christianity has abandoned, in this cold world, to every man's whim, and never pronounces violated, so long as it is not totally renounced and abjured? Surely there is some point far short of nothing, at which gifts cease to be "liberal," and begin to be "vile;" at which a giver ceases to be "bountiful," and deserves to be called a "churl!"

One thing is certain, that if Christianity has set no *minimum* limit to generosity, it *has set* a maximum limit. If we are at liberty to press down our generosity to the lowest discernible point, we are not at liberty to push it up without check. Christianity commands plainly, "Owe no man anything;" so that I cannot give away money while I am unable to pay my debts, without violating the laws of my religion. She also plainly declares, that if any man provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an "infidel." Therefore, I cannot give away money while my own are unprovided for, or left to be provided for by others, without violating the laws of my religion. Is it, then, probable that Christ's good gospel, while marking points in the upward progress of generosity at which it would pass into injustice, has marked none in its downward progress at which it would pass into selfishness?

If Christianity has left benevolence entirely to private decision, it also follows that, while those branches of expenditure which regard our self-interest are regulated by fixed circumstances, that which is for the glory of God is at the mercy of chance. The three circumstances already named—family, locality, station—decide for each of us, to a great extent, the scale of most items of our outlay. Your rent is tolerably well fixed from year to year ; your board is not very uncertain ; your dress, and every other claim of self-interest, has its proportion not ill-defined ; and is it probable that while every outlay that nourishes self is regular, that only outlay which tends to free you from earth, and connect your hopes with a better country, is precisely the one which the religion of Jesus has left to be the football of passion or of accident ?

“ I do not mean,” you say, “ that we are at liberty to give by mere chance, without fixing some principle ; I only mean, we are not bound to a tenth.” Not bound to a tenth ! No, most surely we are not bound to a tenth. If that be your meaning then thy heart is as my heart. No principle of the gospel, no precept of the law, ever glances in the direction of binding us to a tenth. But is it possible that you mean something you do not say ? Is it possible that when you speak of not being bound to a tenth, you mean we are at liberty to make up our minds not to give a tenth, but to give something less ? Well, so let it be. Suppose that a Christian, without offending against his religion, may spend on self-interests more than nine-tenths of his income, then it follows that it is lawful for a Christian to be more selfish than was lawful for a Jew. This conclusion may not be agreeable, but it is clear. Every Jew was blessed with a religion which checked his downward, earthward tendency, at the *very least* to this extent—that, of his all, one tenth went to sacred things, and thus connected with them his affections and his hopes. Less than that he could not consecrate to the service of his God, without a trespass against his religion. If, then, a Christian may give less, his religion elevates him in a lower degree, leaves him to be more earthly without guilt, and less noble without reproach.

One other consequence follows. If a Christian may, according to his religion, lawfully devote less than a tenth of his income to holy purposes, then CHRISTIANITY HAS LOWERED THE STANDARD OF A VIRTUE, and that the virtue of liberality ! The Jew who gave less than one tenth was branded by his religion as a sinner. That system, which we regard as very much more earthly, so much less spiritual and heavenly than ours, ever held the standard of pecuniary self-denial up to that point at the very least. And is it come to this, that our Christianity, our religion of love and sacrifice, let down the standard of this special virtue below the point where it stood when she came to warm our world ? We know the thousand contrivances to escape from this conclusion. But, however often you cite the difference between an agricultural and a commercial people ; however much you talk of Levites, tribes, rent-charges,

and adjustments ; however many lanes you enter from your starting-point, if you follow any one of them to its end, it will land you in front of this conclusion : CHRISTIANITY HAS LOWERED THE STANDARD OF A VIRTUE.

But I will not further follow the supposition that the duty of giving away at least a tenth of our income has no grounds ; for the conclusions to which it leads are not satisfactory. I will now assert that it has grounds. They may be thus stated :—

GIVING IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. This position needs no special argument. In support of it the whole New Testament cries aloud. The system of redemption is from first to last one prodigious process of gift. God loved the world, and GAVE His only begotten Son. The Son loved us, and GAVE Himself to death “for us all.” This giving does not rest at the point of bounty, but passes on to that of inconceivable sacrifice. Every man on whose spirit the true light of redemption breaks, finds himself heir to a heritage of givings, which began on the eve of time, and will keep pace with the course of eternity. To giving he owes his all ; in giving he sees the most substantial evidence he can offer that he is a grateful debtor ; and the self-sacrifice of Him in whom he trusts says, far more pathetically than words could say, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

(To be Continued.)

In Memoriam: Alex. Mackenzie, Ontario.

BY GEORGE FORREST.

I HAVE been requested to write something to the *Free Presbyterian Magazine* about the late Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, of Lucknow, Ontario, who died at that place on the 7th of April, 1904. But although it is to me a kind of melancholy pleasure to do something to help to keep up the remembrance of so worthy a man, and especially as he was a very dear and confidential friend of my own, yet what I have to say about him must be at best but very fragmentary, as I never met with him until some years after the union of the Presbyterian churches in Canada in the year 1875. But it was not until 1884 or 1885 that, when we were at Brucefield during a Communion season, an intimate friendship began, which was only broken by death, of which we often said to each other—we hope it will be renewed in that world where death never enters.

Mr. M'Kenzie was born in Lochalsh, Ross shire, Scotland, in the year 1824, and came to Canada in 1847. Some years later he settled on a bush lot in the township of Ashfield, in the county of Huron, Ontario, and by industry soon made a comfortable home for himself in what was until then a “howling wilderness.” Mr. M'Kenzie was one of a number that could not conscientiously go into the union of the Free Church with the United Presbyterian Church in 1861. and he has often told me of the difficulty that he

had in deciding what was his duty in that case, for a pamphlet had been published by some of the United Presbyterians in which they referred to the objection of Dr. John Bane, of Galt, to entering that union, viz.—“Because of unsound views regarding Christ’s kingship over the nations and the powers and duty of the civil magistrate.” This pamphlet fell into the hands of Mr. M’Kenzie and caused him great trouble; for thought he—“If this pamphlet be true, what I have been hearing all my life is untrue.” This he said in reference to the ministers he was wont to hear in Scotland, such as Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall, and his own uncle, Rev. John M’Rae, at one time Free Church minister in Greenock, and others of the same stamp. He could not believe that THESE MEN preached anything that was not the TRUTH, so he could not think of uniting with the publishers of that pamphlet. But in the time of his trouble in this respect these words came with great power into his mind—“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb. i. 3.) He reasoned in this way—If this is a fair specimen of the teaching of the U.P. Church on this important doctrine, it is very different from, if not contrary to, what is taught in this passage of the word of God, and I for one will not go into union with them, and he did not. He cast in his lot with a little company who for conscience’s sake remained outside the union, and who met on Sabbath days for worship in a school-house in the neighbourhood, where they continued to meet for over fourteen years. But although Mr. M’Kenzie was at this time much concerned for the honour of Christ’s name and cause, he did not think that he had accepted Christs as his *personal* Saviour. In his youth he had been accustomed to hear the Word preached with such faithfulness and discrimination that he had a very good idea of what the marks and character of a true Christian was. Failing to find these in himself, he concluded that he had not yet undergone a saving change. But the time came when this all-important question pressed on his conscience, and had to be considered, and could not be put off. One night, being at a friend’s house, at a distance from home, and being in great trouble of mind, he went out and knelt by the side of a straw stack, and there poured out in strong crying and tears the troubles of his soul to Him who came to seek and to save the lost, and he was heard. (But as I am writing from memory, I cannot tell the Scripture that was borne in on his mind.) But it brought with it such an inflow of the love of Christ into his soul that he described his condition at that time to be as if he were in an *ocean of love*. And such was the gracious revelation of Jesus Christ to him that, as he expressed it himself, “If I had a thousand souls I could have put them all into His hand.” Mr. M’Kenzie continued in this state of mind for some weeks, and then he felt that his peace and joy was declining. He went to the meeting on

the Sabbath day, when his brother Donald, who was conducting the meeting, spoke with much liberty from the words that had brought light and peace to him at first, and the result was a return of the same joy and peace. He often had times of darkness since, but in such times he said he had just to go back where he cast his anchor at first.

Mr. M'Kenzie was a man of prayer. Many times while we slept in the same room, and sometimes in the same bed, I heard him pray in the night; but as he spake the Gaelic I could not understand him, only I knew what that word "*O Thighearna*" meant, and I often heard *it*. But it was seldom indeed that he could be persuaded upon to pray in public. This was disappointing to those who by private intercourse knew something of his experience and ability. He was a wise and prudent counsellor and a warm friend, also a liberal supporter of everything that he considered would advance Christ's cause in the world. He was ordained an elder in the Free Presbyterian Church in Lochalsh in the month of September, 1902, by Rev. N. Cameron; but on account of the distance between Lucknow and that place of worship, and his failing health, he was not able to attend with much regularity their meetings. We said that Mr. Mackenzie was a man of prayer, and he was also a careful and constant reader of the word of God, and in all his times of trouble it was the comfort and delight of his soul; it was also his counsellor in all his perplexities. The Word of God and the Confession of Faith with Catechisms, which he believed to be founded on and agreeable to the word of God, were the only authorities he would acknowledge in doctrine or in worship. He had no sympathy with "Higher Critics" who would falsify the Word of God, nor had he any sympathy with those who to make worship more attractive introduced their own inventions as a supplement to or substitute for God's own appointments. Mr. M'Kenzie was naturally of a strong and robust constitution, but a few years ago his health began to fail, and during the last six months he suffered greatly from some inward trouble. His wife, to whom he was greatly attached, was also greatly afflicted, which was a sore trial to him, but he bore it all with fortitude and resignation to the will of God, who he believed doeth all things well.

"The troubles that afflict the just in number many be,
But yet at length out of them all the Lord doth set him free."

But the time came for his deliverance. He died about 4 p.m., and his wife died about 11 p.m. the same night. It may truly be said of them—"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided," for they were buried side by side in one grave, to wait there until the resurrection morn. Thus have passed away these excellent of the earth, and we miss them. But we do not mourn as them that have no hope. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

G. F.

"The Righteousness which is of Faith."— An Expostulation.

NOTES BY THE LATE REV. HUGH MARTIN, D.D.

"The righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, Who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But what saith it? The word (that is, the word of faith which we preach) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart."—Rom. x. 6-8.

THE Righteousness which is of Faith is here represented as a person speaking, arguing, expostulating, advising. And this not by a mere figure of speech. It is not a mere figure of speech—it is not mere "personification"—that sets the righteousness of faith a-speaking; though, regarded even in that light, it casts an uncommonly beautiful light upon the passage. But it is more. There is more than personification here—there is a person. Little wonder if the Righteousness which is of faith can speak, and actually speaketh, seeing it is none other than the Word—"the Word which was in the beginning, which was with God, and was God." It is none other than the Second Person of the God-head, as God incarnate, and the Christ of God. For Christ crucified is the Righteousness of God to every one that believeth. Christ is of God made unto us Righteousness. As is said in a preceding verse of this chapter, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." He is "the Lord our Righteousness." And because He becomes ours by gift on God's part, and by simple reception or, in other words, by faith on our part He is "the Righteousness which is by faith."

What has He in this capacity to say? When He would act and speak and speak as the Righteousness of faith, what has he to say? What "speaketh" He?

Right wisely, right powerfully, right tenderly He speaketh. He speaketh to sinners who would be the better of Him as the Lord their Righteousness, infinitely the better of Him—and who never will be the better of anything till they have found and been pleased with Him; and He speaks to them (1) in a double dissuasive, and (2) in a double persuasive.

First—A double dissuasive.

I. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above." For that would imply that no Saviour has as yet come down from heaven. "But, behold! we bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all mankind: To you is born a Saviour, which is Christ, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Never say anything "in thine heart" that is at

variance with this. Never be in any state of mind or frame of heart at variance with the blessed fact that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might obtain the adoption of sons, and (and because we are sons) therefore, also, the Spirit of the Son in our hearts crying Abba, Father."

II. "Say not in thine heart, who shall descend into the deep? that is to bring up Christ again from the dead." For He is risen again, in very truth. Death could have no permanent dominion over him—no dominion at all. He conquered death by dying. He was not made a victim. He became a conqueror. And His resurrection is the proof of it. Never think of Him as an incomplete Redeemer. His redemption work is perfect. And His resurrection proves it. He died for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. He finished the work given Him to do. He left none of it for His weak and weary people. "Father," said He, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do." And in token that the Father is of one mind with Him on this, the very basis of His people's faith and joy, He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory that our faith and hope might be in God.

Say not anything in thine heart that it would be right and reasonable to say only on the supposition that Jesus was still the prisoner of death. He is risen. He is ascended. He is within the veil in glory—able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. Let not thine heart ever for a moment be in a state or frame that would be reasonable, only on the supposition that Christ was not raised from the dead.

Say not then, Who shall go down into the deep? any more than, Who shall go up into heaven? Say neither the one thing nor the other. Speak neither of going up nor of going down—as little the one as the other. I bring near My salvation, and you have no journey to take to reach it—neither up nor down—neither to the right hand nor to the left. Your attitude is that of waiting, not working: waiting as those that wait for the morning, which, behold! how it dawneth, and cometh on, not a whit aided by any works or journeys of yours, but breaking in powerful omnipotent glory in the east, being itself master of the day—yea, the day-spring from on high.

Secondly. A double persuasive.

(I.) "The word is nigh thee—(*i.e.*)—the word of faith." Now this implies, O sinner, that Christ's redemption work being perfect, and sealed as such by His resurrection, your salvation work is a work done at a "word." That is clearly implied in this persuasive. It has no meaning at all, if it do not imply, that, first of all, and above all, salvation is by grace, seeing all the redemptive work is done already. Ye are saved by grace through faith. And it is of faith that it might be by grace. But faith needs a

word to go upon. "Be merciful to me, O Lord, according to Thy Word." "Remember to me the word on which Thou hast caused me to hope." The promise accordingly is the word of faith—the word which faith receives—the word which the Spirit makes the means of ingenerating faith, the word on God's part which answers to faith (or rather to which faith answers) on man's part in that great transaction in which reconciliation between the angry God and the alienated sinner is effected by the word of the gospel.

Now this "word," which is all that is needed to thy salvation work (because redemption work is a finished work)—this "word" which is required to be taken home in faith, in order to the taking home of a perfected redemption work (unto the resulting work of our actual individual salvation)—this "word" intended of God to be so received in faith unto our actual salvation, and, in point of fact, so received by every one that believeth;—and therefore very properly called the "word of faith," the word which faith proceeds upon as true; the word which kindles and calls up faith itself, and then trusts itself to the faith which it has kindled;—this word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thine heart.

Such is the testimony of the "Righteousness of which is faith." And none can be so deeply interested in the "word of faith" as the "Righteousness which is of faith." By the word of faith He, the Righteousness of Faith, puts Himself into the possession of every one that believeth and sees of the travail of His soul. And this word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart.

(2.) Oh! says the sinner, I can understand how this word should be in my *mouth*. I can of myself—alas! only too easily—take it in my *mouth* and utter it. But that it should be "in my *heart*,"—that I should know and love the joyful sound,—that I should willingly receive and be in actual possession by faith of the great redemption;—this is another matter altogether, and not competent to this depraved and sinful heart of mine. How can it be true that the "word is in my heart?"

Very good, dear fellow-sinner, very good and very true. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Very true. But consider!

Who, indeed, if He cannot, who speaketh? And is it not in and by *speaking* that He does it? He who here speaketh is the all-powerful Word who speaketh and it is done. He said "Light be," and light was. He "calleth the things that be not as though they were." He *bringeth* into being by *calling* into being. His call *gives* the being to which it *calls*. His people are a willing people in the day of His power. If He *say* to you that the word is not in your *mouth* only, but in your *heart*, have you any interest to question and gainsay him? He can *make* this true in the act of *saying* it. Is it too wonderful—think you?—to be true, though He speak, who came to bear witness of the truth? He can *realise* it as the case in the *describing* of it.

For He is acting here as a prompter : yes, as a *prompter*. That's the jet and edge and joy of it. And it is faith's part, and faith's nature, and faith's inward instinctive prompting to act on His promptings ; not to gainsay and resist them. "When Thou saidst unto me, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, O Lord, will I seek." So remember Christ's almighty power over the *heart* in prompting *it*—even as complete as an earthly master has over the mouth in prompting *it* ; and see that you "out with" (or confess) the word from your heart, even the word of faith which is preached unto you. Be it yours at once to cry, "My Lord and my God," or "Lord, I believe ; help mine unbelief."

Yes ; go not about to construct, or establish, or find a righteousness. Go not up to heaven ; go not down into the deep ; go neither up nor down ; go neither to the right hand nor to the left : but here—where you are, this moment—here and now—listen to another righteousness—the Lord your righteousness—the righteousness which is by faith—which comes by faith—which is yours by faith. This righteousness (and all the salvation that depends upon it) is yours at a word. And "the word is nigh thee"—nigher than you think. Let the Righteousness of faith himself tell you how nigh—"even in thy mouth and in thy heart." Oh ! doubt not ; say not it is too good to be true. If that's the only style of objection you have to what Jesus Christ says, it's a very poor one. For grace is poured into His lips, and His words are so good that just on that ground the Father, in infinite admiration of Him, hath done every thing possible to make Him most blessed for evermore. Say not that anything is too good to be true when Jesus Christ—the ever blessed "delight" of the Godhead—hath said it. Rather try and see if it be not thoroughly true indeed. Try and "out with it"—"My Lord and my God"—"Lord, I believe." In the rich full flow of His goodness, so great as to be telling thee things to which thou canst have no objection, except that they are too good to be true, "out with" (or confess) the word from thy very heart ; prompted by Him, yet uttered by you—*you*, the travail of His soul ; *He* thy regenerating Lord and Saviour, making thee willing in the day of His power. "Saved by grace through faith ;" *His* grace ; grace on His part ; faith on your part ; *your* faith in the sense that it comes from your believing heart ; but *His* gift in that it is wrought by His Spirit there and prompted by His word there ; but altogether such that this other glorious utterance may take place in terms of it, and because of it sealing eternal espousals between Him and you—"My beloved is mine, and I am his." "My Lord and my God."

Aye, truly : "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people and thy father's house : So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty : for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

Yes; and then just proceed upon the truth of it. Try and see if those things be not true, which are and ought to be true because of this. "Being justified by faith, you have peace with God"—have you not?"—"through Jesus Christ the Lord." Yes; and have you not "access by faith into an estate of grace"—(not merely an occasional and fortuitous blessing)—but into an estate of grace, "into the grace wherein ye stand."—(Are Christians always careful to do justice to *this*? *This*, at least, is what you have to do justice to. *This* is what you have to be thankful for.) Try if you don't *get* access just by *taking* access into "this grace wherein ye stand," this gracious right and title to all blessings of the everlasting covenant—"even into this grace wherein you stand," and which is to you a "status" and "estate of salvation by a Redeemer" as truly as formerly you were in an "estate of sin and misery." And, not only so; but you rejoice in tribulation also—do you not? (would you not rather suffer affliction with the people of God than have all the pleasures of sin to all eternity?) You rejoice in tribulation, because: "tribulation worketh patience: and patience experience: and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad" in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto you. Put all this to the proof by proceeding in faith upon the truth of it, and so you find it true. You *get* access into what of Christ's fulness you need just by *taking* access to it by faith; taking your way by faith to the very blessing that you need, asserting that in Christ it is yours—maintaining your assertion against all effort of the enemy to deny it—(who or what is *he*?—a damned and vanquished foe!)—and the Lord in such case gives his fainting, faithful soldier—fainting through the very efforts of his fidelity—to find that he is not fighting for the wind, for a fancy, for a shadow, but for the faithfulness of God: and thus he finds that the faithfulness of God is in the heavens, and is also a shield and buckler to himself upon the earth.

Oh! to bow the head of the soul; to bend the knees of the soul; to set the silent smiling face of the soul steadfastly towards heaven; and let God speak! Oh! to follow, fearless, where His word leads the way! Oh! to follow and to follow on, nothing doubting—cherishing neither a proud unbelief nor, what is even worse, a humble unbelief, but cherishing just the word itself, because it is "the word of faith." Thus we would think nothing of our faith, but all things of the word, which is the "word of faith." Thus would we realize Christ's great saying, "If ye abide in me, and *my words abide in you*, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Dwelling in a realm in which we had learned to silence every voice save the voice of our heavenly teacher, as He speaks by His word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation, our joy and our duty, we should have the blessedness of the people who in that case truly know the joyful sound and walk in the light of thy countenance, O Lord our God.

Letters of the late Alexander Kerr, Assynt.

IV.

AUCHMELVICH, 28th July, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your letter in due course, and indeed it was a sore stroke to my feelings to hear of the death of my dear and faithful friend, F. M'K. He has been taken away from the evil to come; but I feel it in the very bottom of my heart, for the like of him was not easy to be found anywhere.

I sympathise with you in that village, but the Lord is able to help in time of need, and He can make up the loss in some measure in another channel; and see that you seek Him for that and at a throne of grace. The removal of the Lord's people, although good for them, is a dark sign to the generation—the most of whom care not what will become of them in an eternal world. May the Lord pity them; and surely any one who got the least drop of spiritual life would pity them also. Our land is full of unconcerned professors of religion; may we be kept from their snares. And may we be made of the brokenhearted, penitent sinners who know they have a fallen nature, and who learn by experience that they have a corrupt and deceitful heart, and that nothing will do for them but a saving interest by faith in the work of Christ, “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” And may He be made so precious to us that we can say in sincerity and truth that He is our portion for time and eternity.

I now give up hope of seeing you and the friends in C—— this year. I am sorry I cannot fulfil my promise as to this, but besides the continued illness of my wife, one of the boys got a fall, and put his arm out of joint at the elbow, and cannot do the least turn about the house—and oh! how the rebellion of my evil nature rises against the frowns of Providence. But although my poor purposes and promises cannot be fulfilled, there is One whose purposes and promises will all be fulfilled in His own time towards every one of His redeemed people, for they were given to them in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world.

Write soon, hoping you are all well, your sincere friend,

ALEX. KERR.

V.

AUCHMELVICH, 26th September, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I should have answered your last letter sooner, but was not feeling well in body or mind since receiving it. And I may be plain to tell you that the chief cause of my trouble was how much I was cast down in my mind because of my continual shortcoming in every duty. Indeed, I may say I was confounded and ashamed in spirit before Him who knows all our

hearts because of the sin and shortcoming I saw mingled with everything I attempted in the way of duty private or public. Will you not pity me, an old man coming on to the brink of the grave, and so unprepared for the inheritance of the saints in light. No man is fit for the enjoyment of that inheritance but he who has a conscience cleansed by faith in the precious atoning blood of Christ. But as for me I am a poor, blind, hard-hearted sinner, ever provoking the Lord to cast me off; and if sin and corruption could do it, I would have been cast off long ago. But blessed be His holy name, the everlasting covenant stands sure, in which it is promised that although they will be chastised for their iniquities (and the hardness and deadness they bring on themselves is not the least part of their chastising), yet His love He will not utterly take from them nor suffer His faithfulness to fail.

They had the Sacrament at Stoer last week, and Mr. Aird was there. He called me to speak on the Friday, and poor as I was I endeavoured to say some broken words in accordance—so far as I know—with the Scriptures, which are the only safe guide in such solemn work as speaking to immortal souls concerning their eternal interests. . . .—Yours very sincerely, ALEX. KERR.

IV.

ACHMELVICH, 14th November, 1871.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your last, and for the note that you gave from Mr. — about the letter that came from heaven from the Son of the Great King. It is when His own Word is dropped with life and power in the mind that it is felt to be indeed a message from heaven—"good tidings of great joy" to the poor weary soul. Then the Word will be the support of the soul, and its power will melt the hard heart like wax before the fire.

I wish you to read at your leisure the 2nd chapter of the Song of Solomon, and you will see there what thoughts the Church and the believers in every age had concerning Christ. And you will see at the 16th verse what was the conclusion of it all—"My Beloved is mine and I am His."

Now nothing less than this will stand when it comes to be tried at last where we are. Are we in Christ by a living faith, or are we not? And in order to come to a point on this, we ought to ponder much on the work of Christ—what He did for the salvation of lost sinners, what price He paid for their redemption, what love was in His heart toward them: and we should seek out a throne of grace that He would enlighten us in the knowledge of Himself, so that our souls would be drawn out after him. There will be "a few names even in Sardis" to the end of time. "Few" compared with the bulk of the generation, and with the bulk too of the professors of religion in the generation. May we be of them. Write soon to your sincere friend, ALEX. KERR.

Opening of Assemblies.

THE Assemblies of the Established, United Free, and Free Churches were opened on Tuesday, 26th May. The Moderators were—Dr. John MacMurtrie, Dr. R. G. Balfour, and Rev. Murdoch Macqueen, Kiltearn, respectively.

Mr. Macqueen, in his opening address, spoke out strongly, though by no means too much so, upon the character of the majority who joined the United Presbyterians, and formed what is known as the United Free Church. He said that he had yet to learn that mere numbers apart from principles constituted the Free Church, that a majority that had thrown the distinctive principles of the Free Church to the winds, and joined a body holding opposite views, could possibly be the Free Church of Scotland, however large that majority might be. The seceding majority and the voluntary body it had joined formed a very curious combination, which was hard to describe. It seemed to be a politico-ecclesiastical body, having political rather than religious objects in view. In its political aspect its object seemed to be to stir up political strife in the land, to command Parliamentary votes, and more especially to bring about the disestablishment of a sister Church. In its ecclesiastical aspect it was, to say the least, very tolerant of error, very partial to unorthodox views, and did not assign to the Bible its due place as the authoritative rule of faith. For this hybrid body, this politico-ecclesiastical caucus, which was like a huge menagerie of clean and unclean animals, offering an asylum for a great variety of errors and heresies, he said for this unprincipled body to pretend that it was the Free Church of Scotland was simply preposterous and absurd. A majority that had disowned the distinctive principles of the Free Church could not possibly be the Free Church. Many or few, those were the Free Church who adhered to its name and to its distinctive principles, as revealed in the Word of God and founded upon its infallible testimony. The Free Church of Scotland existed, and would continue to exist, when the memory of the ambitious, unscrupulous, and worldly-minded men who had attempted its destruction had perished from off the earth. Let them set the highest value upon the fact that they were members and office-bearers of the Free Church of Scotland, and let them earnestly pray that the Lord might give them grace to be faithful in maintaining those imperishable principles, and sending them to the generations to come.

[In regard to the claim to be "The Free Church of Scotland," we are disposed to say that the body which Mr. Macqueen represents is, taken as a whole, a much nearer approach to it than the U.F. Church, but before it will be a thorough representative of the Free Church of 1843, it will require to undergo a good deal of purging. We heartily echo the prayer that grace may be given to maintain the imperishable principles of *that* Church, and to send

them down to coming generations, not merely because they are the principles of a Church who has a great name in history, but because they are founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God.—ED,]

Church Notes.

Communion.—Lybster, Caithness, and Dornoch, 3rd Sabbath; Inverness and Gairloch, 4th.

John Knox's Congregation.—This congregation, with permission of Presbytery, meantime meets at the Christian Institute, Bothwell Street, Glasgow.

Meeting of Synod.—The Synod will (*D.V.*) meet at the Free Presbyterian Church, Inverness, on Tuesday, the 5th day of July. The Rev. Alexander Stewart, Edinburgh, moderator, will preach at 12 noon.

Acknowledgment of Donations.—Contributions to Dingwall Manse Building Fund have been received as follows:—£1 from ex-Provost Cowan, Dumfries, per Mrs. Macfarlane; £5 from a Friend, per Rev. Mr. Macfarlane; £2 from a Friend, per Treasurer; 6s. from a Friend, per Mr. A. Maclean, Mill Street.

Deputy to Canadian Mission.—We are glad to learn that the Rev. Alexander Macrae, Portree, has safely arrived in Canada. The prayers of the Church should ascend that his labours may be abundantly blessed by the Lord among our friends in Canada, and that he may be brought back again in due time in safety and comfort to the home country.

The Southern Presbytery and the Education Bill.—This Presbytery at a meeting on the 20th May, adopted the following resolution anent the clause on Voluntary Schools in the proposed Education Bill for Scotland:—"This Presbytery declares its strong disapproval of the clause in the Scottish Education Bill now before Parliament, wherein it is proposed that School Boards shall have power to help out of the public rates Voluntary Schools, over which they have no control, such as the Roman Catholic and Scottish Episcopalian; protests that such use of the rates would infringe upon the conscientious convictions of many of the Protestant and Presbyterian community, who would thus be compelled to support institutions many of which they regard as teaching idolatry and superstition as well as principles of disloyalty to the Protestant Throne; and warns the Government that if the clause referred to be retained in the Bill, its provisions will undoubtedly give rise to troubles in Scotland similar to that which has arisen in connection with the Education Act for England and Wales." The Clerk was instructed to send copies of the resolution to the Prime Minister, the Secretary for Scotland, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and the *Herald* and *Scotsman* newspapers.

Brief Account of Gustavus Adolphus.

WE closed our last narrative with the mournful account of the death of this heroic king. Lutzen, fought November 6, 1632, was his last field. He fell near the commencement of the fight, and his lifeless form, stripped and mangled, was recovered at the close of the action. His remains were embalmed and conveyed to Sweden, where they now repose honourably in the Riddarholm Church, Stockholm. Thus fell, amid the lamentations of the Protestant world, a brave, useful man—a man evidently raised up for special service at a crisis in the long struggle for civil and religious liberty, and whose brief but crowded hour on the stage of history effectually reversed the designs of a devouring hierarchy, and lifted the almost-expiring Protestant cause to a level of political supremacy from which it has never since fallen. The weapons of the Kingdom of Heaven are not carnal; nevertheless, in order that pure and undefiled religion may have standing-room and leave to exist in this evil world, good men, in Christ's name, have oftentimes been constrained to seize the secular sword, and debate the point with the enemy to the effusion of blood. This is a service not to be worthily sustained without some degree of the faith that was found in Joshua and Gideon. in David and in Judas Maccabeus, and, we will add, in Oliver Cromwell and our Covenanting forefathers. There are pleasing proofs that the prime fitness of Gustavus Adolphus for this dangerous but honourable service, was the possession of the same spirit of faith and Godliness that dwelt in these worthies. His opposition to Romanism as a political tyranny was accompanied by an understanding of the spiritual question at issue between the Reformers and the champions of the Mass. Conscious that the success of the cause he was embarked upon was not possible without the help of God, he was desirous not to forfeit that help by any failure of piety or good morals among the troops. Hence the ordinances of public worship were religiously maintained in camp, and discipline of the most strict kind was exercised to preserve morality and good order in the ranks. "His carriage in his army makes him to be beloved even by his enemies," says one observer. In towns captured by him and garrisoned by his troops, the inhabitants, accustomed to the licence and barbarity of the Catholic soldiery, were astonished to see Gustavus' soldiers forbearing all theft and violence, and on Sabbath peacefully mingling with the worshippers in church. Although a brave man and zealous to nourish bravery among his soldiers, he was resolute in forbidding the practice of duelling, esteeming it not a test of bravery but an exhibition of gratuitous wickedness. There is an anecdote of his anti-duelling principles to the following effect:—Two officers requested permission to fight a duel. Gustavus gave the desired liberty, and signified his intention of being present. When the affair opened he said, "Now, gentlemen, fight—fight till one of you falls.

Meanwhile I have brought the provost-marshal to behead the survivor." He was not only an example of fortitude and courage to the common soldier, but also a pattern of temperance and frugality to the officers. He hardly drank wine, and cultivated plainness and moderation in all appointments of his tent and table. In his conduct of war there was a happy mixture of caution and courage—a solid apprehension of the limits of human power, but a forwardness to do and dare that was almost romantic. But the most significant feature of his character was the moral elevation of his spirit, finding expression in continual prayers and aspirations. When the battle came to a dangerous pass he would kneel down and pray for divine aid, and when victory was coming or had come he offered public prayer. The following is the prayer reported to have been made by him on his first landing on German soil to prosecute his Protestant war:—"My Lord and my God, Thou who rulest the winds and the sea, in the heavens and over the land, how can I praise Thee, fittingly thank Thee, for the protection which Thou hast granted me during this dangerous voyage? I give Thee thanks from the depths of my heart. Thou knowest it, I have undertaken this expedition, not for my own glory, but to sustain the oppressed Church. Cease not to sustain us in the accomplishment of this sacred work until we have attained the object fixed by Thyself." He then raised himself; and, seeing tears in the eyes of those who surrounded him, he remarked, "Weep not, but rather pray to God with all your heart. To pray often is almost to conquer."

When he embarked on his great undertaking, he bade farewell to ease and pleasure, and set his affairs in order like a dying man. His words to the Swedish Senate were:—"I expect you to persevere in this great work, of which you and your children will see the happy issue, such as God, I hope, will accord to your prayers. For myself, I look henceforth for no more tranquility before entering into eternal felicity."

His perseverance to the end, through the toils, troubles, and difficulties of this undertaking, continually hampered by lack of men and means, vexed by the obstruction of lukewarm friends, and worn by the deadly hostility of sworn enemies, and yet having a spirit joyous and undaunted through it all, bespeaks the frame of mind indicated in Heb. xi. 17, "He endured as seeing Him who is invisible." His service was popular with our countrymen. Many Scotchmen followed his banner, either as officers or private soldiers, and this circumstance left lasting traces on the after history of our country. General Leslie, who commanded the army of the Covenant at Duns Law in 1638, was a trusted veteran of Gustavus' wars. And of the numerous levies raised for his behoof in the north country by such Protestant chieftains as the Earl of Sutherland, Mackay of Reay, and Munro of Fowlis many returned

to their own country not depraved and morally wrecked as in most cases of return from military service, but converted to Christ by the means of grace afforded in Gustavus' camp, and thus a permanent blessing to their country. The name Gustavus occurring in the Highlands to this hour is a proof of the esteem and popularity attaching to the King of Sweden's service in the minds of our ancestors. The signs of times in which we live are becoming ominous of the necessity for another struggle to the death with the Romish destroyer of life and liberty. It is certain that strange events connected with Rome's last brief but terrible hour of supremacy are drawing on. We may profit somewhat by a historical contemplation of the deeds achieved by the faith and courage of our forefathers, but this of itself will not avail to nerve the faithful for the fiery trial that is to try them. One thing is needful, even divinely implanted faith in the unseen but ever-living Captan of Salvation, for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Signs of the Times.—A short time since a new minister was ordained in the West United Free Church, Thurso. A social meeting was held in the evening, after the ordination, and at this meeting (according to report) there were present, among others, the Rev. Messrs. Paterson and Martin, ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church and Original Secession Church respectively. We cannot possibly understand how these gentlemen, in view of the historical and doctrinal testimonies of their Church could conscientiously deliver addresses of congratulation in connection with the induction of a minister belonging to the United Free Church, a body that has practically renounced the sound doctrines of the faith of the gospel, and that tolerates and supports professors who deny the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures, the Word of the living God—indeed, one of the most degenerate religious organisations that exists in the world. Reformed Presbyterian office-bearers solemnly pledge themselves at ordination to the following, among other things—"To countenance and connive at no man's sin for fear or favour. To concur with no persons or judicatories for strengthening the hands of evil-doers, or grieving the hearts of the Lord's people. Not to be silent, or speak ambiguously in the public cause, but faithfully to declare against all the prevailing evils of the times wherein your lot is to live." We have not the O.S. testimony at hand, but the vows of its office-bearers, we believe, are no less thorough and strict. Moreover, the Word of God emphatically says, "Have no fellowship with the unprincipled works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Ephes. v. 11.)