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"Be Ye also Ready."

THE Lord Jesus Christ towards the end of His public ministry delivered a very solemn address to His disciples on the subject of the last things, such as the signs of His second coming and the end of the world (Matt. xxiv.). He spoke of the rise of false prophets and false Christs, wars between the nations, "famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places," and the afflictions and persecutions to which His followers would be subject in due time. "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Jesus also intimated that after three days of tribulation the sign of the Son of man would appear in heaven, and that "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." But He added that the exact day and hour of this appearing "knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The precise moment of this tremendous event is one of the secret things known only to God, and it is clearly evident from the teaching of Christ that it is kept hidden from men for one great practical purpose at least—that they may be always on the watch-tower. Thus, when He comes to the personal application of His address, Jesus says to His disciples, "Watch, therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

In these latter words, to which we desire briefly to draw attention, Jesus speaks as if He, who was then present with them, might, in another sense, come at any moment. This, along with the general context, points to a coming at the hour of death, and indicates that there is then a coming of the Son of man. In fact, it shows that for those who will not be on earth to see the personal appearance of Christ in the heavens at the last day, He may come at any moment in the article of death to appoint them their future abode. We get many lessons from time to time concerning

the uncertainty of our natural life and the sure approach of the messenger of death, "Behold, the judge standeth before the door." At this season of the year also we are impressively reminded of the swiftness of the flight of time. It is not inappropriate, then, that on the present occasion we should meditate for a little on the approach of the Son of man and the importance of being ready and watchful. Let us notice:—

1. That the Son of man comes at the hour of death. The Son of man now sits upon the throne at the right hand of the Father, and though very man is also very God, equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost in the undivided and ineffable Godhead—in one word, "God over all, blessed for ever." Unto Him, as the mediator of the new covenant, the Father hath given all things, all power in heaven and in earth, the government of the world, and "power over all flesh." Not a sparrow, therefore, falls to the ground without Him, and it is He, according to His own testimony quoted above, that comes to men at their dying hour. From the natural eye the world of spirits is hid; death may only seem to be the decay of the physical frame, and the cessation of its activities; but the eye of those who behold invisible things, through the wonderful revealing glass of God's Holy Word, sees vastly more than this; it pierces the veil of sense, and discerns the tremendous issues of eternity, and the infinite solemnity of appearing before God. At the important moment of death, the Son of man, who purchased the eternal redemption of His people, and then entered as their forerunner within the veil, comes forth again in order to bring them to the mansions He has prepared. On the other hand, as the appointed judge of the world, He comes to deal with impenitent and unbelieving sinners, who have despised the day of grace, and to assign them their awful but just reward in the place of everlasting misery. This leads us to observe:

2. That the final abode of men is fixed at the hour of death. Lazarus is immediately carried to Abraham's bosom, but the ungodly sinner to the place of torment. Stephen cried out in immediate prospect of glory, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" while it is written of Judas, in words brief, but terribly suggestive, that at death "he went to his own place." No doubt, we speak of the day of judgment as the day of final reckoning, but this does not imply that nothing is settled until that day, or that those who die now do not pass into a definite place of happiness or woe. The opposite, we see, is the case. For the true believer, "absent from the body" means "present with the Lord." Death is robbed of its sting, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Some of God's people are privileged with raptures of joy on their death-beds, while others depart quietly to their eternal rest. But it is true of them all at the moment that Jordan is passed that "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace." True, they will be openly acknowledged and publicly acquitted on the day of judgment, and then,

in possession of glorified bodies as well as souls, will obtain a fuller accession of happiness, but this is no fundamental change of state. Their house, not made with hands, is even now unchangeably fixed for ever, "eternal in the heavens." The impenitent, on the other hand, at death—O overwhelming thought!—pass quickly down to hell, and the great day only means for them—then, also, with body and soul reunited—a fuller accession of misery.

3. The hour of the coming of the Son of man at death is hidden and uncertain. "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." He may, and often does, come at the time He is least expected. Sometimes the Lord's people, though in good health, know beforehand that the time of their departure is near, but this is not of the will or skill of man, but of God. For most part, this hour is entirely hidden. Perhaps at the very time there is no immediate anticipation of such an event, the Lord appears and carries away His ransomed one, to be forever with Himself. And how often is it also true that the careless sinner is cut down in his wickedness without a moment's warning! Surely this uncertainty as to the tenure of human life should stir up souls to number their days, consider their latter end, and seek preparation for eternity. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof." Everything here is changeable and vanishing. Soon, the place that now knows us will know us no more for ever. Young people especially are apt to look forward to a long life and happy days, and to suppose that death, if ever it comes at all, is in the far-distant future. It is no doubt natural and permissible to desire long life, but we must remember we live in a fading, dying world, where God has shortened human life for sin, and where our days are all uncertain. How often also the last call comes to the young in early childhood, or in budding manhood or womanhood, when parents and friends are cherishing high hopes and expectations in regard to them! The disappointments of the present life are many. It would be well to have an interest in that higher life which shall never end, otherwise death also will bring us an eternal disappointment. "Therefore, be ye ready."

4. Lastly, notice the call to be ready for Christ's coming. There are two kinds of readiness—a *habitual* readiness and an *actual* readiness.

The children of God have always an habitual readiness. This arises from their saving union to Christ, and their experience of a new birth. They are made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and as such have a right and title to eternal life, and an earnest of it in their souls. They have a holy nature that is akin to heaven, and being complete in Him who is their Head, they are habitually ready for the coming of the Son of man. This is the fundamental preparedness without which no one shall see the kingdom of heaven. It lays a necessary foundation for the *actual* readiness to which Jesus here solemnly exhorts His disciples. This

readiness consists in that gracious frame of mind which becomes souls that expect soon to enter into the immediate presence of the holy and blessed God. Jesus calls His people to preparation. This implies an exhortation to have their thoughts fixed upon the things that are unseen and eternal, to meditate much upon the glory of God, and to seek fellowship with Him through His Son. Thus their souls shall be fashioned more and more for the enjoyment of His holy presence in eternity. Heaven will become less strange and distant to them, and the coming of the Son of man at death will gradually lose its dread and terror, and become a sweet and attractive prospect; yea, the very thought of it fitted to kindle within them a heavenly joy. Thus they will be "ready" when He comes. It does not mean that they will not be sensible of much sin and imperfection in themselves to the last, but it infers that dwelling by faith on the borders of eternity and in contemplation of Christ and eternal realities in life, they will joyfully welcome His appearance at death. It may be that they will be engaged in their worldly occupation to the end. The call to watchfulness and readiness does not necessarily mean a giving up of the common daily toil, though for most part that is done, before the Christian goes hence. It is his, just to be in the place and circumstances the Lord appoints for him, and the Most High is able to give grace for coming glory even at the moment he gives grace for common duty. At the same time it is clear from Christ's words that believers require to be stirred up to spiritual preparation for the solemn day of death. Sin, Satan, and the world are so active in dragging them down to the mire of carnality that they need to hear the rousing, quickening voice of Christ, saying "Be ye also ready." Blessed be God, He who gives the call has grace to bestow for obedience to it. And so the needy soul, sensible of its great unfitness to appear before God, is encouraged to cry for spiritual supplies out of the fulness that is in Christ. That same glorious Son of man, who will come for you at death, has an infinite fulness of grace in Himself, capable of giving you peace and strength and courage as you go down into the dark waters of Jordan, and of carrying you safely and comfortably across, to the praise of His glory!

But what shall we say to the unconverted? They have neither habitual nor actual readiness to meet the Lord. Some such may be professors of religion, but that will not save them from the dread consequences of sin; if they die without Christ, they shall have their portion among the hypocrites in that place where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth. As for others who make no profession, their danger is the same. The want of profession won't save any. If you have no profession, poor unconverted soul, you have had at least many privileges. Born in a Christian country, with an open Bible and a preached Gospel, with godly friends around you, you have much to answer for at the bar of God. Jesus also speaks to you in His Word, and

you should cry for the hearing ear and understanding heart. "Hear, and your soul shall live;" "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" You cannot prepare your own soul for eternity. In the Son of man alone is that which you need. "It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell," and Christ with His blessed fulness is offered freely to you in the Gospel, without money and without price. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." You have no right or fitness for heaven; how can you cherish any hope of entering it apart from Christ? We believe many entertain false hopes of heaven, persons who were never born again. For such to enter heaven, if that were possible, it would simply mean the most awful affliction that could be sent on them. Heaven would be hell to an unregenerate sinner.

We would, therefore, solemnly warn our unconverted readers to think upon their souls, their sins, their exposure to God's holy wrath, their unfitness for meeting the Son of man, their danger of being lost for ever. These are matters of supreme and eternal moment; in comparison therewith the most valuable things of earth are bubbles light as air. Consider also the glorious provision that is in Christ. He came to save sinners, and will receive the very chief, who come to Him, and make them fit for eternal glory. Even now He cries, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And for the returning prodigal he has the warm and heart-ravishing welcome: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." (Luke xv. 22-24.)

Acknowledgment.—Treasurer of Dingwall congregation begs to acknowledge with thanks the following contributions received from the Free Presbyterian congregations at the several places named towards Dingwall Manse Building Fund:—Inverness, per Mr. Angus Clunas, £14 10s. 6d.; Daviot, per their representative, £3 5s.; Beauly, £3; Tarbert (Harris), £1 15s. 6d.; Moy (Strathdean), per Mr. Duncan Davidson, Findhorn Bridge, £13 12s.

The Burns Bible.—The family Bible of Burns the poet, which, it seems, has survived the shocks and changes of time, recently came to the hammer in a London saleroom. It was bought by a London bookseller for £1560. It was shortly thereafter sold again to the curator of the Burns Museum at Ayr for £1700. This large sum represents, not the esteem cherished by the Burns worshipper for the Scriptures, but the extravagant height to which the Burns mania has now been carried. £1700 for a book which will only be gazed at through a glass case is a sad abuse of good money.

Notes of a Sermon.

By the Rev. JOHN MACLEOD, M.A., Kames.

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 "What sign shewest thou then that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?" etc.—John vi. 30-32.  
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I n the early part of this chapter we have an account of the miracle wrought in a desert place, when five thousand men that waited on the ministry of the Lord Jesus were fed with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and of the effect that this wonderful work had on the minds of those that witnessed it. The people, under the fresh impression of what they saw and tasted, came at once to the conclusion "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They came to a right conclusion, yet they came to it in a carnal way, and that this was how they came to it was soon made plain. Their first impulse was to take Him by force and to make Him king. This of itself showed how little they were inclined to subject themselves to the authority of Him whom they recognised to be the Prophet. They were ready to run before Him, and in false and fiery zeal to lead Him, instead of consenting or seeking to be led by Him. Such attachment as this He would have none of. He withdrew from them and went to a mountain alone.

His disciples crossed the sea, and on the way He joined them, so that by morning light He was on the other side on the sea from the multitude that had so lately decided that he was indeed the Prophet long expected by Israel. They could not find Him, sought for Him, crossed the sea, and came to Capernaum "seeking for Jesus. Were there nothing told us of them but that they followed Him so laboriously and sought for Him until they found Him we might think that something divine and spiritual led them to take the course they took. Surely there was burning, flaming zeal exhibited in such conduct. At the cost of no small personal inconvenience they had pursued their search until they found Him. Was there not devotion here shown to His person and cause? Surely one might say this at any rate is love to the Prophet. They have recognised Him, and they are prepared to follow Him. He, however, knew what was in man and needed not that any should testify. He knew what manner of people they were and what their spirit was. Their flattering attentions did not find in Him what could be deceived or puffed up. Nay, they met with a rebuff at His hand. He spoke plainly, and brought out before their eyes the secret springs of action that impelled them in the course of conduct they were now pursuing. They might say, 'Surely He will be flattered with our earnest, zealous waiting on His words, and the more they thought themselves entitled to a welcome on His part that would correspond to their own enthusiasm

the more were His words and the reception He gave them fitted to damp their ardour.

"Rabbi," they said when they found Him, "When camest Thou hither?" Still they give Him the place they acknowledged already to be His when they concluded Him to be the Prophet. They salute Him as master, and in so doing virtually profess themselves His scholars ready to wait on His instructions. He proceeds forthwith to instruct them, but His doctrine was rather plain than palatable. He at once told them their motives in seeking Him. They sought Him not because they saw His miracles, but because they had eaten of the loaves and were satisfied. They had not learned the lessons that His miracle was fitted to teach them; they were but grovelling earth worms; though His glory was manifested in His works they saw it not. They were not spiritual subjects of His realm prepared to submit their neck to His yoke, and He knew it. Nothing nobler than this led them on; they had eaten of the loaves and were filled. They might by engaging in their lawful callings earn their bread by the sweat of their brow and so satisfy one craving at anyrate that brought them after Him. The novelty of His method of meeting their needs might, acting as an irritant of their vain curiosity, bring them with eyes not satisfied with seeing to see again what they had seen already. They had come to where He was after a search. It was not without toil that they found Him. That energy and activity might if otherwise applied have secured the satisfaction of their hunger in a lawful way. Now, however, while professing to recognise Him as the Prophet and as their Master, they waited on Him not to have their soul fed with spiritual food, but to have their vague thirst for the wonderful gratified and their mortal bodies strengthened with the bread that perishes. Accepting their declaration that He was their Master, He thus taught them, and in teaching made plain that he knew what was in man, and gave them additional reasons, albeit unpalatable to proud nature, to conclude that He knew heart secrets. He not only revealed what was within, but He also gave advice. When they waited on His word and ministry they should have in view not the bread that perishes, but the bread that endures. They should in accordance at once with what their profession involved and with the reason of the thing seek first and foremost the food that was fitted to satisfy their soul. They should as rational accountable creatures esteem the soul more than the body, and so doing seek above everything what tended to promote its highest interests.

This was the advice He gave them. How was it taken? Do they immediately back out of their profession and, indignant at such imputations on their motives, resent the reception that their attentions met with? Or do they at once humbly submit to His authority and meekly subject themselves to His word? Were they or were they not angry at the plainness of His dealing? Let

us see. He has given them advice to work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life. They still profess themselves ready to take counsel with Him, or rather from Him. Practically they say, "Thou art our Master and givest us advice; we need that Thy advice should be explained; we need to understand it. If we are to work for the enduring meat, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?'"

They were a self-righteous generation. Their kind has not died out. Self-righteousness is as rife to-day as ever it was. They are set on *doing*; they will work out His will. "What shall we do?" Was it not right and proper that they should ask this? Undoubtedly it is the part of a rational being to put this question, and particularly so to put it when he has the opportunity of receiving instruction from above. The doing of the will of God, the doing of the work He marks out for us, the fulfilling of the end of our creation, should be a pressing question with accountable agents. That we may do the will of God we need a two-fold deliverance, and to this the Redeemer shuts in His hearers. They were ready offhand to assay the task that should be set before them, and if some great thing were asked to be done, something in the doing of which they might shine, it would be no doubt acceptable to hear of it. The Redeemer, however, brings them up with His answer, "This is the work of God that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." Not doing great things, but submissively receiving His words was what was put before them as the doing of the work of God. Thus should they eat the living bread. They are taken now on their profession, and the heartiness of their adhesion to it is put to the test. They had but acknowledged that he was the Prophet, long expected, come at last. They still professed themselves His disciples though He had rebuffed them. Now, however, He makes in clear terms the claim to be received as the Prophet, and He challenges them as it were to make good their recent profession. The testing to which it had already been subjected showed itself now. The dissatisfaction that His rebuff of their attentions aroused was now brought to light. Brought face to face with His claims, though He claimed to be only what they had so lately recognised Him to be, they indicate plainly that they were not ready to bow their shoulder to His yoke. They evidently cast off the mask of humble disciples, satisfied with the evidence already perceived, and convinced that this was of a truth that Prophet. They turn sceptics. "Ah! that a serious matter. The claim is no small one. If thou art the Prophet expected of the Fathers we 'must implicitly receive Thy word; we must yield ourselves entirely to Thine authority.'" This they were not prepared to do. Thus the hollowness of their professions became apparent.

They understood that He spoke of Himself, and that He claimed to be the Prophet that should arise like unto Moses. The promise had long been the possession of Israel, and many

prophets had been raised up, but in none of them had the word given to Moses and spoken by Him found its fulfilment. Great prophets had arisen, but in intimacy of communion with God not one of them attained to the stature of Moses. To him the Lord spoke face to face, and if thus in intimacy of communion with the fountain of light Moses surpassed his successors, the Prophet who was to be like Moses must resemble him in this distinctive feature. Moses, too, inaugurated a new dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. He was the Mediator of the Old Testament through whom the Lord spake unto Israel. In this respect also no one of the many prophets raised up of old approached him. He who should rise like unto him must resemble him in this. A new dispensation must by him be inaugurated. The change his successor must introduce meant the upturning of the dispensation that then was. As the result of his coming what is antiquated must soon pass away. That which decayed and waxed old was now ready to vanish away.

The Messianic claim brought solemn issues before Israel. If they refused to hear the prophet so long foretold, it would be required at their hand. And these solemn issues were now before the multitude that waited on the Lord Jesus in Capernaum. Had they reason to receive him as Messiah and the Prophet, then it was something to answer for if they refused to bow their shoulder to His yoke. They had reason to ascertain how the case stood, and it was in one sense no unreasonable request that they now made when they sought for evidence. They sought a sign. That they had already concluded that this was the Prophet, and in so doing were right, is undoubted. How flimsy their conclusion was in its kind was already apparent. It was but a fleshly judgment come to under the influence of what they saw in the wilderness. The instability of flesh and blood appears in the reversal of position we now have. After vows they make inquiry. They had not dug deep and laid their foundation on the rock. Such is the case with the superficial convictions of many still. Their minds, so far as they take any side, seem to incline to the acknowledgment of the truth. This they do, however, from regard to the testimony and example of others. They have not heard and learned of the Father. They have not seen for themselves. Such convictions do not carry far. They do not count for much. They may go hand in hand with fleshly zeal, and may flash in the pan. But testing, trial, they cannot bear. What we need is what will stand testing, not what will blow away as the chaff of the threshing floor, but what will fall as good grain to be gathered into the garner. A divine faith, the product of divine teaching, the gift of God that discovers to the individual the thoughts of God in the Cross of Christ, this is what is needed, and this is the very thing that was wanting on the part of this multitude, whose zeal had carried them so far and then left them stranded high and dry. Before the Redeemer's discourse on this occasion

was over, many of His disciples were offended and left Him. He winnowed them with the fan of doctrine. The winnowing process—the testing, the trial—served only to bring out more clearly, in contrast with the apostasy of the rest, the constancy of the true disciples. “To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Now they seek a sign, and they do so in significant terms. They quite appreciate the nature of the claim that has but been uttered in their hearing. He who stands before them and speaks, asks for the unconditional surrender of their whole inner man to His authority. He challenges acceptance as the Divine Messenger who should introduce the “world to come” the days of Messiah to which Israel looked forward. The parallel between Moses the Mediator of the dispensation of exclusion and the prophet like unto him is obviously before their minds. Moses surpassed all the prophets in his intimate familiarity with the Lord in the honour conferred upon him when he was set over the house of God as a servant. Ample attestation was afforded to his mission, and Israel had every reason throughout their successive generations to be convinced that God spake unto Moses “Now,” the people seem to say, “our fathers ate manna in the wilderness. He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Week in week out for forty years the many thousands of Israel were miraculously sustained in the waste and howling wilderness. Such was Moses to our fathers. Well might they and well may we, their offspring, believe in his divine mission. If thou hast come with credentials such as his were produce them. Hast thou such outstanding intimacy of intercourse with the Highest as he had, or dost thou introduce a new world, a new order, that is destined to supplant his? If so, we must be as well satisfied as to Thy credentials as we are of his. What sign shewest Thou then that we may see and believe? What dost thou work?”

The Jews sought a sign; a wicked and adulterous generation sought it. We find on one occasion that the Redeemer assured them that no sign should be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonas. The burial and resurrection of Jonah were to be fulfilled in their days. The narrative of the prophet's experience adumbrated the history of a greater Prophet. The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the burden of the Gospel. The stone set at nought of the builders was to become the head of the corner, and this has come to pass. The burden of prophetic testimony, as it bore on the common salvation, was the sufferings of Messiah and the glory that should follow. Not the sufferings only, and not the glory only, but both together, and together in a certain order—not a glory that should end in suffering, but suffering that should be crowned with glory. Only when the Son of Man was lifted up could Scripture find its fulfilment, and without this lifting up there should be no message of life for a sin-stricken world. The testimony of Scripture was express, and on the ground

that it was clear and unmistakeable to the docile receiver of its message, the Lord Jesus proceeds in the rebuke He administered to His disciples after the resurrection—"O fools, and slow of heart to understand all that the prophets have spoken; ought not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" If those that had enjoyed His own leading guidance and tuition for the years that His earthly ministry lasted stood in need of such a rebuke, may we not safely assert of Israel as a whole that their Messianic expectations were altogether out of joint. They had reason to expect the fulfilment of the promise, but the mere word of prophecy did not get fair treatment at their hands. Elements that entered into its description of the coming One they no doubt applied to Him. Other elements, however, that equally applied to Him they misapplied; nay, they failed to apply to Him, and thus at the best their view of Him who was their fathers' hope was a distorted one; and soon those descriptions given beforehand that they did correctly apply to Him, they degraded by carnalising them, so that if the instructed disciples, not yet free from the entanglement of prejudices and mistakes, amid which they had grown up, and which had infected the very air they breathed, were open to the rebuke of "Fools and slow of heart," this rebuke in a more intense form applied to the nation at large.

How then does the Lord deal with the request that is made for a sign? He practically threw His hearers back on the divinity that shone in His every word—Let them there recognise who He was. Never man spake like Him—Let them come to realise this, and give it the place due to it. Then they should no longer as children crave for signs and wonders, without which they would not believe. We have seen how Messiah referred those that asked a sign to the sign of the prophet Jonas. This sign that generation should have, and the record of its fulfilment all generations have to the end of time. The Stone must be rejected of the builders. This must be so that the signs of Messiah might attest the genuineness of His claims. This gives us a glimpse of what Messianic pretenders had to pass through. It was a crucial test indeed. Their claims they could make good only by being rejected, and, as we now see, rejected unto the death, and once this rejection came about, their Messianic claims came to nought. There was no rising again for them. There was no broad seal of heaven's acceptance to be stamped on their impious pretensions. The fulfilment of the conditions that marked out Him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write involved something that secured for His claims nothing less than divine attestation.

The Gospel of God, now that the kingdom of God has come, concerns His Son, who is defined by the resurrection to be what He claimed to be. In the testimony borne by the apostles—competent witnesses—to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the wicked and adulterous generation had the sign of the prophet Jonas brought before their eyes. A sign has been given, and it is

a sign pregnant with meaning. The whole Gospel is in it. In its interpreted form it is the setting forth of the propitiation—the revelation of the righteousness—He who was delivered for our offences has been raised for our justification. Messiah the Prince has been cut off, to bring in everlasting righteousness. The resurrection is involved in the sign as surely as the death.

Many impostors died, and that was an end of their imposture. Their influence did not, for it could not, outlive themselves. Their views were absorbed with what was between them and death—how best they could delude the people, how best they could aggrandise themselves, and they had no wish to submit to the ordeal of death. The Lord Jesus, however, came with death in full view; the prospect of it was not sprung upon Him as a surprise. From the outset of His course in public He contemplated the goal. The Brazen Serpent must have its Antitype. The temple must be destroyed to be built again. Calmly He looked forward to what He must pass through, and the one sign He gives is His own sacrificial death with its triumphant and blessed results. If the burden of the prophets was a suffering Messiah, the burden of the Gospel is Jesus the Christ and the Christ crucified. When the message of eternal life as God's free gift to a sin-blighted race is proclaimed, the whole setting of Divine truth, when seen with open eyes, is a proclamation of the divinity of the Word.

Law and gospel, ruin and remedy, curse and blessing, when set beside each other show the profound need, suitableness, and excellency of the Gospel. There are truths that do not belong to the Gospel that are essential to a satisfactory acquaintance with its nature and its purpose. For an unfallen world the message of reconciliation might be pronounced to be an impertinence. "What," it might be asked, "is the need or call for reconciliation?" For a world suffering from some malady that involved it in no such dire results as await our world under the wrath revealed from heaven, such a wonderful provision as the Gospel brings before us would seem to be uncalled for. One might ask in view of it "Why this profusion, this prodigality of grace?" For a world able to help itself and to win the favour of the Highest by its deserving and well-directed struggles, even though surrounded with mist and darkness, the very doctrine of gratuitous salvation would be an insult. But law and gospel so fit into each other that the very situation of affairs that the law describes is the very case for which the gospel provides. The very provision made in the gospel, and nothing less will meet the deep need and the hopeless ruin that the law reveals.

Grace revealed, as reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord, is the message of hope to the hopeless. Nothing less than eternal life will do for creatures endowed with a being destined to last for ever, and under the tyranny of a principle that like an undying worm gnaws at their heart and feeds on the exercise of God-given faculties when they are prostituted

to the service of the adversary. The salvation of the gospel is through righteousness and in the Son. His is the righteousness that entitles to eternal life. Nay, He in His obedience is that righteousness—the righteousness for sinners, the righteousness of God. He is made of the Father righteousness to as many as receive Him. He bore their guilt that He might bear it away. He bore it away, and now lives to conduct within the veil a more excellent ministry. A Saviour raised in Israel to gather unto the God of Israel all the spiritual progeny of Abraham is now proclaimed, and salvation is of the Jews. The economy of preparation was crowned by the advent of the Seed of the woman. He has bruised the serpent's head, and in Him and through Him there is the warrantable hope of eternal blessedness for as many as are content to accept Him in His saving offices. Here is glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

The Apostle Paul refers us to the things that are made as sufficient to leave us excuseless if, when we know God in His eternal power and Godhead, we glorify Him not as God, nor are thankful. There is such manifest glory in the works of creation as to call for the acknowledgment from every beholder that they owe their origin to a Being infinite in being, wisdom, power, and goodness. The handwriting of the Creator is so legible that all are without excuse if they read it not and lay not to heart the demands His existence makes upon them. In mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissing each other, in a just God revealed as just, when He justifies the ungodly, there is such a revelation of this glorious Being as to leave those to whom the record of it comes without excuse if, when it comes, they fail to recognise herein the marvellous glory of the divine perfections shining forth with meridian splendour; and this is the condemnation that the light hath come into the world, yet men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. The Lamb is the light of the Holy City. In Him is the revelation vouchsafed that instructs cherubim and seraphim in the manifold wisdom of God. Thus the Gospel is its own witness. It contains the thoughts that are as a great deep and that are not recognised to be such, only on account of the brutishness of those to whom they are made known. The Gospel contains within itself an evidence that is fitted to satisfy the judgment and conscience that it is indeed of God. Only let the truth of man's original glory and dignity, of his apostacy and his now helpless plight, his wretchedness and his guilt, be deeply impressed on the conscience, the cry will come forth "What shall I do to be saved?" When thus a personal interest is awakened in our highest concerns, and the sinner casts about for some means of pacifying the offended and dishonoured law, then, and not till then, is he in a position to discover the inexpressible suitableness of God's righteousness to meet his case. When, receiving the unspeak-

able gift, he rests in the satisfaction Immanuel gave to Justice on behalf of as many as believe, his conscience knows the blessedness of a peace that the Supreme Judge proclaims; and the "living bread" manifests its glory, not in the same way as the manna of old, not by satiating the hunger and renewing the strength of the body, but by satisfying the hunger and renewing the strength of the living soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. In the adaptation of law and gospel to each other, realised by the broken-hearted penitent, there is such a sign as satisfies him that he follows no cunningly-devised fable when he commits his eternal all to Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.

This is the sign He gives them. Moses was attested as the Lord's prophet by the manner wherewith Israel were fed. The Lord Jesus with His words of eternal life feeds not the body but the soul; and as soul surpasses body, even so does the marvellous provision, that the words of eternal life containing the message of His person, work, and salvation, feed and satisfy the immortal spirit. For forty years the manna was given. It could not last unless miraculously preserved. But the words of eternal life, from the beginning and since the fulfilment of the promise, have an unfading freshness. The more they are eaten the more are their qualities discovered. He who eats them does not destroy them. After they are eaten they are still whole and unimpaired. As spiritual food they contain an evidence than can appeal only to spiritual men, but that evidence fails to get justice at the hands of those that reject the Gospel, simply because they are carnal and not spiritual. Thus it is their sinfulness that brings it about, that they cannot appreciate the thoughts of God, cannot discover their glory, cannot profit by the message that conveys them.

In giving this sign the Redeemer brought before the men of that generation, that had wellnigh a surfeit of signs, the evidence that suffices to the end of time for those to whom the immediate advantage of seeing signs and marvels is denied; who, having not seen, yet do believe. If that evidence that shone out in His words and in His deeds was withheld from their eyes, they would not submit to Him, however many portents were brought before their notice. It was no want of signs that they laboured under. These signs were a showing forth of His glory. They were blinded by the god of this world, and until He who commanded light to shine out of darkness should shine in their hearts there was no power adequate to subdue their pride and stubborn unbelief and impenitence. The glory shining forth in His marvellous deeds convinced His disciples, and the Apostles as faithful witnesses transmitted to succeeding generations the words of eternal life. This presentation of the Lord Jesus in His person, word, and works is the ground we have to build upon. The scheme of redemption is crowned. The way of life is opened, and though no attendant miracles of healing accompany the word

now in the physical sphere, yet it is the healer of the bitter waters still, and there are many whose souls have discovered its efficacy as quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. They are in their own experience so many blind whose eyes have been opened, so many dead that have been raised, and what they are thus to themselves they are in a measure to their brethren too, and what they are recognised to be by their brethren they should be recognised to be by the world, so many epistles of Christ, so many in whom the life of Jesus is manifested. The sign the Redeemer gave is a sign that is still present with us. If forty years of manna testified to Moses, this was but a shadow to the abounding evidence that accompanies the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, whensoever it comes and whensoever it is declared. It is the true manna—all ages and men in every land and of every family under heaven partake of it—and as it satisfies the soul below, in a more glorious manner it shall secure that result above. Here we see but through a glass darkly, then face to face, and then in the full harmony of our restored powers, we shall be enabled to acquaint ourselves with the Living God in His Beloved Son, and to enjoy perfect blessedness in the full enjoying of His communion unto all eternity.

The word of God carries with it the hall-mark of its own authenticity. What is required to recognise this is not special natural equipment, not high thinking and profound learning, but a meek and teachable spirit, so that we may receive as little children the thoughts of God, and respond to them as they variously call for response at our hands. The unction of the Holy One makes the simple wise, and however simple and unlearned they may be, however unable either to answer or to comprehend many of the objections of the sceptic, they know whom they have believed, and they can say, "We have seen for ourselves and heard for ourselves, and know of a truth that this is indeed the Christ that should come into the world, that this is the true God and the Eternal Life."

This being so, the way is clear for the herald of salvation to declare the message fearlessly. Unto as many as are set apart unto eternal life, it shall doubtless prove the savour of life unto life. He is not to depend on receptivity of nature for the reception of the message, but to look rather to the fulfilment of the word. "The hour cometh, yea already is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." This aspect of things is fitted to strengthen his hands in the Lord and to lead him to make the Lord his confidence. At the same time this aspect of truth shows how, though the noontide sunshine is spread abroad, how unresponsive sinners are to it, how impervious to the light they are, how unable to appreciate the truth. This inability to appreciate the truth but proves the truthfulness of the descriptions the Word gives of our ungodly world, and in so doing is fitted to impress sinners of the instancy and urgency of

their need (seeing such spiritual death is theirs) of deliverance from the condemnation that hands them over to it, in order to deliverance from itself. Not only is the abject wretchedness of fallen men thus solemnly brought before us, but when divine truth in its spiritual glory and beauty is presented and fails to elicit a response suited to its character, the enormity of the guilt that filthiness of spirit involves the impenitent sinner in is impressively exhibited.

The whole narrative is fitted to make us pause and examine to what extent we as individuals have come to discern the excellency of the prophet like unto Moses, and to what extent we have subjected ourselves to the authority of His word. Fleshly zeal and human testimony may impel us to do many things, but nothing less is requisite in order to membership of the kingdom of God than that we be born from above—that, receiving in implicit simplicity the testimony that bears on our case and our ruin, we receive likewise the testimony that bears on God's gift of love, and venture our interests in the hands of Him who is an advocate with the Father, and ever liveth to make intercession.

The sign of the Prophet Jonah has been given. The claims of Jesus of Nazareth have been confirmed, and we have to declare not a Messiah whose course ended in darkness, a stone set at nought and nothing more, but a Messiah who has risen in triumph, because the stone, set at nought of the builder, God has made head of the corner. His claims are still what they were of old—that we receive His word and believe in Him, that we receive the truth in the love of it and live under its influence, looking not on the things that are seen but on the things that are unseen. In order to this the Spirit of faith is needed—the evidence of things not seen that removes the films and veils that prevent us from seeing their glory and rejoicing in them. Wherefore we should pray:

“Open mine eyes that of Thy law

The wonders I may see;

I am a stranger on this earth,

Hide not Thy laws from me.”

—Ps. cxix. 18, 19.

Brief notice of Neil Leslie, Dornoch, held over until next month.

Memoir of Rev. D. Macdonald, Sheildaig.—This interesting book (2s. 9d. post free) is to be had from Rev. D. Macfarlane, Free Presbyterian Manse, Dingwall. A suitable gift for young or old.

Acknowledgments.—The treasurer begs to acknowledge with thanks the following sums received for Dingwall F.P., Manse Building Fund, per Rev. Mr. Macfarlane:—A Friend in Bonar Bridge, 10s.; a friend in Blairgowrie, 5s.—The Rev. Neil Cameron begs to thank sincerely “Carrbridge” for 5s.; “A Friend in Cromarty” for 10s.; and “A Friend, Blairgowrie,” 5s. towards St. Jude's Building Fund.

Christ's Little Ones.

NOTES FOR BIBLE STUDENTS BY BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD,
D.D., LL.D.¹

IT is exceedingly touching to observe the tenderness of our Lord's habitual thought of His followers, as manifested in the affectionate designations which He applies to them. It was a land and an age in which the teaching function was greatly magnified. "No Hindoo fanatic," writes Edersheim, "would more humbly bend before Brahmin saints, nor devout Romanist more venerate the members of a holy community than the Jew his great Rabbis." And Jesus was the supreme Rabbi, veritably, "a teacher come from God" (John iii. 2). First and above everything else, therefore, His followers were His "disciples," and so He constantly thought and spoke of them (Luke xxii. 11; John viii. 31; xiii. 35; xv. 8). As His "disciples" they were, of course, also His "servants" (Matt. x. 24, 25; John xii. 26; xiii. 16); for this is the relation which was universally assumed to be implied in discipleship (Schoettgen, *Hor. Hebr.*, on John xv. 11). But Jesus did not wish to look upon His "disciples" as "servants," though He alone of the Rabbis was really their Lord as well as Master. He preferred to think of them as "friends" (John xv. 15). Nay, they were more even than "friends," they were his "children" (Mark x 24; John xxi. 5), or in the extreme expression of His tenderness, His "little children" (John xiii. 33). His shepherd heart went out to them as His "flock" (Matt. xxvi. 31; John x. 16, R.V.), or rather, in the fondness of His thought of them, His "little flock" (Luke xii. 32.) They were His "sheep" (Matt. x. 6), or even His "little sheep" (John x. 7, 16.); or, rather, more lovingly, His "lambs" (Luke x. 3), or even His "little lambs," His "lambkins" (John xxi 15). It will be observed that the use of what the grammarians call "hypocoristics," or "endearing diminutives," is characteristic of our Lord's thought and speech concerning His followers. In a word, He employs by predilection "pet names" in designating them.

What may be looked upon as, in a formal point of view at least, the typical form of our Lord's "endearing diminutives" as applied to His disciples, may possibly be discerned in a designation that occurs a half-dozen times in the record of the Evangelists, though in all these cases it may have been spoken by the Lord on not more than two or three different occasions. We refer to the designation, "These little ones." There is no substantive expressed. The adjective "little" simply with the article is used substantively—"the little;" though the demonstrative pronoun is always present, and the phrase is not "the little [ones]," but ever "these

¹ These "Notes" are taken from "The Bible Student and Teacher." Dr. Warfield is a professor of theology in Princeton, New York, and a learned expositor and defender of sound doctrine.—ED.

little [ones].” The emphasis that is is solely upon the objects to whom the designation is applied. These objects are called nothing whatever but “little.” This certainly bears the appearance of being formally just the perfect embodiment of the “endearing diminutive,” the “pet name,” so to speak, at its climax—the expression of pure affection without implication of aught else whatsoever. It seems, that is, to tell us nothing about Christ’s “little ones” except that He loves them very fondly, and thinks of them with exquisite tenderness, going out towards them in a passionate impulse of protection. Let us see if this be not true.

It has sometimes been thought, no doubt, that the phrase “these little ones” is merely a paraphrase for “children;” and even that it is sometimes employed quite literally to mean just actual children. Thus multitudes of Christians seem to be accustomed to read Matt. xviii. 10, “See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,” quite simply as a declaration that the “angels of little children” (whatever these “angels” may be) hold a peculiarly exalted place in heaven. The repetition of the phrase “these little ones” in this verse from verse 6, and the relation of the phrase in verse 6 to the corresponding phrase “one such little child” in verse 5, together with the connection of this whole series of verses (5-14) with verses 1-4, where a “little child” is presented as a model to the disciples, appear to many readers to exclude all other interpretations. And this feeling seems to receive support from the parallel passages, Mark ix. 37, 42, Luke ix. 48, xvii. 2, from which it is inferred that the idea of actual little children underlies the expression. The conviction derived from the passages, that it is little children who are meant by the phrase, becomes so strong in the minds of some, indeed, that they are ready to impose it *vi et armis* even on such a passage as Matt. x. 42, where there is no allusion to children in the context at all. Thus, for example, Alford and Morrison suggest that we must suppose that some actual children were present when our Lord was delivering His instructions to the Apostles, and that He indicated them by a gesture—“one of these little ones,” these, to wit, whom you see standing there. To seek the “children” somewhere outside the discourse, however, surely amounts to an admission that they are not discoverable in the discourse.

In endeavouring to ascertain the real meaning of the phrase, it may be well to take our start from this last-cited passage. It gives us at once its first appearance in the Gospel narratives and its earliest recorded occurrence in the discourses of our Lord. Our Lord is (Matt. x. 40-42) bringing to a close His instructions to the Apostles as He sent them forth on their first, their trial, evangelistic tour. His words are words of the highest encouragement. “He that receiveth you,” He says, “receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.” That is the general declaration: our Lord makes common cause with His messengers.

Then comes the enforcement by illustration. It was a matter of common understanding that "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet"—that is, not in the name of another prophet, but on this sole ground, that he is a prophet, or, as we should say in our English idiom, "as a prophet"—"shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man"—that is, again, merely because of his righteousness—"shall receive a righteous man's reward." The broad principle, then, is that the receiver shall be put, in the matter of reward, on the level of the received; he, by his reception of the prophet or righteous man, takes common ground with him, and becomes sharer in his reward. Now comes the application, marked as such (and not the continuation of the examples), by a change of construction. "And whosoever"—perhaps we may paraphrase, "Likewise whosoever"—"whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." The ordering of the clauses in this sentence is parallel with the ordering of the clauses in each of the preceding sentences. As, then, in them the prophet was received in the name of a prophet, and the righteous man in the name of a righteous man, so here when we read of "one of these little ones" being received in the name of a "disciple," it is clear that these two terms are synonyms. "One of these little ones," means in other words just a "disciple." Again, "in the name of a disciple" here means just what "in the name of a prophet" or "in the name of a righteous man" meant in the preceding clauses; that is to say, not "in the name of another disciple," but "on this sole ground, namely, that he is a disciple." If the receiver of the prophet shall share a prophet's reward, and the receiver of the righteous man the righteous man's reward, so the receiver of the disciple shall share the disciple's reward. Therefore, again, a "little one" is just another name for "a disciple."

It is not merely the parallelism that would be ruined, however, by reading, "Whosoever shall give drink unto a little child in the name of a disciple." The entire significance of the declaration would be wrecked. The object of the declaration was to enhearten and encourage the Apostles on their mission. How would it enhearten them to tell them that goodness to children would surely receive its reward? It was that goodness to them, the disciples, should receive a high reward that they needed to be assured of. We may be certain, then, that it is this that is asserted. And even the variations of phraseology introduced into the parallel sentences in this application, conduce to emphasising this needed lesson. These variations are four in number. In the first place, instead of the simple "he that" receiveth we have here the emphasized universal "whosoever;" there is no danger of failure here! Next, instead of the simple comprehensive "receiveth," we have here the least conceivable benefit specified—"shall give to drink a cup

of cold water only:" the slightest goodness to them shall be noted and rewarded! Next, instead of the simple statement that the benefitter shall share the reward of the benefitted, we have the solemn asseveration that in no case will a due reward be missed: the nature of the reward is left in large vagueness, and it is hinted only that it shall be appropriate, treated as due, and surely given. Lastly, instead of the cold "a disciple," we have the tender "one of these little ones." The "disciples" our Lord has in mind are His own disciples; His own disciples He loves with a devoted love; and this love is pledged to their protection. How natural it is then that he that receives them shall be treated as having received Him! The effect of these variations from the formally exact parallel is thus not to destroy or even to mar the parallel, but to raise it to its emotional climax. The lesson conveyed is that Christ's disciples are under the watchful charge of His jealous love, a love that is as strong as death, the flashes whereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of the Lord.

The case stands precisely the same with the paragraph Matt. xviii. 6-14. It can seem to be different there, indeed, only when we misapprehend the relations of this paragraph to the preceding one (Matt. xviii. 1-4) and the nature of the transition that is made at verse 5. The Apostles had been disputing as to their relative claims to greatness in the coming kingdom; and the Lord teaches them a much-needed lesson in humility by means of the example of a little child. Setting a little child in their midst, He exhorts them to emulate its simplicity if they would be first in the kingdom of heaven. With the fourth verse, however, this incident closes, and the lesson from it is concluded. The discussion that follows, in the succeeding verses, is no longer an inculcation of humility. It is an exhilarating pledge of the whole mediatorial, or rather Divine, power, to the keeping, protection, and glorification of Christ's followers. The connection between the two paragraphs is of the slenderest, and appears to consist of little more than this—that Christ's followers are spoken of in both paragraphs as like little children. In the first paragraph they are exhorted to become "as little children," and commendation is passed upon those who humble themselves "as this little child." In the second paragraph we are told how our Lord stands affected towards—not "little children" literally, but "such little children"—such, that is, as become like little children, in obedience to Him. These, He declares, He takes under His own protection, rewarding those who benefit them, and visiting with the severest punishment those who evil-entreat them; their angels ever behold the Father's face in heaven; if they go astray everything is dropped that they may be sought out and recovered; the Father's will is pledged that no one of them shall perish.

The note of individual, as over against class, oversight and protection, must be observed in order to appreciate the full value of this language. From the beginning throughout the stress is laid

upon the individual as the object of the Divine love. Whoever receives any ONE such little child receives Christ ; whoever causes a SINGLE ONE of them to stumble, were better drowned in the sea ; no SINGLE ONE of them must be despised, since their angels abide in the Father's presence ; if only ONE of them strays, all is left until he be recovered ; the Father's will is that not a SINGLE ONE of them shall perish. It were absurd to suppose that the subject of all these great assurances were the whole body of human infants—of a large number of whom such assurances are never fulfilled. The passage is in effect but the Synoptic parallel of the seventeenth chapter of John, with its great assertion that nothing shall be lost of all that the Father has given the Son : or, perhaps better, the evangelic parallel of Romans viii. 28-39 with its triumphal note of perfect safety for all that love God. Christ's "little ones," in short, are just who He tells us they are—"those that believe on Him," of whom "it is not the will of the Father that one should perish," whose angels "in heaven do always behold the face of the Father which is in heaven."

The same conclusion is forced on us similarly at Mark ix. 42, the declaration of which is parallel with Matt. xviii. 6, and is immediately preceded by a verse, the thought of which is parallel to Matt. x. 42, so that it gives us afresh in a single context the two primary statements which we have met with in Matthew. We read here, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe to stumble, it were better for him that a great mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea." The variation of the phraseology, in verse 41 from its parallel in Matt. x. 42 supplies a commentary upon the meaning of the phrases in the latter. The "little ones" of the one becomes the "you"—that is, Christ's Apostles—in the other ; and the "in the name of a disciple" of the one becomes "in the name that ye are Christ's" in the other. Thus the interpretation offered of the passage in Matthew is confirmed by the very language of the passage in Mark. But this language also sets the meaning of the phrases of the succeeding verse. The "you"—that is, the disciples—of this verse is replaced in that by "these little ones that believe," which must therefore mean the same thing as the "you"—that is to say, just "the disciples." This would be manifest, indeed, of itself, since these "little ones" are specifically defined here not as little ones simply, but as those little ones "that have faith." This specific class of little ones, then—the class of "believers"—is the one designated. It is quite clear therefore that "these little ones" in this passage means not children, but Christ's disciples.

In the only other passage in which the phrase occurs—Luke xvii. 2—the matter is equally clear. This passage is parallel in its assertion with Matt. xviii. 6 and Mark ix. 42, and repeats in effect their

language. "It were well for him, through whom occasions of stumbling come," we read, "if a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble." There is no allusion to children in the entire context, in which our Lord simply warns His "disciples" against sins against their brethren. In this and the parallel passage in Mark, in other words, we have simply renewed manifestations of the Saviour's infinite concern for those He calls "these little ones." He pronounces the sin of causing those for whom His love was thus pledged to stumble almost too great for words to express.

On each occasion of its occurrence, therefore, the phrase "these little ones" evinces itself, independently, a designation, not of children, but of the disciples of Christ. In these circumstances we can not permit doubt to be thrown on its meaning in the palmary passage, Matt. xviii. 6, by the circumstance that certain passages in Mark (ix. 37) and Luke (ix. 48) which are parallel to Matt. xviii. 1-5 might easily be understood of little children. The phrase "these little ones" does not occur in these passages of Mark and Luke; its place being taken by language which, if these passages stood alone, might easily suggest to the reader only little children. Perhaps, however, this is saying a little too much of the passage in Mark (ix. 36, 37), at least. This reads "And he took a little child and set him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, he said unto them, 'Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.'" The account in Matthew is fuller and permits the connection of the clauses to be more exactly estimated: it seems as if it were merely the compression of Mark's report which is responsible for the apparent identity of the "little child" of verse 36 and "one of such little children" of verse 37. But even in Mark it is to be noted the phrases employed in the two verses are not the same. The phrase used in the latter verse is not a "little child," but "one of such little children." This is practically the same with Matthew's "one such little child," and seems to be open to the same interpretation,—not "one little child," but "one of those who are spiritually like little children." And the subsequent use (verse 42) of the phrase "one of these little ones" obviously in this spiritual sense, renders this interpretation easier. Dr. Alexander MacLaren appears entirely justified, therefore, when he tells us ("Bible Class Expositions, Mark," page 142) that "such little children" here means just "those who are thus lowly, unambitious and unexact-ing."

It must be confessed, on the other hand, that if Luke ix. 48 stood alone we should very naturally think in it of nothing but a literal child. What Luke tells us is that Jesus "took a little child and set him by his side, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever

shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me." This little child " seems an explicit reference to the child seated by Jesus' side. Indeed, the reference is just a little too explicit. Are we to believe, for example, that just THIS PARTICULAR CHILD was intended, and no other? Is the promise confined to those who received THIS SINGLE CHILD which Jesus now had by His side? Surely the meaning is not this particular child, but as G. L. Hahn puts it, "that which is represented by this child." Is, then, what is represented by this child just other actual children like itself? Or rather all those who bear an inner resemblance to its childlike qualities? It does not seem out of the question that the latter may be intended. And the concluding clause does something to bear this out. "For," we read, "he that is least among you all, the same is great." "Least"—surely not in size or age: in inner self-estimation rather, in humility and absence of self-consciousness. Thus, after all, there is a flavour of something else than youthfulness even in this passage also.

Perhaps we may not unjustly say, then, with Hahn, that "the sense of the first clause is: not 'A child is so highly esteemed in God's sight that to receive it in Christ's name is the same as to receive God' (Bisping Keil); nor yet, 'Every disciple of Christ who is like a child in unassumingness and humility is so highly esteemed of God that whoever receives him, etc.' (Meyer); but, 'Every kindness that any one shows to the least of My followers, because he is My follower, is reckoned to him as if he had shown it to Me, even to My heavenly Father Himself.'" Something like this is obviously intended: and in proportion as we feel that this is the case in that proportion we feel that it is at least inadequate to understand the phrase "this little child" as referring merely to a literal child. Accordingly, Dr. Broadus waxes very bold, and prefers to interpret explicitly of the spiritual child (on Matt. xviii. 5-9). "The reference in Matthew and Mark," he says, "is plainly to the lowly believer. But Luke says, 'Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name.' Luke's account is very brief, omitting the sayings of Matt. xviii. 3, 4. The idea had become familiar to all Christian minds that Jesus used a little child for an object lesson, and so it is likely that Luke meant 'this little child' representatively, the lowly believer who is like this child."

Some may feel, no doubt, that such an interpretation subjects the actual text of Luke too strongly to the influence of the parallel passages: and that we ought to interpret Luke strictly independently, apart from all influence from them. In that case surely we should interpret Matthew and Mark also strictly independently, apart from the influence of what may appear to us the natural meaning of Luke; and this passage can not then be pleaded as modifying the apparent sense of those. Indeed, in any event, explain the difference of language as we may, and understand Luke as we can, the passages in Matthew and Mark too clearly indicate

their own meaning to be successfully explained in a different sense, for the purpose of harmonizing them with Luke. If we find it difficult to understand Luke in harmony with them, we must just let Luke bear the brunt of the difficulty. However we ultimately expound his text, we must abide by the clear meaning conveyed by the language of Matthew and Mark for theirs.

We may take it, then, as established that the phrase "these little ones" on the Master's lips meant not "Children," but distinctly "My disciples." The question still presses, however, whence the Master derived this term as a designation of His disciples. It has frequently been suggested that He simply adopted it from the Rabbinical schools, in which "little ones" had come to be a current designation of "pupils." This idea seems traceable to John Jacob Wetstein, who in his great edition of the Greek New Testament illustrates the phrase on its first occurrence (Matt. x. 40) by the following citation from an old Jewish commentary on Genesis known as the "Bereshith Rabba" (xlii. 4), "If there are no little ones there are no disciples; if there are no disciples, there are no sages; if there are no sages, there are no elders; if there are no elders, there are no prophets; if there are no prophets, there is no God." Following this suggestion, commentators of the highest rank, such as Bolten, Kuinoel, Bloomfield, Fritzsche, have accordingly explained the phrase simply as a Hebraism for "disciples," so that in His employment of it our Lord would have done nothing but adopt a current denomination of "disciples." The correctness of the assumption on which this explanation is based—viz., the currency in the Rabbinical schools of the phrase "little ones" as a designation of "pupils," was, however, long ago called sharply in question by Meyer (Ed. 2, p. 215, note) and Bruno Bauer (II. 241). The passage from the "Bereshith Rabba," Meyer points out, is scarcely foundation enough for such an assumption, especially as the progressive development of the idea embodied in it seems plainly to indicate that in it the term "little ones" means not "disciples," but just "children." As a consequence of these criticisms, the notion has quite generally died out, and most commentators will agree to-day with Weiss (Meyer, 8 Ed., 1890) when he says briefly, "Wetstein erroneously maintains that the expression was current among the Rabbis for the conception 'disciples.'"

(To be continued.)

The Revival in Wales.—A religious movement of some consequence is at present going on in Wales. There are no reports to hand yet by discriminating witnesses, but it is evident that some remarkable power is working. In the Rhonda Valley the whole football world is paralysed. Both players and spectators have deserted the field for the prayer meeting. Truly a strange transformation.

The late Alexander Campbell, Elder. Rogart.

THIS worthy man was born at Dalmore, Rogart, where he also died on Tuesday, the 27th day of September. In early life he was like his fellow-creatures, satisfying himself with the things which perish in the using, but as far as can be known he lived a very moral life, which is all the religion the majority of gospel hearers have in our day. Those, however, whom the Lord has loved with an everlasting love will not be left with daylight dreams of that kind; the Lord will make them see and feel what they have done, and what is in their hearts. When His time came that this man, who was naturally of the earth earthy, was to be quickened, it was not in a soft manner the Allwise dealt with him. He might say that the arrows of the Almighty were fast in his soul, so much so that some thought his reason would give way. For some time he could not look at his work or converse with his friends as he used to do. To some he told afterwards that eternal realities were before his mind day and night, and that he could not see that there was anything for him but "to be with the devil in the lake of fire." Thus he spent days and nights, the sleep parting from his eyes, so that some of his friends and neighbours thought that he was beside himself, when the man was in reality, like the Prodigal Son, coming to himself. In this state of mind, being one day in the school where the worthy man, James Murray, kept a meeting, Alexander got up and addressed the people, whom he considered secure and careless, somewhat as follows:—"If you all knew how near we all are to eternal ruin, you would not be so careless." To those who could not see their danger this was nothing but the saying of a deranged man. Some of them complained to James, but he would answer, "Leave you Sandy; the Lord will take care of him." Earthly physicians were consulted, but they could not help him; his trouble was deeper than a nervous shock.

The Lord alone could relieve him, and when His time came it might be said of him in the words of the gospel that "he sat at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind." The Spirit, whose office it is to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment, showed him that he was under the wrath and curse of God, and then enlightened his mind in the knowledge of Christ, and enabled him to embrace Him as He is freely offered in the gospel; and if his state as a condemned sinner was painful to him, when the anger of the Lord was turned away and he was comforted, his joy knew no bounds. As he said himself, "I thought I was never to be moved again," but this only continued few days, and he was in the depth again, with Satan making new accusations against him,—that he was of those who are described as having tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, that he could feel himself that he had fallen away, and that there was no hope for him now. This was the school in which Alexander was

being taught when those who were secure in Zion considered him beside himself. The Lord was teaching him lessons that would in future be helpful to those who would be tossing on billows somewhat similar, and when the Lord's time came he was again enabled to hope in His mercy. The Psalmist said that they reel and stagger like one drunk, but that He bringeth them out of their distresses. And when the time came that this wrestler with principalities and powers was called upon in public to open his lips in praises of Him who called him out of darkness into His own marvellous light, the children of light could see that it was not from man he had his news, but that his heart was inditing good matter, and that in a measure he resembled his Master who spoke with authority and not as the scribes. The most careless could see that a great change had come over the man whom they had formerly known only as a good neighbour. The inmates of the house in which he lived felt that the Lord had indeed visited them. The poor of the flock in these parts were refreshed as they listened to him declaring the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Naturally humble, kind and peaceable, with a clear intellect when grace took possession of his soul, cleansing and enlightening it, he became a polished shaft in the hand of the Lord.

On the Friday at Communion seasons he was often enabled to enter into the green pastures of the Word of God, although after being watered the accuser often tempted him, that he had no right to be among the Lord's people. The self-righteous will dance as self pipes, but the true child of God will have a messenger of Satan to buffet him lest he should be exalted above measure. But in his case all the enemy's temptations worked for his good, for it made him seek more of the Lord's fellowship. In his spare time he went about visiting the sick of all denominations. Although the parish is shaken with divisions, all welcomed him to the bedside of the sick; there he might be found seeking the salvation of immortal souls. Thus following the Word of God, "visiting the fatherless and widows," Alexander Campbell ran the race. As for his kindness and hospitality, it might be said of him, as was said of another good man, that he had a house that would hold twenty but a heart that would hold a hundred. At Communion seasons it was his delight to see every corner of the house occupied and to minister to the wants of the people.

As the Lord of the harvest was gathering the keepers of the walls from the Church militant to the Church triumphant, the lovers of Zion were anxious to have others set in their stead. The Session, looking upon Alexander as a man taught of the Lord, wished to have him as an elder. When the day of ordination came, James Murray, though feeble, went all the way to Lairg to see his colleague installed, and said as he returned, "I am glad I saw this before my departure." Little did those who looked on that day think that the young elder would so soon follow the old catechist to the region of bliss. For a short time Alexander went

in and out with his brethren, discharging the duties of his office in a humble but firm manner, clearly revealing that he felt the eye of his Master upon him, often tempted that he was not a suitable man for the office he held. Sometimes he would be so cast down that he would refuse to pray, and he told afterwards the reason, saying, "I felt myself a Judas among the rest." The Lord was fast preparing him for the house of many mansions, and Satan wished to make the way as thorny for him as he could. He might say with the Apostle, "Without were fightings, within were fears;" but as his tribulations abounded his consolations also abounded by Jesus Christ. In him the lily bruised, and the flourishing palm tree revealed themselves, mourning over his own barrenness and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, who could turn his barren soul into a fruitful field by the power of His hand. Those who used to hear him from Sabbath to Sabbath may well remember how he would in prayer plead "that I might be found in Him, not having mine own, righteousness."

The Sabbath before he died it seems the Lord gave him a taste of the pleasures that are at His right hand. He kept the people much longer than he used to do, telling them that he wanted to be free from their blood. The portion of God's word he spoke from was Matt. xxv., from the 31st verse to the end. The Lord was revealing to him what is hid from the "wise and prudent"—that there is a Throne at which we must all appear to be judged of the things done in the body. On his arrival at his own house, his wife remarked that he had kept the people later than he used to do, to which he replied, "Yes, I felt so happy; I did not want to part with them." At the evening service he said that there were some there that night that would never be there again. The people wondered at the unusual way he spoke to them, but he was bidding them farewell. The words he had in the evening were John xiv and last verse, "Arise, let us go hence." He was indeed going hence, for on the morning as he was making ready for the work of the day the messenger of death came to him in a severe pain in his side. The doctor and a nurse were called in, but no human skill could stop the trouble. It was the call from the Father of spirits to appear before Him.

One of the members of the congregation, on hearing that he was so ill, went at once to see him, and asked if he felt any pain on Sabbath. "No," he said, "nor on Sabbath night, but it was my last Sabbath on earth." Although in excruciating pain he revealed his concern for the cause of Christ in the land. About an hour before he died he was asked if he would like to live longer, to which he replied, "Yes, if I would be enabled to witness for Christ; there is need of faithfulness, for we live in a dark, dark age." After a while he said, "We know it is the Lord's cause we have," and then he said to one who stood beside him, "Go and keep worship. I am so pained that I cannot read." Then he went on his knees beside the bed, and as he went back it was too

evident that his soul was about to leave the tabernacle of clay. His wife, who could not stand to see his agony before, and all his friends, were then called in. As his wife came before him he asked who was there, and when he knew her voice he asked one near him to hold up his hands while he placed them round her neck, committing her to the Lord, till he closed his eyes in death between 9 and 10 on Tuesday. The comfort he got from the Lord on the Sabbath before was like Elijah's, a preparation for the journey from time to eternity. Of Alexander Campbell it might in truth be said that he was lovely in his life and in his death.

May the Father of the fatherless and the widow's stay shield and support his widow and orphan child, and his aged mother, to whom he was a wise counsellor as well as a dutiful son! And may his mantle fall on some one in the parish where he lived, that we may not be as Sodom nor be made like unto Gomorrah!

E. M^cQ.

Searmon.

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

Salm cxxvii. I. An dara searmon.

CHÀN e a h-uile ni a ghearras an creutair a mach a dochas; agus tha ceart cho duilich sin an creutair a thoirt gu bhi 'g earbsa as an Tighearn. Mar sin feudaidh sinn a radh gur e slainte an anama dara iongantas na siorruidheachd. 'Se iongantas na siorruidheachd Dia air 'fhoillseachadh anns an fheoil; 's e slainte an anama an ath-iongantas. Is bochd an t-anam a theid tre'n t-saoghal gun churam. Bidh e tre'n t-siorruidheachd a' mallachadh an la a fhuair e bith.

Tha an Salmadair anns an t-sailm roimh so a' labhairt air saoradh na h-eaglais o dhaorsa gus am bheil e tighinn gus an earrainn, "mur tog an Tighearn an tigh gu diomhain saothraichidh an luchd-togail." Ciod air bith saothair a ni iad cha bhuannaich iad leud na roine gus an cuir an Cruithear a lamh ris an obair. 'S iomadh creutair bochd a tha fad an la a' frithealadh nam meadhonan agus nach do bhuannaich leud na roine agus cha bhuannaich gus an cuir an Cruithear a lamh ris. Eadhon an deigh sin feudaidh peacadh a h-uile ni a rinn an creutair a mhilleadh air chor 's gu bheil feum air caithris agus biodh suil a' chreutair air an Tighearn fein airson gu'n gleidheadh E 'obair fein. 'Oir mur gleidh an Tighearn am baile gu diomhain ni am fear-coimhid faire."

'Nuair a bha sinn a' labhairt o na briathraibh so roimh, bha sinn a' nochdadh,

I. Gur e dleasdanas nan uile bhi ri faire,

II. Mur gleidh an Tighearn am baile gur diomhain a ni am fear-coimhid faire.

Bha sinn a' foillseachadh gur e dleasdanas nan uile bhi ri faire faire air an t-saoghal uile, gu'm bheil curam an anama ghrasmhoir a' dol a mach timchioll na cruitheachd uile. Tha an creutair gun ghras cho cumhann, cha teid a churam ni's fhaide na a fein. Bha sinn ag radh gur e dleasdanas a' chreutair a bhi caithriseach nach biodh e a' neartachadh chreutairean eile ann am pheacadh. Is uamhasach sin gu'm biodh creutair air bith tre'n t-siorruidheachd a' coireachadh aoin airson call anama. An t-anam a tha faicinn sin bidh e ri faire.

Tha aig creutairean a' Chruitheir creidimh air anam a bhi aca 's gu'm feud iad bhi ciontach dhe sgrios an anama sin. Ma dh' fhosgail an Spiorad Naomh sin do chreutair air bith bidh an creutair sin ri faire. Tha sinn a' leughadh air Ieroboam mac Nebait a thug air Israel peacadhadh agus am peacadh sin a' ruith anns na ginealaichean 'na dheigh air chor 's gu'm bi na miltean ghinealach a' fagail am fuil air. Bha naimhdeas Esau do Iacob a' leantuinn a ghinealach gu ginealach; mar sin bidh iad u' fagail am fuil air. Thusa a tha faicinn sin bidh tu ri faire; ach mur gleidh an Tighearn am baile gu diomhain ni am fear-coimhid faire."

'Nuair a thig aon gu bhi ri faire mar so bidh iomadh suil air; agus is beag an ni dh' an toir iad an aire; agus 'nuair a tha creutair 'na ghairm 's iongantach mur bi e air a ghlacadh ann am peacadh agus gu'm faigh an t-anam a mach 'fheum air caithris. Ach "mur gleidh an Tighearn am baile gu diomhain ni am fear-coimhid faire." Tha Satan air toir an anama sin. B'fhearr leis aon de'n luchd-faire a ghlacadh ann am peacadh ma mile eile. 'Nuair a sheallas sinn air na bheil anns an anam a' brosnuchadh an Tighearna 's iongantach nach 'eil E a' fagail a' chreutair gu tuitam ann am peacadh a bheir cnamhan briste dha fein uile laithean a bheatha. Tha feum air faire, ach "mur gleidh an Tighearn am baile gu diomhain ni am fear-coimhid faire."

Tha curam aig a' Chruithear mu 'eaglais mar na creutairean a cheannaich E le 'fhuil fein agus tha e soilleir ma tha *drap* sam bith de ghaol Chriosd anns an anam gu bheil anns an anam sin curam mu eaglais Chriosd; agus 's ann an sin a tha an t-aonadh a tha eadar cuspairean a ghaoil a' tighinn am fradharc. 'Se an t-aonadh sin neart agus gloir na h-eaglais. Nis 'se iartus Shatain gu'm biodh an t-aonadh so air a bhriseadh. O mar a tha aige ladhar sgoilte nan roinnean, air chor 's nach 'eil an creutair a mach a cunnart gus am bheil e stigh ann an gloir. Mar sin tha feum air faire. Cha-n 'eil iad ach tearc a tha 'toirt an aire dha so; ach tha e cunnartach. Thusa, a bhios a' briseadh an aonaidh so eador clann Chriosd, ged a b' anam grasmhor thu cha chuir Dia uiread de dh' onoir ort 's gu'n toir E dhuit fianuis a thoirt air a shon air leabaidh do bhais. Co fhad 's a tha aon air a chumail critheannach le eagal gu'm bi e 'na Achan cha bhi e 'na mheadhon toirt a stigh roinnean am measg clann Chriosd. Ach 'nuair a chi thusa neach a' fas bruidhneach agus foirmeal tha feum air caithris

o'n aon sin. Tha cuid agus cha-n 'eil aca ach seann notachan : tha feum aeadsa air caithris maille rin sin.

'Nuair a chi an t-anam grasmhor, ged a tha an Tighearn a' deiligidh ris gu sabhailte, 'nuair a chi e anmhuinneachd am measg pobull Dhe agus gu bheil bochdan Chriosd fosgailte dha sin, 'nuair a labhras e air sin tha e ullamh air fuachd a thoirt 'nam measg agus tha e an cunnart a bhi ciontach de pheacadh Ham. Cha-n 'eil e 'na chomharra air an Tighearn bhi tighinn dluth do'n anam creutair a bhi 'labhairt air anmhuinneachd pobull Dhe. 'Nuair a tha an Cruithneachd a' tighinn dluth do'n anam tha an creutair a' faicinn de thruaillidheachd ann fein 's gu'm faigh e fein air dheireadh air a h-uile neach. Gheibh e freumh a h-uile peacaidh a tha anns an t-saoghal ann fein agus mar sin tha feum air caithris. Gabh beachd air ceilg a' chridhe. "Tha an cridhe cealgach thar na h-uile nithe." 'S iomadh aon a thug an cridhe a stigh do na lasraichean. "Leis gach uile dhichioll gleidh do chridhe oir as a sin tha sruthanna na beatha." Ma tha beatha nan gras anns an anam tha sruthanna na beatha a' sruthadh as, ach, mur 'eil, tha sruthanna a' bhais a' sruthadh as a' chridhe. Ma bhios thusa a' gleidheadh do chridhe gheibh thu mach ciod a tha annad. Ciod a rinn Phairisich dhe muinntir? Nach e nach robh iad a' toirt an aire d' an cridhe? Feudaidd sinn a radh nach 'eil aon air an talamh a bu chomasach a bhi ann an sith airson na siorruidheachd nan toireadh e an aire d' a 'oireachadh inntinn ann am meadhonan nan gras ; ach gun a bhi toirt an aire eudaidh e buanachadh 'na fhoirmealach bochd fad a la.

Co luath 's a tha Spiorad Naomh nan gras a' gin smuain air siorruidheachd anns an anam bith an creutair a' toirt an aire do chleachdadh 'inntinn. Tha an Spiorad Naomh a' tionndadh suil an anam air a' chridhe agus buanaichidh an t-anam grasmhor mar sin gus an teid e null air Iordan. Mar is geire a tha aire an anama air cleachdadh 'inntinn tha e faotainn truailidheachd a' fas ni's beo 'na fhaireachadh. Leigidh tusa an diabhl tre do chridhe mar is toil leis agus cha bhi e 'na thrioblaid sam bith dhuit. Ach cuir stad air le srad de nadur na caithris agus mar is geire a bhios 's ann is beothaile a bhios an truailidheachd a' fas ann am faireachadh an anama. Ged a dh' fheudadh an creutair a bhi cho glan o'n leth muigh 's nach bu chomasach ni a chur as a leth, gidheadh tha nithe a' tighinn beo ann am faireachadh an anama air am bheil an lagh naomh a' deanamh greim agus tha iad a' fagail a' chreutair cho ciontach an lathair Dhe 's ged a bhiodh e fosgailte do'n t-saoghal. Mar sin feudaidd an creutair e fein fhaotainn anns an aon staid ris an neach a tha dol dh' ionnsuidh na croiche agus nach comasach e a bheil fhosgladh no clach a thilgeadh air aon air bith. Bu chomasach Peadar aon uair air labhairt an aghaidh nan "ard-shagart agus ar n-uachdaran" a thug shairis gu dìteadh bais E, agus "le lamhaibh dhroch dhaoine cheus agus mharbh sibh E." Ach 'nuair a chunnaic e an lamh dhearg a bh' aige fein

ann 's e a thubhairt e, " Neach a ghiulain ar peacanna E fein 'na chorp fein air a' chrann."

Feudaiddh an t-anam tighinn gu faireachadh air gu bheil gluasad a chuirp a' togail truailidheachd an taobh a stigh. Tha cuid ann agus tha an suilean 'nan sgios dhoibh. Tha cuid agus tha an cluasan. 'S ann mar sin a tha an t-anam air a chaitheamh mach as an t-seann chumhnant. Feudaiddh neach a bhi 'cumail aoraidh agus an sin a' neartachadh 'fhein-fhireantachd, ach aig a' bhas tuigidh e gu'n robh e togail air gaineamh. Fhuair clann a' chumhnant a mach nach deanadh maitheanas a mhain ni's leor dhoibh nach bu lugha na cruthachadh nuadh a dheanadh sona iad. Dheanadh am foirmealach an gnothuch le maitheanas. Tha maitheanas priseil ach 's e cruthachadh nuadh a chuireadh stad air an dortadh fola-sa. Is iongantach aon a' tighinn ann an eisimeil an Tighearn. Tha sinn a' leughadh anns na Corintianaich air an fholach a tha air a' chridhe ach 'nuair a phillear chum an Tighearn togar am folach dheth. 'Nuair a thig thusa an eisimeil Chriosd togar am folach dhe do chridhe ach co fhad'sa tha thu ag amharc ri nithibh eile mairidh am folach. Chaidh an eaglais beagan seachad air nithibh eile 'nuair a thubhairt i, "fhuair mi esan d'am bheil gradh aig m'anam." 'S iongantach sin, creutair a' tighinn gu bhi feumach air an Tighearn. Nis ciod a bheir a dh' ionnsuidh an Tighearna e? Bheir gairmean saor an t-soisgeil. Cha d' thug truailidheachd riamh aon a dh' ionnsuidh an Tighearna, 's ann a chuireadh sin air falbh. Tha Esan naomh ach mise mi-naomh, Esan 'na sholus ach mise a'm' dhorchadas. Nis an tig naimhdeas a dh' ionnsuidh graidh? no dorchadas a dh' ionnsuidh solus? Cha tig. 'S e gairmean an t-soisgeil agus na gairmean sin a' gabhail greim air an anama "le cordaibh duine, le ceanglaichibh graidh," a thairngeas an t-anam. "Bha mi dhoibh mar neach a thogas dhiubh a' chuing air an gialaibh agus chuir mi sios biadh dhoibh." Agus tha E a' labhairt briathran iongantach ann an aite eile, "Agus bidh duine mar ionad-fasgaidh o'n ghaoith agus mar dhìdean o'n doininn, mar shruthaibh uisge ann an aite tioram, mar sgaile creige moire ann an tir airtsnealaich." Faic, 's e bhi fosgladh Chriosd ann an nadur na daonnachd do'n anam a tha 'ga thoirt a dh' ionnsuidh an Tighearna ann an cumhachd an t-soisgeil.

(Ri leantuinn.)

Communion.—Inverness, fifth Sabbath of this month; Dingwall, first Sabbath of February.

Errata.—We regret that the following errata occur in the Rev. Mr. Macrae's report of visit to Canadian Mission printed last month:—P. 298, "Cape Rose" should be "Cape Race," and "northern," "southern"; p. 300, "1873," "1875"; p. 354, "wet," "good."

The late Donald Polson, Elder, Halkirk.

THE county of Caithness, like other parts of Scotland, has been bereft during recent years of most of its aged and eminent witnesses for God's truth. Trees of righteousness of venerable worth and long-standing experience have been cut down by the hand of death, and their empty places have caused a painful sense of desolation in the hearts of surviving friends, who valued and esteemed them. The loss to the cause of Christ has been very great. It is our sorrowful task on the present occasion to record the unexpected departure of Mr. Donald Polson, Clayock, Bower, one of the last of these worthy public men of an older generation that adorned the Church in the far north. The deceased, who had been for some time in better health than usual, suddenly became unwell, and at the end of five days' illness passed away, on Sabbath, the 27th November, at the age of sixty-seven years. Previous to this, many of his friends had thought he had got a new lease of life, so that the news of his death came to them with a sad shock. His unlooked-for removal is also felt as a sore blow by the congregation at Halkirk, in which he was the leading office-bearer, and for whose welfare he was spending and being spent with ungrudging energy. He was a man much beloved for the excellence of his personal character, as well as for his active Christian labours.

Donald Polson was born of worthy parents in the parish of Olrig, and several of his relatives on both sides were witnesses for Christ in their day. He had thus the precious privilege from childhood of godly upbringing and example, and this was evidently accompanied with the divine blessing, for at the age of sixteen or thereabout he showed a deep concern for the things of the soul and eternity. Under a burden of spiritual trouble, he one day entered the Olrig Free Church as the minister (the late Mr. Auld) was giving out the opening Psalm. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;" and the inspired words on this occasion came with special power, and brought relief to the young lad's troubled soul. They were, we believe, the following:—

"O greatly blessed the people are
The joyful sound that know;
In brightness of Thy face, O Lord,
They ever on shall go."—Ps. lxxxix. 15.

From this period, Donald became a devoted follower of the Lord and His people, of whom, at that time, there were not a few in the county. Indeed, love to the brethren was a prominent feature in his character to the end of his days. A more loving, Christian man one could seldom meet with. He might justly have appropriated the language of the Psalmist, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee and of them that keep thy precepts," for the society of God's people was one of his chief delights. Many are the interesting notes and reminiscences we

have heard him tell of excellent worthies of the past, such as David Steven, James Macadie, David Budge, and Hugh Stewart, at whose feet he sat, and whose fellowship he enjoyed, as well as others whose names are not so widely known. We cannot omit mentioning two godly men of the latter class, who were his dear and intimate friends, and of whom he often spoke in terms of warmest respect and affection—David Baillie, Watten, and Donald Mackay, precentor, Dunn, the one distinguished for the beauty of his private personal character, and the other for his upright, outspoken faithfulness on the side of God's truth—both useful to the Church in their day.

During the middle part of his life, the subject of this notice sat under the able and edifying ministry of the late Rev. Alexander Gunn (junior), Watten, and as a deacon in this worthy minister's congregation he was most diligent and conscientious. A prayer meeting was held at Dunn, on Sabbath evenings, for many years, where groups of pious men often met on Communion occasions, and had sweet fellowship together in Word, and prayer, and praise. Of old time conducted by godly James Macadie and others, the care of the meeting latterly fell on Donald Polson, who, when many of the worthy people had passed away, still endeavoured to preserve for it its hallowed associations of Christian fellowship. The writer can testify by personal experience to the value of this meeting. It seemed like a little well of "living water" in the district, and it was with the keenest regret that its leader eventually, on conscientious grounds, ceased to conduct it.

In the year 1893, Donald, who had always been a thorough adherent of the Constitutional party, and a sturdy opponent of innovations in doctrine and worship, cordially associated himself with the testimony on behalf of truth raised by the Rev. Messrs. Macfarlane and Macdonald after the passing of the Declaratory Act. He took an active part in the organisation of the Free Presbyterian congregation at Halkirk, and as has been already indicated, attended to the last with unselfish devotion to all its interests. One cannot omit noticing also the deep interest he took in the Helmsdale congregation, which a few years ago became associated with Halkirk as one Free Presbyterian charge. He often visited Helmsdale, and his services in the conduct of its meetings were not without tokens of the divine blessing, while his general helpfulness was highly prized by the congregation. Indeed it is not too much to say that our Helmsdale people feel with more than ordinary grief that they have lost a father and a friend, whose place will not be easily filled up.

In regard to personal characteristics, it may be said of our departed friend that he was a man of keen discernment as to truth and error, a man transparently honest and single-minded, who had no sympathy with half-hearted or worldly-wise ways in religion, and yet no lover of controversy for its own sake. In him, in fact, was all a woman's tenderness and sympathy, and by his warm, guileless,

loving disposition, he endeared himself to his intimate associate as few did. Being brought early to the knowledge of the truth, he took a fatherly interest in the young of his acquaintance, especially any in whom he saw some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. In this respect he was a true Barnabas, who took young disciples by the hand and introduced them to the brethren—a service which some who survive will ever hold in grateful remembrance. His bearing, when engaged in religious exercises, was very reverential; nor will his friends forget the tender, feeling manner in which he read the Word, or the unction, humility, and appropriateness of expression which marked his prayers. In early and middle life he was also a sweet, pathetic singer of the sacred songs of Zion. Perhaps the writer may be pardoned for referring to a little personal experience in this connection which illustrates the point. It happened twenty-three years ago at a late meeting on a Communion Sabbath evening in Pulteneytown Free Church, Wick. At the request of the presiding elder, one of the "men" rose and gave out a Psalm to be sung. He took the first four verses of the 137th, that song of sorrow in the land of captivity, beginning

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept
When Zion we thought on,"

and then led the singing to the rich old plaintive tune of "Bangor," reading line by line according to the time-honoured practice. Both reading and singing were suffused with such intense spiritual emotion and thrilling pathos that the heart of the youthful listener was deeply touched, and he thought he had never heard such affecting words and melody before. After the service was over, he longed intensely to see and hear "that man" again. The "man," he discovered long afterwards, was Donald Polson, and the incident seemed the harbinger of a future loving intimacy until life's close. The scene stands out prominently before the eye of memory, and the experience will never be forgotten.

It may be added that the deceased office-bearer was most assiduous in his general visitation of the people under his care, and was remarkable for his kindly, sympathetic attention to the homes of the sick and dying. In this important feature of Christian practice he excelled many. His Christianity was of a very real and practical kind, manifesting itself in the most unselfish consideration for the welfare of others. Though delicate in body, he did not spare himself, but often cheerfully endured much trouble and inconvenience in order to further the work of the Church or to help individual acquaintances in a time of need. The whole district in which he lived—irrespective of religious distinctions—will miss him much for his active Christian labours in their midst.

As a public figure at Communion gatherings in Caithness, Donald Polson will be greatly missed. He carried with him a presence and a savour of better days, and was one of the last re-

representatives of a race of godly men who are, sad to say, fast passing away from the land. The ministers of the Church will feel they have lost a personal friend, whose warm greeting and interesting company they prized. Much sympathy is felt for his widow and family in their sore and sudden bereavement. May the Lord in infinite compassion raise up the children in room of the fathers and make them noble witnesses for Himself! The Voice says, "Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

J. S. S.

Rev. John B. Radasi, Missionary.

MR. J. B. RADASI, our Kaffir student, was ordained as a missionary by the Southern Presbytery of our Church in the Hall of St. Jude's Glasgow, on the evening of 16th November. He chose as the field of his future labours Matabeleland in Rhodesia. In making this choice he was guided by two considerations which appeared to us judicious—viz. (1) He thought he could understand their language—seeing the Kaffir and the Matabele are two branches of the Zulu tribe, and therefore speak the same language; and (2) he desired to make known the gospel where it was not preached before. There was a mixed feeling of joy and sadness in the minds of all present. The prospect of his being a blessing to his poor fellow-countrymen in turning, at least, some of them from darkness to light, and from Satan to God, caused some to rejoice secretly before the Lord. On the other hand the fact of poor Mr. Radasi's having to go alone caused us all to feel sad. It dawned on the minds of some how sympathetic the Lord Jesus was to the frailty of our human weakness when He sent His disciples out by twos. We desire to urge on our praying people to bear Mr. Radasi and his future labours on their spirits to the throne of grace; for his success depends entirely on the presence, guidance, and quickening power of the Holy Spirit.

It was felt that some recognition from the Colonial Office would strengthen his position as our missionary to South Africa. The Rev. J. R. Mackay wrote Sir R. B. Finlay, Attorney-General, M.P. for the Inverness Burghs, asking his valuable help. He immediately wrote the Secretary for the Colonies. On the 1st of December he wrote Mr. Mackay—"The Colonial Office informed me some time ago they were to do all that could be done for Mr. Radasi." Mr. Angus Fraser, who accompanied Mr. Radasi to Southampton, and Mr. Radasi himself called on the Colonial Secretary, who received them very kindly, and sent a letter to Lord Milner, and asked them to see the Secretary of the Chartered Company. This they did. The secretary of this company sent a copy of Mr. Radasi's certificate of licence, and ordination to their office at Cape Town. He told them it would be necessary to get a letter of recommendation from some well known public man,

otherwise he would have to cancel the letter he sent. Mr. Fraser asked him if a letter from Sir R. B. Finlay would do. He assured that a letter from him would be all that was necessary. Mr. Mackay wrote Sir R. B. Finlay about this, and he at once wrote the secretary of the Chartered Company. On the 5th December he wrote Mr. Mackay, enclosing the following letter from the secretary of the company:—"I am directed to thank you for your letter of the 1st instant with reference to the Rev. J. B. Radasi, a native missionary of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and to say that a copy of your letter has been forwarded to the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia at Salisbury, and to the company's representative at Bulawayo, with a request that they should afford Mr. Radasi any assistance possible in carrying on his work." The Free Presbyterian Church is very much indebted to Sir R. B. Finlay for the deep interest he manifested in this matter, and for the good success of his advocating our cause both with the Colonial Office and with the Chartered Company. We have no doubt the recognition given will be very valuable to our dear brother in his future labours in South Africa.

May the Most High cause that, through weak instruments, Ethiopia may soon stretch out her hands to the Lord. N. C.

In Memory of John M'Kenzie, Gairloch.

OUR November issue recorded the death of this excellent man. A brief sketch of his life will, however, be not unacceptable to our readers generally, and will be expected by those who had the privilege of acquaintance with the deceased.

John M'Kenzie was born at Red Point, in the parish of Gairloch, in the year 1835. Up to his twenty-first year there was nothing in his manner of life to distinguish him from other young men of his neighbourhood. In or about that year he made up his mind to leave home with the view of earning a livelihood in the Lowlands, but although that was his design, the Lord had designed otherwise concerning him. On the evening preceding the day on which he had resolved to leave home, he paid a visit to a young man who lived some two or three miles away whom he expected to accompany him to the South country. In going or returning, John walked rather hurriedly, got over-heated, and, as a consequence, was that night seized with a serious illness. He never left the parish of Gairloch for the sake of work. The illness contracted then left him a comparatively delicate man for the remainder of his life.

In that first great sickness he was brought face to face with unseen and eternal realities, and there is reason to conclude that in the furnace of affliction he was chosen. There is reason to conclude that in those days the Mediator of the New Covenant became precious to him above what the teaching of flesh and blood can effect. We have been told that at that time his previous

careless disregard of the Lord's Day, with its privileges, gave him great exercise of soul, and if that was so, we can the more fully understand the way in which he ever afterwards appears to have realised the authority of the Fourth Commandment, and the way in which he felt compelled to bear testimony at all times against Sabbath desecration in his native parish. His growth in spiritual things was gradual, and inasmuch as that growth was conditioned by the events of Providence as well as by the Word, we shall here briefly relate the subsequent leading events of his life.

The parish of Gairloch was at that time blessed with not a few Christian men and women of great discernment, conspicuous among whom were Rev. Duncan Matheson, pastor, Mr. Angus Munro, catechist, and Alexander Kemp. To this people, the subject of this memoir, when he was measurably restored to health, joined himself, and everywhere received the right hand of fellowship. His first public service in the sanctuary was rendered as a leader of praise. He was naturally gifted with a sweet and melodious although not strong voice, and when in some measure he, besides, received a spiritual unction, his singing was with great effect. It is related that upon the first occasion of his singing in the Gairloch Free Church—the verses were Ps. xxxi. 5, onwards—Mr. Matheson was so struck and comforted therewith that he caused him to sing the first of these verses three times over. Dr. Hugh Martin, who, on occasion, spent some time at the Gairloch Free Manse, would call John the sweet singer of Israel. As a resident in Red Point his home was nearly ten miles from the church, but he had permission from Mr. Matheson to hold evening services in his own home for the benefit of the people in that district, and of this opportunity he sometimes availed himself.

In 1870 he was married to Louisa Maclellan, and about that time removed to Sand, Gairloch, where he lived for eighteen years. During this sojourn this worthy couple had their own share of affliction. Not to enter into fuller details, the nature of these afflictions may to some extent be indicated by saying that while here they were bereaved of two boys who had each, in turn, attained to the age of five years, and of another little girl of nine months. But by such discipline true Christians live.

In the year 1879, during the pastorate of Rev. John Baillie. John M'Kenzie was ordained an elder, an office which through grace he filled with credit to the end of his life. In 1887 he was employed by the West Coast Mission as one of their missionaries, and with Mr. Baillie's concurrence he removed in this capacity in the following year to Port Henderson. Port Henderson was to be his home for the rest of his days on earth. Here for 16 years he wielded a great and healthful influence among the people of those parts. His manner might appear to strangers somewhat stern and reserved, but it is not too much to say that he cherished very ardent affection for the people among whom he laboured. He

was gifted with an intellect considerably above the average capacity. His thinking was orderly and logical, and his message he delivered without affectation but with great directness. He was, in a word, an edifying expounder of the Word, and his services at Port Henderson were much appreciated.

But he was not to be suffered "to die in his nest." In 1893 he felt it his duty to join with those who formed the Free Presbyterian Church. On this account, largely I suppose through the influence of the then interim moderator of the Gairloch Free Church, he was not only debarred from the use of the meeting-house in which he had conducted services for so many years, he was also dismissed from the service of the West Coast Mission, but through grace when he suffered wrong because of his following that which was good he endured it very patiently. Possibly this may have been the most blessed and happiest period of his life. Precious promises of God's Word were in those days brought home to him with much demonstration of the Spirit—promises relating to his own individual case as well as to God's cause in the world. The writer remembers the great and manifest comfort with which he spoke of the strength vouchsafed to him in those days through the application to his spirit of those words, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance." Thus then, enabled to rise above the fear of man, he took a leading part in helping to form what is now the Free Presbyterian congregation of Gairloch. Shortly after his dismissal from the West Coast Mission he was received as a missionary and catechist of the Free Presbyterian Church, and in this capacity he continued to render public services to the end. Although the number of his hearers on the south side of Gairloch was considerably less under this new arrangement than it had been during his connection with the West Coast Mission, the sphere of his usefulness was not lessened, as ever afterwards the circumstances of the times required that he should very frequently conduct the services of the Free Presbyterian Church on the north side of the loch. He was indeed during the last four years of his life, as the pastorate was vacant, doing practically, so far as that was competent to a ruling elder, the work of a pastor of the congregation. What the spiritual fruits of this service were the great day alone will declare. What is patent is that it was largely through the blessing of God on his ministrations, and skilful managing of affairs, that our congregation at Gairloch has during these years remained the compact and united body that it is. This work, however, he was latterly carrying on only with great and increasing infirmities. In the August of this year he, for his health's sake, visited Strathpeffer, but the change did not benefit him. On the Tuesday after the first Sabbath of August, being at Auchterneed, near Strathpeffer, he was taken seriously ill, and it was thought that the end had come. Here, however, he lived for a few weeks

in much bodily weakness, but enjoying no little measure of a comfortable assurance of an interest in Christ. His prayer also that he might be allowed to return to Gairloch was granted, and he arrived there early in September. One of our students writes :— "After his return from Auchterneed he took me aside in his own house and spoke most solemnly of the stand we had made as a Church. He said that he himself did not regret the step taken, that he had many tokens of the Lord's special favour since the first day he cast in his lot with the faithful few who stood by the truth ; and he then gave a warning, that we should take great care that we be faithful to that which is committed to our trust."

For a few days after his return to Port Henderson, he appeared to be slightly improving, but the improvement was more apparent than real. About three o'clock on the 16th October, it being Sabbath morning, he was taken with a severe pain. When thus suffering, he prayed earnestly that, if it were the Lord's will, he might now be allowed to enter upon the rest that remaineth to the people of God. His prayer, we believe, was speedily answered, and he fell asleep at 6.40 that Sabbath morning. His remains were interred in the Gairloch Churchyard on the following Wednesday.

Mr. M'Kenzie is survived by a widow, a son, and two daughters. For these the sincerest sympathy is felt, and the prayer offered that the God of their loved one may prove their stay and help. We may fittingly conclude this brief notice of one who was at once a wise counsellor, a true soldier of the Cross, and a pious man, with the last portion of Truth which he was heard to utter :

" My flesh and heart doth faint and fail,
But God doth fail me never ;
For of my heart God is the strength
And portion for ever."

J. R. M.

The late Mrs. Urquhart, Resolis.

THIS Christian woman, who was latterly a member of the Free Presbyterian congregation at Dingwall, died a few weeks ago.

Jane Urquhart was born at Culboa, in the parish of Resolis, on the 24th March, 1824. She had undergone a saving change at a comparatively early age. At the age of about 20 years she went to service to the parish of Avoch, in the Black Isle, and it was while there she was converted. Speaking afterwards to intimate friends on the important subject, she used to say, "If I have ever passed through the *new birth*, I have no doubt as to the *time* and *place* in which that change took place." The means of her conversion were of a private nature. The Holy Spirit, without the instrumentality of human agency, makes the *reading* of God's Word an effectual means of convincing and converting some, while the *preaching* of the Word is more largely blessed for that end. But the good work begun in private was fostered and developed in the public means of grace under the ministry of eminent servants

of Christ. The young convert had at that time the privilege of attending the powerful and edifying ministry of the late Rev. John Macrae (Macrath Mor), of Knockbain. Though it was evident that she had before this time tasted that the Lord was gracious, yet she confessed that it was through that prince of preachers she drank in more largely the consolations of the gospel. Hence her love and attachment to Mr. Macrae were great. She derived much spiritual benefit through him; and to the end of her life she loved to speak of him in terms of affection, admiration, esteem, and grateful remembrance. She used to say, "Oh, what a spiritual nurse he was!"

In course of time Jane Urquhart returned to her native parish, where she married. Her husband—whose surname was also Urquhart—was a genuine Christian too. Mrs. Urquhart was now a considerable distance from her first nursing father, Mr. Macrae, but it was not necessary that she should travel all the way to Knockbain to hear the gospel, for the gospel was preached nearer her home. In her native parish, where she now settled down in her new relation in life, she had the privilege of sitting under the ministry of another excellent ambassador of Christ—the late Rev. Mr. Sage, of Resolis, for whom she cherished great regard, and by whose calm and solid evangelical ministrations she was edified, and grew as was evident "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." At that time it was not difficult for the Lord's people to find in Ross-shire and in other parts of the Highlands a pastor to feed their hungry souls with the bread of life—"the Living Bread that came down from heaven." Times have sadly changed since, and men have changed with them! Because of the change made in the creed and constitution of the Free Church by the passing into law of the Declaratory Act of 1892, Mrs. Urquhart along with her husband joined the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and associated themselves with our congregation at Dingwall, being the nearest congregation of that denomination. In her old age she came to Dingwall on Communion occasions, and at other times as often as she could. She was present at our last Communion in August, and sat at the Lord's table for the last time on earth.

Mrs. Urquhart was a meek and humble Christian. She was of a quiet and reserved disposition, but her consistent Christian walk and conversation spoke more loudly of her genuine piety than her modesty would allow her to express in words.

She passed away to her eternal rest at the ripe age of 80 years, and is survived by her husband, four sons, and three daughters, with whom we sincerely sympathise in their bereavement.

Many of the mothers, as well as the fathers, in Israel have been removed by death from our midst during the past few years, and it is our earnest prayer that the Lord would in mercy to His own poor cause raise up many of the young to fill the gap that has been made in our Church!

D. M'F.