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No National Turning from Evil.

NOTHING would afford greater satisfaction and pleasure to those who fear the Lord and have His glory at heart than to recognise any real and significant return to God on the part of the people in general throughout the nation. The heart's desire and prayer to God of His people is that there would be an abandonment of evil and a turning back to the "Law and to the testimony" by all classes throughout the length and breadth of the land. But in the exercise of true Christian charity and good will, it cannot be honestly asserted that there is any improvement in this regard, with respect to Church or nation. On the contrary, there is no improvement in religion and morals, albeit, there are advancements in the standard of living, and in the increase of knowledge, in other than spiritual spheres.

As to the professing Church—in many quarters, the Bible which we regard as inspired and infallible, as the Word of God, is still said to contain myth; and what is recorded as fact, such as the account of man's creation and sin and fall, is regarded as parabolic teaching. And doctrines, which are divinely revealed truths, such as that of "eternal punishment," are ignored, discounted or positively condemned as unworthy of God. And if, as it is not, the whole range of Gospel truth was being preached by the most of professed ministers of Christ, there would not remain the deplorable state of affairs within the Churches, that of thousands of poor, deluded sinners declaring that they are Christians, having Church privileges, holding office, and conspicuously controlling the affairs of the visible Christian Church; while all the time they are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians ii. 6), and know nothing of the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Birth. Multitudes of such persons, ministerial and lay, are much more at home at the dance, card-table, the theatre and all kinds of sport, etc. And again, revival campaigns, with a display of much evangelical doctrine, and involving the gathering and outlay of immense sums of

money, and the expenditure of a great measure of human energy, have not left any perceptible spiritual benefit behind.

Indeed, where the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ is being faithfully, clearly and solemnly preached by sent messengers of God, "hearers only" are in the vast majority. And the fact is that true ministers of the Gospel to-day are going forth bearing precious seed and weeping, whatever the ultimate outcome will be, according to the divine purpose. Death is reigning throughout the land in the Churches. Then it is an indisputable fact that there is a sad indifference to and wilful neglect of the public means of grace and the acknowledgment of God therein, by all kinds of people who have even had a religious background and links with the Church. And one may meet one after the other of such persons on week-days going about their worldly business, who are absent from the public worship of God on Sabbath and week-day. In addition, there are the great masses of our population who live as if there was no God at all. And here there is no sign that people in general are turning back to the Bible and the Gospel of Salvation, among young or old.

Now in the midst of all this, there is a great cry for ecclesiastical union—union of large and small Churches. The present case which is outstanding is the move by the Church of Scotland and the Church of England to enter into close collaboration or union, the movement to include other denominations also. The "Low Church" evangelicals of the Church of England are already plagued and oppressed with their leaders' lack of regard for Reformation doctrine and practice. And these are the leaders who are seeking to entangle the Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Episcopacy and then in High Anglicanism and then in a Romish trend. The leaders of the Church of Scotland seem to be more taken up with this than endeavouring to bring their people back to the faith and gospel of the Scottish fathers and divines. These movements are not concerned with the pre-eminent business of Christ's Church, the salvation of lost, hell-deserving men, through the gospel of the Reformers, and the building up of true Christians in the most holy faith. They are bent on organised, formal, external, ecclesiastical union. They aver that this is the way which Christian charity should take, and so we see that there is no return really among us to unity (not union merely) and fellowship in the truth of God, and the practice which is after godliness.

Another feature of the situation is that in some quarters, ecclesiastically, where a loud and repeated profession of being orthodox and Calvinistic and Scriptural in doctrine and practice, there is the demand to be free to "come and go" in relation to the modernistic Church of Scotland, that is, for ministers to exchange pulpits and so on. We mean here the Free Church of Scotland. This is not the way to stand fast in the faith and to preserve the people of Scotland from the

insidious influence of another gospel which is not another. Uncompromising devotion to God, His truth and the spiritual well-being of immortal souls has not increased or evidenced itself in greater measure, in general.

Then it is to be feared that among those who are true believers upon the Son of God, and have a hope of eternal life, that many such do not give themselves to prayer and secret prayer especially, as they ought. They are not praying that the gospel they hear from week to week, be really made a blessing to themselves and others, as fervently and frequently as they ought. They are not bearing the needs of ministers of the gospel, in regard to their ministry, to the Throne of Grace as they should do. In the case of some Christians, sermons are studied, prayed over, and delivered by the minister, and are then heard, and that is the end of the sermon as far as they are concerned, more often than not. There is the story of the pious minister who stated that he had lost his prayer-book. The explanation being that a godly woman in his congregation, who was given to prayer for her minister, had died.

Then ministers, who may be truly called of God, may well be showing no spiritual improvement in their ministry to-day. There are influences and even duties of a lawful nature, which do not come within the immediate scope of the ministry, and if not guarded against, may mitigate against prayer, meditation, study of the Word, and the enjoyment of a suitable and right frame of heart and mind, for the spiritual and profitable discharge of gospel ministrations. Also, this office requires that a man be an example to others: "Be thou an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Timothy iv. 12). It is therefore desirable that those who hold this office, bemoan wherein they come short and lack improvement, and that they humbly seek that the divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, would make all grace abound toward them.

Throughout the nation—apart from the Church—there is no sign of a return from our sins and backsliding ways. "Our iniquities testify against us . . . our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee" (Jeremiah xiv. 7). These words of the weeping prophet in Jerusalem are suitable, sad to say, to our conduct still to-day as they have been for many years now, and few, relatively, recognise this serious state of matters as before the all-seeing eyes of the Lord.

A considerable section of tradesmen and other workmen, under certain circumstances, require and demand work on Sabbath Day as on week-days, with extra pay for transgressing the Fourth Commandment. The peculiar thing is that originally labour demanded double wages for being called out to work on the Sabbath to prevent employers demanding service from them on that day. And no doubt

employers in certain cases offered higher wages to induce men to work on God's Day. The strange thing is that we now witness the workmen of this country willingly working seven days a week, and their declared policy, not so very long ago, was to demand a shorter working week. The Government officials and contractors are encouraging this disregard for the divine law, when there is neither the element of necessity nor mercy present, and all this is bearing evil fruit, and God will punish this conduct in His own time and way.

Millions of our people think more of outstanding personalities in the respective realms of entertainment and sport, than they do of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We mean, in their extreme, inordinate and carnal adoration for certain personalities. Of course, man by nature sees no beauty in Christ that He should be worshipped. But millions commit the heinous sin of idolatry in the manner we have indicated. Their hearts, their money and their time are laid at the feet of their idols. The name of God is nothing, and the Lord Jesus is but a root out of a dry ground to such. The idolatrous Mass of Rome is also periodically given publicity on the British Broadcasting Corporation's Sound and Television services. All this goes on apace, and more of a like nature, and we officially and professedly a Protestant nation. Yet there are few sections of the people throughout the country who seem to be anxious or concerned at the boldness and the inroads of Roman Catholicism. This aspect of the matter reflects accurately the widespread lack of knowledge and appreciation of Reformation history and principles. We, as a people, are just not interested in the preservation of the foundation truths, practices and liberties, handed down to us by godly forefathers.

With all the talk of increased interest in religion, and revival movements, and "Tell Scotland" activity, we are much afraid that the Bible is wilfully neglected, and actually unknown as to its contents by the masses of the people in all walks of life. The Bible is still waiting for a place in the majority of homes in Britain. The fruit of this is evident throughout society, as the ruling law is "That which is good and right in our own eyes."

Outsanding and heinous violations of the second table of the Moral Law are rife. Adultery, murder, and theft, etc., are common occurrences, and crime among the young is widespread. And all this reveals the continued drift away, by adults, and then children, from any thought at all about God, or the soul, or man's accountability to the Judge of all the earth at last.

Yet, the people are after work and more especially increased wages, and business and profits. In other words we seek all the good things of a temporal nature; and which a beneficent God, in providence, allows, as He who causes the rain to fall and the sun to shine upon

the just and the unjust. We are a people "who mind earthly things," and live for time, and not for God or His Son, or with a view to Eternity.

Our rulers at Government level, with all their national and world problems and anxieties, seem to be incapable of looking further than human wisdom and power for assistance and a solving of difficulties which affect millions of people. The Lord God omnipotent who reigneth, is not called upon nor consulted in our national difficulties and in connection with national and international conferences, as in the case of the Suez business and later developments.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isaiah i. 4). And so we are like the nation of Israel in Isaiah's day, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters (Isaiah i. 4). And as the prophet further writes: "They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (verse 4).

Of course, the Most High still speaks to us as a nation through His Word, and by his providence, and by the witness of the remnant of His people in the midst of all the backsliding and sinfulness. But He has left us to a great extent; as far as the withholding of the powerful and saving operations of His divine Spirit are concerned. There can be no substitute for this. A multiplicity of religious and worldly activities attached to the visible Church of Christ, and large quantities of spurious Christian charity, etc., can never heal our backslidings.

Let the living and faithful Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the land, continue to preach the whole doctrine of the Gospel, and to pray "Thy kingdom come"; and set an example before all of the life that is according to godliness; and this by the strength of heavenly grace, and in face of every present discouragement. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49).

Perilous Times.

By THOMAS BOSTON of Ettrick.

The following sermon was preached at Ettrick, November 14, 1731. (He died in 1732.)

"This we know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy iii. 1).

In these words we have three things:—

1. The notification of an event in future; "perilous times shall come." Not that there are any times in themselves perilous, or

"unlucky" days as the superstitious imagine; but they are perilous in respect of the evil that is a-going in them among men (verse 2). The word properly signifies difficult; times wherein it will be hard for people to keep their feet, to know how to carry themselves, to keep out of danger, and keep a good conscience; and these are perilous times.

Of these it is said, they "shall come" (Greek, shall be on). They will be on men, in the course of providence, to try what metal they are of, as darkness comes on after light, and adversity after prosperity, in their turn.

2. The time of that event: "in the last days." These are in Scripture-style, the days of the Messiah, the days of the gospel, even that whole period, according to Acts ii. 17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Hebrews i. 1, 2: "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. It is an Old Testament expression, which sounds "the last of the days," and days being used absolutely, these days are the days of the world, running from the creation to the end. The days of the gospel are the last part of these days, the concluding period of time. In these last days are several particular periods; the first of which was the last item of the Jewish State, beginning from the time of our Saviour, to the destruction of Jerusalem; and more periods followed, and some are yet to come; but from the time of our Saviour to the end of the world, is "the last days."

3. The notice to be taken of that event: "This know also," rather, "Now know this"; be informed of this, consider it duly, and lay it to heart, that being foreward, ye may be armed against the "perilous times."

Doctrine. As the days of the gospel are the last days, so men should know there are in the course of providence difficult and perilous times that come on in these days. In discoursing this doctrine, we shall consider:—

I.—The days of the gospel as the last days.

II.—The difficult and perilous times that come on in gospel days.

III.—Lastly, apply.

I.—We shall consider "the days of the gospel as the last days." And so we may taken them up in a three-fold view.

1. As the last days of the world, the latter end of time. With relation to them that oath is made, Rev. x. 6, "That there should be time no longer." The world has lasted too long now, it must have an

end; and the last part of its time is begun, and far on. The morning, and forenoon of the world are over; it is afternoon with it now, and drawing toward the evening.

2. As the days of the last dispensation of grace towards the world, according to Rev. x. 7, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, with which God's dealing with sinners for reconciliation shall be closed; the mystery of God shall be finished." There have been three dispensations of grace in the world—the Patriarchal dispensation in the first days; the Mosaical dispensation in the middle days; and now the Christian dispensation in the last days. The first two are now off the stage, and shall never come on again; the third now is; and after it there never shall be another.

3. As the best days of the world in respect of the greatest advantage attending them. The last works of God are always the greatest, as ye may see in the account of the creation (Genesis i.); so the circumstances of the world to come are greater than those of this. The gospel dispensation far excels the other two, in clearness, extensiveness, and efficacy, through a larger measure of the Spirit. One may say, have there not been perilous times in all the days? Noah's time is the first; the Egyptian bondage, Babylonish captivity, Antiochus' persecution, etc., in the middle days; what wonder there be so in the last days? So indeed we say now; but consider the Old Testament prophecies of the last days, and the big expectations that behoved to be raised thereupon; and ye will see need for this caution, frequent among the Apostles, and even in the "last days," for as great days as they were to be, there were "perilous times to be on."

Use of this point:—

1. Take heed how ye improve the gospel. Delay not to comply with the call thereof; for ere long an account will be required of it. The days of it are the last days of the world, wherein time comes to an end, and the world must make their account for the entertainment they have given it. Behold He cometh "from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. i. 1, 7).

2. Ye must be saved by falling in with the gospel method of salvation, or else perish; for it is the last dispensation of grace. It is God's last method with a sinful lost world; after which they are not to expect a new one. It is the last ship going off for Immanuel's land; if ye slight it, ye will have no more opportunity for ever; Hebrews x. 26, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin."

3. The contempt of the gospel is the most dangerous adventure ever the world made, and will have the most terrible issue; gospel days being the last and best; and the better are the days, the contempt will

be the more dangerous. The contempt of the Patriarchal dispensation was punished by the flood; of the Mosaical, by the Babylonish captivity, and other heavy plagues (II Chronicles xxxvi. 21). How terrible must the punishment be of the contempt of the gospel dispensation? The destruction of Jerusalem was the first swatch (a sample of cloth-leather) of it; the conflagration of the world will be the issue.

4. Lastly, there may be great and good things in days which yet are dangerous days; "in the last days shall be perilous times." The best days that ever Judaea saw, were in the days that went before the destruction of Jerusalem; the Spirit was poured out in such a measure as never took place before or since; Acts ii. 17 foretold; but there came after a pouring out of "wrath to the uttermost" (I Thes. ii. 16). In these days of ours there are great things not to be overlooked. Learning and art of civil management, in improving of ground and manufacturers, are carried to a pitch they were not at before; which sometimes brings in mind the case of the Cainites, among whom arts flourished while piety went to wreck, as ye may read (Gen. iv. 20-22). Nay, there are good things done in these our day, great good things, the like to which were never done before in our nation; particularly the erecting of schools for propagating Christian knoweldge in the Highlands, and Islands, the erecting of the Infirmary in Edinburgh. Nay, some glorious gospel truths have been in our days set in an uncommon light. And yet for all they are certainly most perilous days. Which brings me to consider :—

II.—The difficult and perilous times that come in gospel days. Even in the days of the gospel, in which sometimes there are sweet and glorious times, yet at other times there come difficult and perilous. We must inquire what makes these perilous times.

Firstly. An old controversy lying over untaken up. They that are in debt, are always in danger. The Jews were a bloody generation, from generation to generation they were murderers of their prophets; that was an old debt on the head of the generation in our Saviour's time (Matt. xxiii. 31), and made their time a perilous time, for it was like a train lying within their bowels, which at last came to blow them up (verse 35). So good Josiah's time was perilous times, by reason of an old controversy laid in the days of Manasseh his grandfather, II Kings xxiii. 26).

Our times are so, by reason of the iniquity of the times, which is like that of Baalpeor, that brought "a plague on the congregation of the Lord" (Joshua xxii. 17). The avowed breach of the covenants made with God for reformation; the blood of the Lord's people shed in fields and scaffolds, for adhering to the oath of God, the sinning, confining, imprisoning, banishing of them, and other barbarous usage of them, whereby for many years these nations carried on a war with

heaven; there, I say, are an old debt lying on the head of Scotland, England, and Ireland, for which God will pursue them, and pursue so as it will appear to be both for principle and interest during the time it has lain over. These things are forgotten, or laughed at now as what we have no concern in; a stone is rolled to the mouth of that sepulchre. But God will readily arise, if the stone were sealed, and they forgot quite and clean; I Thes. v. 3: "For when they shall say, peace and safety: then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; they shall not escape."

Secondly. Error or corruption of principles spreading. This was foretold to happen in the latter days: I Tim. iv. 1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." Then the fountains men drink are poisoned; the faith once delivered to the saints is exchanged for strong delusions, to believe lies; and many are in hazard of following their pernicious ways. There are three dangerous engines of this kind that the gates of hell are directing this day against the foundation of the Church built on the Rock.

1. Legalism; an attempt against the grace of Christ, bringing in a scheme of religion that has no relation to Jesus Christ and His Spirit, putting virtue or a virtuous life in the room of Christ's righteousness for acceptance with God, and the exerting of our natural powers in the room of the influence of the Spirit. By which means the corruption of nature, and the necessity of regeneration, are buried in deep silence, and living by faith, attending the Spirit's influences, and communion with God, are branded as enthusiasm; and desertion is accounted the product of a crazy imagination. Thus a refined heathenism is palmed on us for Christianity!

2. Arianism. An attempt against the Person of Christ, bringing in a Christ that is not of the Father's equal, not the Most High God, independent, and self-existent; but an inferior god, an arbitrary, dependent being; thus striking at the foundation of our salvation, taking away the infinite dignity of His Person, which gives the sufficient value to His sacrifice. And it is to be feared, that when Christ ariseth to vindicate His own glory, it will be found that the Church of Scotland has not given sufficient testimony of their indignation against this blasphemy.

3. Deism. An attempt against all revealed religion, casting off the whole gospel and Bible by the lump, with the whole way of salvation by Jesus Christ; leaving us nothing, but that there is a God, and that this God is to be served as our reason directs. Such a stroke was not given against Christianity in the time of Prelacy, no, not in times of Popery. Scotland may, and shall say, Alas! for the union with England; we were going to ruin before, but we have run to ruin since that fatal time, as to our most valuable concern.

Thirdly. Immoralities abounding. That this is the case in the last days, we may consult the text and context, "know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The opening of the sluice of impiety and wickedness, and the spreading and the prevailing of scandalous practices, make perilous times.

If these make perilous times, ours are very perilous. I doubt if ever contempt of God, His gospel, and all that is sacred, was ever at a greater height. The first table and second table are trampled on with a witness, so that we may say, Hosea iv. y-3, "Hear the Word of the Lord, ye children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because, there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea, the fish of the sea also shall be taken away." God's worship is condemned and slighted, His name abused and blasphemed, and His Sabbath profaned. Unfaithfulness prevails in all treated, injustice and fraud in dealing, lying, covetousness, etc. What can be found among a people professing the name of Christ, to bring on wrath, that is not to be found in our land at this day? Here, let us view the scandalous outbreakings among us. Many such we see, opening the mouth of the enemies to blaspheme the way of God. But how few do we see truly humble, but almost always more concerned for their own blasted honour and reputation than for the honour of God! And unless it be in those things by use require public satisfaction, people cannot endure to be touched or checked with their faults told them.

Many other things there are that make perilous times, and which make ours so; such as the hiding of the Lord's face, threatenings and symptoms of wrath; among which may be reckoned the terrible thunders by which so many were killed on the last day of July this year; the shocks which the fruits of the earth endured in the harvest, though Providence seasonably interposed, yet in a way that gives occasion to sing of mercy and judgment; and the murrain that in some places has appeared among the cattle. But one thing deserves particular notice, as rendering our time perilous, viz., the Church joining with the State in robbing the people of the Lord, of their just right to choose their own ministers, and thrusting in ministers on congregations violently, and over their bellies. This is a most ready way to fill the church with

mighty men, to ruin religion, and quite mar the interest and success of the gospel, which are already very low. I might here show in what respects such times are perilous, that they are perilous to the present and succeeding generations, to their souls, and to their bodies. And how they come in the course of providence to fall out by its permission. viz., for proving and trying men; I Cor. xi. 19, "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." But I will conclude, exhorting you therefore to know and lay to heart, that our times are perilous times, and therefore to bestir yourselves for your own safety, and be on your guard. Let the peril of the times cause you to join yourself to God in Christ, and keep near Him; beware of worldly-mindedness, instability, and wavering, pride, and self-conceit (Rev. vii. 3). Strive against the stream, if you would not be carried away with it.

Dr. John Duncan's Humility.

By REV. A. MOODY STUART.

THE most marked of all the moral features in Dr. Duncan's character was humility. He was singularly humble in consideration of his great talents, of his vast treasures of learning, and of his attainments in the divine life. But if we set all these aside, and compare him with other Christian men, we cannot but come to the conclusion that out of all the guests bidden in these days by the King within the circle of our knowledge, it was he that took the lowest room at the feast. It was not that he was unconscious of his talents, or disposed to undervalue his attainments. He knew that he could justify his excessive share of all conversation only on the ground of his thoughts being of more value than most other people's; and he rather liked to refer to his candidature for the Oriental Chair in the University of Glasgow, when he made an offer for examination in Hebrew Literature in which he knew that no man there was competent to test him. He would quote with a simple pride a sentence in his letter of application, in which in the event of failure he comforted himself with the thought that "Sparta had found a better man"; but with the evident consciousness that for such a position there was no better man to be found in Sparta. But with all his consciousness of intellectual power and literary attainment, the "clothing of humility" covered him from head to foot as it did no other man.

This lowliness was allied to the childlike simplicity which pervaded his whole Christian course, and was made more evident by the helplessness which rendered him so unfit to guide himself in common matters, and so willing to be guided by others. But its root lay in his sense of

the majesty of God, which was far more profound than in other men, and humbled him lower in the dust; in his perception and his love of holiness, and the consciousness of his own defect; in his sense of ingratitude for the unparallel love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in his abiding conviction of past sin and of present sinfulness. This habitual humbling was deepened by the wounding of his very tender conscience, through yielding himself to be carried away by what chanced to take hold of his mind.

These combined elements rendered him an example of an altogether rare and inimitable humility. Men who might be reckoned holier might be named out of those who served the Lord along with him; but among them all it would be hard to find one so humble. The holiness of Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne, if not so deep, was more equal, and more thoroughly leavened the character hour by hour. The holiness of Rev. William Burns was in some respects as deep, and it was singularly constant. They were both more watchful, and therefore more evenly holy. But in the race to stoop down into their Lord's sepulchre, Dr. John Duncan outran them both; he was the humblest of the three, and all of the men whom most of us have known.

His sitting down among the inquirers at Kilsyth in 1839, and his resuming a similar posture elsewhere at an interval of nearly thirty years, are not to be ascribed to mere anxiety and doubt about his own salvation. Of such doubt he had often more than enough. But the act was also one of simple, childlike, genuine humility, and the fruit of deep self-abasement. When seated at the Lord's Table with his own intense desire, if there had been a place at once inside and outside of the guests, David's welcomed place as "a door-keeper in the House of God," that of all others would have been his chosen seat, the fittest and the happiest place for him as "the chief of sinners," as "less than the least of all saints."

Episcopacy and Presbyterianism.

By REV. JOHN COLQUHOUN, Glendale.

IV.—Scotland's Opposition to Episcopacy.

SCOTLAND's opposition to Episcopacy did not proceed, as has often been asserted, from the influence of Geneva. John Knox, its leading Reformer, manifested, long before he ever saw Geneva or Calvin, that he considered Presbyterianism the only form of Church government which was based on the Word of God. He saw Episcopacy at close quarters during his sojourn in England and, during that period, he refused a bishopric, at least once, if not on two occasions, and thereby gave offence to the Privy Council. In his first sermon, which was

preached at St. Andrews, he taught that no man could be head of the Church, and that there were no true bishops, except those that preached personally without a substitute. (See McCrie's *Life of Knox*.) When the time came for setting up the Church of Scotland we see that he acted on this principle, and continued to do so during his whole life, in spite of assertions to the contrary. On 13th February, 1572, he was present at the installation of Douglas as Archbishop of St. Andrews, and having preached as usual on the Sabbath, the Earl of Morton asked him to inaugurate Douglas, which he refused to do, pronouncing an anathema against both the donor and the receiver of the bishopric. This opposition to Episcopacy he continued with his "dying hand and dying breath" till he rested from his labours, after which the Lord raised up another stalwart against Episcopacy in the person of Andrew Melville.

At the Assembly of 1575, when it was proposed to proceed to the trial of the bishops, John Drury, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, rose and protested, that the examination of the conduct of the bishops should not prejudice what he and others of the brethren had to object against the lawfulness of their office. On this occasion Melville rose and addressed the Assembly in a speech of considerable length in which he supported Drury's proposition and stated his own sentiments respecting Episcopacy. He said that he was satisfied "that prelacy had no foundation in the Scriptures, and that, viewed as a human expedient, its tendency was extremely doubtful, if not necessarily hurtful to the interests of religion. The words *bishop* and *presbyter* are interchangeably used in the New Testament; and the most popular arguments for the divine origin of Episcopacy are founded on ignorance of the language of Scripture." He concluded his speech by stating that he was convinced "that the best and the only effectual way of redressing the grievances which at present afflicted the Church of Scotland, and of preventing their return, was to strike at the root of the evil, by abolishing prelacy, and restoring that parity of rank and authority which existed at the beginning among all the pastors of the Church."

From now on, Melville, as the champion of Presbyterianism, figured in many a stormy scene with those in authority, including King James, when he assumed the government, and in all his contentions he proved clearly, like Knox, that he neither feared nor flattered any man. As a result of the definite attitude Melville took against Episcopacy, the Assembly step by step began to assert itself, until in 1580 it un-animously declared the office of a bishop, as then used and commonly understood, to be destitute of warrant from the Word of God, and the whole order of Bishops, with the exception of five, submitted to this declaration.

In 1581, Robert Montgomery, minister of Stirling, who had accepted the See of Glasgow, was promptly summoned to the bar of the

Assembly. After various appearances before the Church Courts, and repeated interferences by civil authorities with these Courts, the Presbytery of Edinburgh, to which the matter was delegated, appointed John Davidson, Minister of Liberton, to excommunicate Montgomery, which sentence was formally carried out, and duly intimated from the pulpits of Edinburgh and Glasgow and the surrounding churches.

In 1584, the infamous Black Acts were passed by a Parliament which consisted of King James, eight bishops, thirteen abbots, twenty-five lords, and twenty-three representatives of burghs. By it Presbytery was overthrown and the liberties of the Church and nation laid at the feet of the King and his counsellors. Against these Acts some of the ministers made public protestation at the market cross of Edinburgh, and orders were given for their speedy arrest, but they saved themselves by flight. This state of matters continued until a meeting of the Assembly was convened by the King in 1586, at which a modified Episcopacy was set up and Presbyteries re-established. For a considerable time the King showed himself more favourable to the Church, and, during his absence in Denmark on the occasion of his marriage, he committed the oversight of the kingdom to one of the most eminent ministers of Scotland, Robert Bruce of Edinburgh, whom he afterwards treated in a very shabby manner for his unswerving fidelity to the Crown Rights of the Redeemer. After Archbishop Adamson's death Parliament passed an Act in 1592 legally establishing Presbytery, and rescinding many of those Acts which were obnoxious to Scottish Presbyterians, and, though it had its defects, has been always considered as far as that can be said of parliamentary legislation, to be the charter of the Church of Scotland's liberties, and as a great step forward in the work of the reformation. The rest of King James's reign in Scotland and his whole reign in England, were marked by actions which showed his deep-rooted hatred to Presbyterianism, and his determination to have the Church in Scotland governed by Prelates.

After King James had gone the way of all the earth in 1625, he was succeeded by his son, Charles I. The principle of the Divine Right of Kings had been faithfully and successfully instilled into the son by the father, and the son, evidently like another king's son of whom we read, became obsessed with the idea that his little finger was thicker than his father's loins, and accordingly, instead of the whips with which his father chastised his subjects, he proceeded to chastise them with scorpions. His chief adviser on Scottish affairs was William Laud, who became Bishop of London and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, a man who was, if possible, more ignorant of Scottish affairs and Scottish character than Charles himself. Both Charles and Laud endeavoured to ride rough-shod over the Presbyterianism of Scotland, with disastrous results to them both. The smouldering embers of opposition continued for a considerable time, only now and

again giving unmistakably evidences of their presence, until, at last, they burst into a furious flame in 1637. The occasion was the introduction of Laud's Service Book, which he had previously endeavoured to introduce into England, with the result that plain people said that Laud was bringing back Popery. To kill opposition the Court of High Commission was set up both in England and Scotland, but neither the Court of High Commission nor Laud's preaching of Royal prerogatives and passive obedience on the part of the subject, was sufficient to quench vital religion in the Scottish Church.

The Service Book, which smelt too much of Popery, was not welcomed in Scotland. When an endeavour was made to introduce it in St. Giles' Church, Edinburgh, there was an uproar. Lord Warriston described the scene thus: "At the beginning thereof there rose such a tumult, such an outerying with the people murmuring, mourning, railing, stoolcasting, as the like was never seen in Scotland; the bishop both after the forenoon sermon was almost trampled under foot, and afternoon being coached with Roxburgh was almost stoned to death; the Dean was forced to cage himself in the steeple; Mr. James Fairley to leave off reading at all; Mr. Henry Rollock not to begin; and Mr. David Fletcher to stay till the people went out. This uproar was greater than the 17th December, and in all history will be remarked as the fair, plausible, and peaceable welcome the Service Book received in Scotland." *Warriston's Diary*, page 365. This refers to the tumult which took place in St. Giles, but according to Stevenson's History, Greyfriars Church was the scene of a similar uproar. All efforts were put forth to bring to task the originators of this tumult but they proved a failure, neither could any one be got to read the Service Book again, though much money was offered for doing so. Scotland had rejected the Service Book in the most public and emphatic manner, and the tumult in St. Giles showed the spirit of the nation. The Lord's work, however, must be done in an orderly manner. and there were not wanting at this time servants who did the work.

It was agreed by a "conjunct motion from the nobility, gentry, burgesses, and ministers" to renew the Scottish National Covenant for religion, bringing it up-to-date, by including in it references to the corruptions of the times and the Acts of Parliament made against Popery and in favour of the true religion. This work was laid upon Archibald Johnston of Warriston and Alexander Henderson, and the signing of the Covenant was begun in Greyfriars Church on 28th February, 1638. That it was well received and largely signed in Scotland is a matter of history and need not be entered into here. The nation had reached a period in its history when men went forth in the strength of Gods' grace, and the Lord acknowledged their labours, and gave countenance to their efforts to throw off the yoke of bondage under which they laboured. Before the year 1638 was ended

this was accomplished. The history of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638, the first for twenty years, is well known and has often been told. At this Assembly Alexander Henderson was chosen Moderator, and Warriston was appointer Clerk. Hamilton, the King's Commissioner, left the Assembly on the eighth day after it began its work, declaring that nothing done in that Assembly should be of any force to bind any subject, and discharging the Court from proceeding further on pain of treason.

Henderson's reply revealed him to be both a man and a Christian. "It hath been," he said, "the glory of the Reformed Churches, and we account it our glory after a special manner to give unto kings and Christian magistrates what belongs unto their places; next to piety towards God we are obliged unto loyalty and obedience to our king. There is nothing due unto kings and princes in matter ecclesiastical which I trust by this Assembly shall be denied unto our king. . . . All that are here know the reasons of the meeting of this Assembly, and albeit we have acknowledged the power of Christian kings for convening of Assemblies and their power in Assemblies, yet that may not derogate from Christ's right; for He has given divine warrants to convoke Assemblies whether magistrates consent or not; therefore seeing we perceive men to be so zealous of their masters' commands, have we not also good reason to be zealous toward our Lord and to maintain the liberties and privileges of His kingdom?"

At the Assembly Episropacy was thrown out and the bishops were excommunicated. Apart altogether from the question of Church government, this was not before time when one considers that the Bishop of Galloway was found guilty of teaching Arminianism, condemned family worship, and was an open profaner of the Sabbath; the Archbishop of Glasgow was found guilty of Sabbath desecration, and being a frequent tippler in taverns; the Bishop of Brechin was found guilty of several acts of adultery, excessive drinking, using a crucifix in his closet, preaching Arminianism and Popish tenets, "and of being universally infamous for several other offences." These offences and many others were proved against the other bishops. By this Assembly, which began on the 21st November and ended on the 20th December, the whole fabric of Episcopacy was cast down in Scotland and Presbyterianism set up in its place. At the close of it Mr. Henderson said, "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite"; words which might well be pondered, in our own day, by the Union-mongers in the Church of Scotland.

The triumph of Presbytery, however, was but short-lived. Charles I, blinded by zeal for Episcopacy and absolute monarchy, ended his life ignobly on the scaffold, and Cromwell took over the reins of government. During the latter's rule the Church in Scotland had its internal

dissentions under the unfavourable eye of Independency until the Restoration of Charles II when Episcopacy was restored and showed itself, during his reign and that of his brother, as the greatest persecutor of the Cause of Christ which ever appeared in this land until the glorious Revolution of 1688 when James II fled, and with the advent of William of Orange Presbyterianism was restored, and, by legislation, secured for the Scottish nation.

Searmonan.

LEIS AN URR. TEARLACH C. MAC AN TOISICH, D.D.

(*Air a leantuinm bho t.d. 123.*)

'Nis, uime sin, beachdaicheadh-mid air beagan de 'n a fìrinnean a tha air an teagasg dhuinn le gul Chrìosd agus briathran Chrìosd. Tha nithean a bhuineas do ar sìth anns a bheatha so agus ann an linn-tìbh na sìorruidheachd, a bhuineas dhuinn, os ceann 'n an uile, sinn a mheattuinn deadh-ghean agus càirdeas Dhé. Ma bhitheas fios a bhi againn orra. Tha ar fìor shìth agus shonas an crochadh air an Dia mòr leinn, "cò dh'fheudas a bhi 'n ar 'n aghaidh?" ach ma bhitheas Esan 'n ar 'n aghaidh cha'n eil sìth dhuinn; agus tha ar suidheachadh nì's drùightich agus nì's cunnartaich ma their sinn, "Sìth, sìth, agus gun sìth ann." Is e Dia a mhàin is urrain ar deanamh sona. Is Esan a mhàin is urrain ar crìdheachaibh a lionadh. A thaobh nàduir tha Dia ag us sinne a mach air a cheile, agus tha fhearg a gabhail conhnuidh oirne.

Ach dheilbh agus dh'fhoillsich E slighe reite agus pilltean tre Iosa Crìosd, Mac a ghràidh. "Ach maille riut-sa tha maitheanas; agus uime sin bithidh eagal air daoineibh romhad." "Treigeadh an t-aingidh a shlighe, agus an duine eucorach a smuaintean; agus pilleadh e ris an Tighearn, agus nochdaidh e tròcair dhà; agus ri ar Dia-ne, agus bheir e maitheanas gu pailte." Faodaidh e bhi air a ràdh gur e na nithean sin a bhuineas do ar sìth eolas slàinteil air Crìosd 'n a òirdheirceas agus 'n a luachmhorachd, na "aithreachas a thaobh Dhé agus creidimh a thaobh ar Tighearn Iosa Crìosd; "chùm sinn fein aithneachadh agus fhaireachadh mar chreutairean cailte, a chùim eolas air Iosa mar an t-shlighe chùim an Athar, agus a bhi'g earbsa Ann-san a mhàin air son slàinte, agus gu bhi tighinn a dh'ionnsuidh Dhé trid-san air son tròcair, gabhail ruinn, agus fois, agus air son gràs gu bhi beo chùim a ghlòir; a chùim a leithid de dh'eolas air Iosa agus gu'm bitheadh E luachmhor dhuinn, agus a chùim air dhuinn a bhi beo gu'm b'e sin Crìosd. Is e sin aithne a bhi againn air na nithean a bhuineas do ar sìth. Agus is beannaicht' an sluagh dh'n aithne iad. Tha sìth aca ri Dia; tha fois aca 'n an

anamaibh; faodaidh iad luidhe sìos ann an sìth agus codal le suain, oir bheir an Tighearn dhoibh còmhnuidh a ghabhail ann an tearuint-eachd.

Tha latha ann anns am bi iad an aithneachadh, anns am bheil maitheanas agus slàinte ri bhi air am fòtainn; agus feadh an lath so tha'm Fear-saoraidh a cleachdadh mòran mheadhonan a chùm am peacach a dhùsgadh, agus a threorachadh gu eolas slàinteil air na nithean a bhuineas da shìth; a daingneachadh gairmaibg fhocail le fhreasdal, a seasamh aig a dhorus, a cladhach mu thimchioll na craoibh neo-thorach agus a cur aolach mu bun. Is e latha nan soch-airean soisgeulach a th'ann, 'n uair a tha Grian na Fìreantachd a dealradh a mach ann an speurn na Fìrinn, 'n uair a tha'n Tighearn a cur beatha agus bàs fodh'r comhair, uamhasan agus a thròcairean, agus a tha E ga'r cuireadh dha ionnsuidh Fein mar Dhia na sìth. O gu'm b'aithne dhuinn luach an t-soisgeil. Is e latha na beatha th'ann. Is e so a tha toirt do'n a bheatha luachmhorachd; gu'm faod aithne bhi air na nithean so eadhon aig an aon uair deug. "Air feadh an lath gu h-iomlan," shin E mach a làmhnan ri pobull eas-umhail agus a labhras 'n a aghaidh, agus fathasd tha E'g ràdh, "An diugh ma chluinneas sibh mo ghuth na cruadhaichibh bhur cridhe." Ach gu h-àraidh 's e latha na h-òige a th'ann. Bha chuid is motha aig am bheil a nis eolas air an Tighearn air an iompachadh ann an laithean an òige. Is e so an latha anns am bheil Spiorad Dhé a strì ris an anam. Ann a bhi labhairt gu coitcheionn, is e so latha an t-soisgeil; ach tha amaibh sònraicht' os ceann amaibh eile 'n uair a tha E strì ri daoineibh. Thugadh-mid an aire a thaobh a bhi cur 'n a aghaidh a nis, air eagal, mar a thachair do chuid eile, sguir E bhi strì riubh, agus dh'fhàgadh iad "mar phreas anns an fhàsach, nach mothaich 'n uair a thig a maith.

Tha'n latha so goirid agus thig e gu h-ealamh gu crìche. Air a chuid is fhaide, cha'n eil ann ach latha goirid. Ach tha gu mair e, mar an ceudne, neo-chìnn-teach. Aig am air bith faodaidh e tighinn gu crìch. Faodaidh snàthain crìon na beatha briseadh. "Ciod e ar beatha? Is deatach i, a chithear re ùine bhig, agus an sin theid i as an t-sealladh." Faodaidh fad-fhulungais Dhé tighinn gu crìch, ar neo faodaidh E mionnachadh 'n a fheirg nach teid sinn a steach da shuaimhneas. Gidheadh tha mòran a diùltadh eolais a ghabhail air na nithean a bhuineas da'n sìth. Mar a bha e ann an latha Chrìosd mar sin tha e'n diugh. Tha iad a fantuinn cho mì-chùramach a thaobh an anamaibh 's ged nach bitheadh cunnart air bith ann. Tha iad a diùltadh a bhi creidsinn fianuis Dhé a thaobh an staid chaillte, agus slighe na slàinte. Tha iad a torit an cridheachan, an smuaintean, agus an neart do'n t-saoghal so, mar nach bitheadh saoghal ri teachd ann. Tha iad a codal air adhart anns a pheacadh, agus a deanamh dìmeas air an t-slàinte mhòr, a toirt a

chreidsinn orra fein gu'm bàsaich iad bàs an fhìrean agus gu'm bi an crìoch dheireanach mar a chrìoch-san. "Imichibh a steach air an dorus chumhann; oir is farsuinn an dorus, agus is leathain an t-shlighe a tha treorachadh chùm sgrios, agus is lionmhor iad a tha dol a steach oirre; ach is cumhann an dorus, agus is aimh-leathain an t-shlighe a tha treorachadh chùm beath, agus is tearc iad a tha 'g amas oirre."

Mar a bi aithne air na nithean so anns an t-saoghal so, cha bhi aithne idir orra. 'S ann a mhàin anns an t-saoghal so a tha'n Tighearn a toirt cleachdadh da thròcair anna am bheil maith-eanas. "Cha'n eil obair, no innleachd, no eolas, no glìcas anns an uaigh, da'm bheil thu ad ol." Mar a thuiteas a chraobh is ann mar sin a luidheas i. Agus mar a bi aithne air na nithean sin cìod a dh'fhagain ach "breitheanas" agus "fearg thinnteach a sgriosas na h-eascairdean." An tròcair a tha nis ag ràd, "Car son a bhàsaicheas sibh?" cha seas i anns an rathad gu dìon a chur, no am peacach a shaoradh bho cheartas dìoghaltach. Tha deoir Chriosd thairis air Ierusalem a nis a dearbhadh do'n a pheacach is trom-luchdaichte le cionta cho toileach 's a tha E gu bhi gabhail ris, agus nach urrain e dhol a dhìth do-bhrìgh cion toileachas ann an Criosd gu bhi ga shaoradh. "Cha'n àill leibh teachd a m'ionnsuidh-sa, chum gu'm faigheadh sibh beatha." Ach a mach a bilibh tròcair, bho'n do shruth nab riathran drùigheach, "Na'm b'aithne dhuit, eadhon dhuit 'sa, air bheag a sam bith ann ad latha so fein, na nìtehan a bhuineas do d' shìth," thig an sin a mach a bhinn uamhasach, "Imichibh uam, a shluagh mhallaichte, dh'ionnsuidh an teine shiorruidh, a dh'ullaicheadh do'n diabhul agus da ainglean."

(*R'a leantuinn.*)

A Loyal Address.

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

(The Loyal and Dutiful Address of four Presbyterian Ministers.)

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY . . .

We, the four ministers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland who had the honour of being received by Your Majesty, by His Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, and Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, at Rodel, Harris, on the 17th day of August, 1956, desire to express to Your Majesty our sincere and devoted loyalty to Your Majesty's person and throne.

We rejoice that Your Majesty, His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, His Royal Highness Prince Charles, and Her Royal Highness Princess Anne visited the

Outer Hebrides—a visit which evoked the love and loyalty of Your Majesty's subjects in these islands, and which will remain with them a treasured memory.

We sincerely pray that Your Majesty and the members of the Royal House of Britain be brought to a personal and saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only Saviour from sin, in its power, guilt, pollution, and awful consequences in a lost eternity. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12).

We pray that Your Majesty be given grace to honour and to uphold the claims and prerogatives of the Lord Jesus, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, that His Holy Word, inspired and infallible, be Your Majesty's counsellor and guide, and His Holy Sabbath observed, not after the unscriptural standards of a decadent age, but in accordance with the mind of the Lord as revealed in His Word, which constitutes the whole of the day holy to the Lord, and expressly forbids pleasures lawful on other days. The desecration of the Lord's Day has become a national sin, and unless repentance prevent, we appear to be ripening as a nation for the righteous judgments of the Almighty. "Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Jeremiah ix. 9).

The Royal Psalmist confessed, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm cxix. 105). We sincerely pray that the Word of God, which alone is able to make wise unto salvation, will ever remain the daystar of Your Majesty's illustrious Throne, and its bulwark against the sinister encroachments of the false and blasphemous claims of the Papal system.

Ever praying for Your Majesty's welfare and prosperity.

We remain,

Your Majesty's loyal, devoted and obedient servants,

REV. A. M. CATTANACH, M.A., Free Presbyterian Manse,
Finsbay.

REV. A. MACKAY, Free Presbyterian Manse, Tarbert.

REV. WM. MACLEAN, M.A., Free Presbyterian Manse,
Ness.

REV. JOHN P. MACQUEEN, Free Presbyterian Manse,
London.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

The following reply has been received from the Secretary of State for Scotland:—"The Loyal Address from the four Free Presbyterian ministers who met the Queen at Rodel on the 17th August, has been laid before Her Majesty, who greatly appreciates the sentiments they express in it."

Mrs. Mary MacKenzie, Inverness.

This worthy woman, who departed this life to be with Christ on Sabbath morning, 13th February, 1955, was born at Sand, Aultbea, Gairloch, in the year 1880, the eldest daughter of John and Mary MacAulay. When she was grown to womanhood, she was united in marriage to Murdo MacKenzie of the same village, and they went to live at Dalmally, Argyll. Later, they removed to Perthshire, where her husband was employed as gamekeeper on Lord Breadalbane's estates. While here, far from any place of worship, she came under soul concern. She missed greatly the House of God, and as Oban was the nearest place where she could attend the services of our church, she went up as often as family circumstances would allow at communion seasons to Oban. On one of these occasions as the communion was drawing to a close, she dreaded parting with the Lord's people and returning to the isolation of her home as there was no place of worship where she could obtain food for her soul. Rev. Neil Cameron, who was assisting at the communion, consoled her with the remark: "You have your Bible."

Mrs. MacKenzie had to rely for the most part during this period of life almost entirely upon her Bible. The nature of her husband's work made it necessary for them to live in lonely parts of the country where she could meet few to whom she could unburden herself. She learned to go to the Throne of Grace with her troubles. Besides her Bible, among religious works the *Memoir of the Rev. Robt. M. McCheyne* was especially helpful to her. How many poor sinners have received a helping hand in their struggles to reach the heavenly country from the biography of this saintly minister, prepared by his bosom companion and true yoke-fellow, Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, the great day alone will disclose!

Her religious impressions were further strengthened by family bereavement. She lost her younger sister, Margaret, in 1918. This God-fearing young woman was a teacher in Edinburgh at the time of her death, and her removal was the more keenly felt by Mrs. MacKenzie as this was the first break in her father's large family. Although persuaded that she was at her eternal rest, her sorrow notwithstanding was great and lasting, and when a year later her child was taken from her at the early age of 16 months, she felt that the Lord was speaking to her and was laying his hand upon her in chastisement for her excessive sorrow for her sister; she submitted to this rebuke, became much more reconciled, and bowed her head to the Lord's will, laying to heart the words "Be still and know that I am God."

The family came north, first to Carrbridge for two years, and then to Inverness where in 1927 she was deprived of her husband. She suffered greatly in health at this time while still distressed under

religious convictions; they were not, however, entirely unrelieved by hope, nor was she left without any encouragement from the Word of God. On one occasion the words helped her as they were being sung at family worship: "Delight thyself in God, He'll give thine heart's desire to thee" (Psalm xxxvii. 4). At public worship the singing of some verses of a psalm by the congregation often brought some measure of relief. The path she had to tread was long, but deliverance finally came, the words which brought relief being: "Unto you, therefore, which believe, He is precious" (I Peter ii. 17). In these words she obtained a believing apprehension of the great Sin-bearer who made reconciliation for the sins of His people and was enabled to cast her burden upon Him and her soul was put at ease. In after-life she gave clear evidence that Christ had been made precious to her by the inward work of the Spirit. She became a member in full communion with the Inverness congregation.

Her health which had been precarious for years began to cause concern and in December, 1953, she underwent a serious operation. For a woman of her frail constitution and somewhat timid nature, it was feared that she could not face the heavy operation that had now become necessary, but the Lord strengthened her with the assurance that her life would be spared for a little time longer. The operation was at first quite successful, but early in the following year complications set in, and finally on Sabbath morning of 13th February, 1955, she entered into her reward.

She bore her last illness with Christian patience and meekness and on a bed of sickness she found the Word of God both meat and strength to her soul. When one of the elders called to see her and asked what particular Psalm she wished him to take at worship, she said, "God is our refuge." One morning, being asked how she felt she said, "'He will sustain thee' are the words before my mind." On another occasion she repeated the words: "He filleth the hungry soul with good things" (Psalm cvii. 9). A few days before the end, she was heard repeating the words: "Who is this that cometh from Edom?" At family worship she often asked that Psalm lxxxiv. and xlii. be read as evidently giving her the greatest help. She was being gently prepared for her end. She appeared withdrawn from the world, and was supported by the promises of the gospel. She expressed gratitude to any friends for calling to see her and was especially glad to see the Lord's people. For a good part of her life, she found the world to be a place of suffering, but her afflictions were sanctified to her. She is now, we believe, among the inhabitants of that land where there is no sickness and where all iniquity is left behind. To her brother and sisters still surviving, to her son in this country and her married daughter abroad, we tender our heartfelt sympathy.—*A. F. M.*

The late Mrs. Marion MacAskill, Struan.

Mrs. MacAskill, Totarder House, Struan, Bracadale, was born at Fernievequire, Glendale, Skye, on 8th February, 1871.

Her father, Mr. John MacKinnon, was a professing member in the Free Presbyterian Church, having followed the noble testimony raised in defence of the Word of God in Scotland by the late Rev. D. MacFarlane, Raasay, in 1893.

Her parents, John MacKinnon and Marion Campbell diligently brought up their large family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They taught their children to study the Bible and Shorter Catechism, to be diligent in the means of grace, and to observe the Sabbath carefully.

The stamp of this early training and example never left Mrs. MacAskill. She often used to refer to the catechising by the late Rev. Neil MacIntyre and others. In those days the young girls used to carry the Shorter Catechism with them when they walked any distance to their work. They were eager to learn the doctrines of the Word of God.

Except for a short period at service in Glasgow, Mrs. MacAskill was at home with her parents until her marriage in 1907 to Mr. Malcolm MacAskill, who farmed at Uillinish. He was a widower with a family of six. Leaving Uillinish shortly afterwards, the family stayed for a time at Glenvicaskill Farm and afterwards moved to Ebst about 1914. There, in 1927, their daughter Flora died, aged nineteen years. The Holy Spirit made Christ precious to Flora in the days of her youth. Her obituary appears in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

We are unable to say when the Lord began to deal savingly with Mrs. MacAskill, but we do know that she never recovered from the loss of a beloved and gracious daughter. The Lord often brings His people into affliction when He means to reveal Himself savingly to them, or afterwards for their profit. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early" (Hosea v. 15).

After the loss of their daughter, the parents removed to Lyndale Farm, near Flashadder and, in 1939, they came to reside at Totarder House, Struan. Mr. Malcolm MacAskill died there in April, 1945, at the age of 86 years. Of him we may say that there was hope in his death. A year previously—in April, 1944—Mrs. MacAskill was received as a member in full communion in the Bracadale congregation. After the death of her husband she had several slight shocks, and her strong constitution began to break down. She felt very much not being able to attend church for a few years before her death.

Although she began to suffer from loss of memory, yet she could repeat the Shorter Catechism answers in Gaelic, and quote the Scriptures, especially the Psalms, quite accurately till her last illness. The clarity of her mind in this respect was quite remarkable. She daily mourned over a corrupt heart, thereby evidencing clearly that she had been given a spiritual view of the majesty of God, of her own guilt and corruption, and of the glory of Christ in His love, power and suitableness to meet with all her need. Often, when speaking with her we thought of the words, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord" (Zeph. iii. 12). Mrs. MacAskill was one of the poor who trembled at the Word of the Lord. She was most exemplary in her life and conversation. Her home was a haven of hospitality.

The Lord's people were her company. She often referred to the late Mr. Duncan MacKinnon, Struan, and to others who followed Christ and to whom she was deeply attached. Her constant prayer was, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm li. 7). Her eye was on the blood of the Lamb of God that cleanseth from all sin.

Shortly before she died, Mr. A. Beaton, missionary, Struan, asked her if she had a good hope for eternity. "Yes," she replied, "a hope that the world will not take from me." On 2nd December, 1955, she entered into the joy of her Lord, aged 84 years. Her step-daughter, Mary, lovingly nursed her during her last illness. Her body was laid to rest in the Old Cemetery, Dunvegan, to await a glorious resurrection. A most melodious singer of the Psalms, she now sings the praises of the Lamb in heaven, where nothing shall ever interrupt the happiness of Christ's children. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 16, 17).

To her daughter, Mrs. Charles Beaton, Totarder House, Struan, we tender our most sincere sympathy.—M. M. S.

Repentance.

A theological student once called on Dr. Archibald Alexander in great distress of mind, doubting whether he had been converted.

The old Doctor encouraged him to open his mind. After he was through, the aged disciple, laying his hand upon his head, said: "My young brother, you know what repentance is—what faith in Christ is. You think you once repented, and once believed. Now don't fight your doubts. Go it all over again: repent *now*, believe in Christ *now*,

that's the way to have a consciousness of acceptance with God. I have to do both very often. Go to your room, and give yourself to Christ this very moment, and let doubts go. If you have not been His disciple, be one now. Don't fight the Devil on his own ground. Choose the ground of Christ's righteousness and atonement, and then fight him.

—*Treasury*, 1868.

Literary Review.

Literary Reviews.

Ministers and Men in the Far North.—This book was written by the late Rev. Alexander Auld, minister in the Free Church, at Olgie, Caithness. Two editions were published by Mr. Auld himself, the second being in 1891. And now a new and third edition has just been published, October, 1956, by the Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The printers are N. Adshead and Son, Ltd., 13 Dundas Place, Glasgow, C.1, and they have produced an excellent copy of this book of 300 pages. The type is large and black, and easily read, and the paper and binding are of the best quality. As to the contents of this book, Mr. Auld has left on record a great deal of information about eminent and pious ministers and many godly men and women who resided in the Northern Counties of Caithness and Sutherland, especially Caithness. He writes of the Rev. Alexander Gunn of Watten, who died in 1836, and of his powerful gospel ministry in that parish. There are also attractive and savoury sketches of Revs. Finlay and Archibald Cook who ministered in Reay and Bruan respectively while in Caithness. And much interesting material is recorded regarding the spiritually minded Rev. John Munro, Halkirk, who died in 1847. Of him it is recorded that Sir George Sinclair sent him word that he could not follow him in joining the Free Church at the disruption. "Tell Sir George," Mr. Munro replied, "that I am going to heaven, and let him be sure to follow me there." There are pen pictures of nearly sixty of the pious and prominent men of those times of gospel and spiritual warmth. James MacDonald, father of the "Apostle of the North" (Dr. MacDonald) and Alexander Gair or Sandy Gair as he was called, are among those whose memory Mr. Auld keeps alive. An unorthodox minister of the times said to Sandy Gair, "How dare you expound Scripture who never studied the original tongues!" His reply was, "How dare you do so, who never studied original sin!" Then the names of godfearing women of those days, such as Mrs. MacKay, better known as Peggy McDiarmid, appear in this informative volume. There are also sermons and letters from some of the ministers and men. Indeed, this book provides a most varied, spiritual, and engrossing account of members of the living Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in days past, in these northern parts of Scotland. Those interested in such reading should not fail to buy a copy; and this book will make

an excellent gift to give to any friend. It is 8/6 per copy, postage 9d. extra. U.S.A. and Canada 1 dollar 50 cents per copy, post free. Obtainable from Mr. John Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness.

Notes and Comments.

House of Lords' Decision in Case of Jehovah Witnesses' Official.

A 21-year-old Scottish official of Jehovah Witnesses, of Dalmuir, Glasgow, claimed to be a "regular minister" of a religious denomination and therefore exempt from National Service in Her Majesty's Forces. He, not being granted this exemption by the authorities, took the case to the Court of Session, Edinburgh, claiming a decision in his favour under the National Service Act, 1948. Lord Strachan, in the Second Division of the Court of Session, found and declared that this young man, Douglas Walsh, was not entitled to exemption from National Service. At the hearing of this case, officials of this evil organisation came over from America to be witnesses on behalf of this "pioneer publisher" and "congregation servant" in the person of Walsh. An Appeal was intimated to the House of Lords, from Lord Strachan's judgment, and this was heard; and the judgment of the House of Lords was published last July. The House of Lords upheld what Lord Morton described as "the powerful judgments delivered by the Second Division" of the Court of Session. And the Appeal of this member of Jehovah Witnesses was accordingly dismissed. Lord Morton, Lord Goddard, Lord MacDermott, Lord Somervell, and Lord Keith, all agreed that this young fellow was not a regular minister of a religious body within the meaning of the National Service Act, 1948. In giving judgment, Lord Morton said, "The organisation of Jehovah Witnesses is of such a kind as to create no such office as a 'regular minister' in the sense in which these words are used in the 1948 Act." He said that every member of this organisation became a "minister." Lord Goddard said: "It is the spiritual or pastoral status and not the performance of functions that gives the right to exemption from military service. . . . Considering that among Jehovah Witnesses every person baptised into the sect is a minister regardless of sex, age, education, or any qualification, it follows that the sect has no ministers within the meaning of the Act, and consequently no regular ministers." It was indeed good that the Courts of Britain have thrown out this claim by Jehovah Witnesses. It was an attempt on their part to get exemption from obligation to the law of the land for hundreds, maybe thousands of their young men, who go about the country selling and spreading blasphemous literature judged by Scriptural doctrine.

But from our personal knowledge of their tenets, the real issue behind the whole case was the fact that this pernicious and dangerous organisation repudiates and disowns all the civil governments of the world, as being, in their perverted view, Satanic governments. To be "consistent" with this, they must refuse to serve such governments when it suits themselves. They take and enjoy the civil liberties and privileges provided by the British and U.S.A. Governments, but there is no rebellion against such matters. And so men scripturally and regularly ordained to the office of the Christian ministry by a religious denomination have a special status in the eyes of the law of the land. This is as it should be and is according to the Word of God.

New Edition of Russian Bible.

A copyright article in the *Scotsman*, Edinburgh, recently gave interesting information regarding the first Bible to be printed in Russia for over 30 years. Copies have arrived in London from Moscow. It is a large volume of more than 1,200 pages, and in London costs £3. The first 25,000, according to Russian reports, have been eagerly bought in the Soviet Union. The new Bible is said not to bear the censor's stamp, as most printed material from Russia does. The text has not been tampered with, and is exactly the Bible the Russian Church has had for over 80 years. Of course, the Apocrypha is included, and it is said that there are some additions to the Books of Esther and Daniel, which are not recognised as belonging to the Canon of Scripture. One Russian professor said that this Bible was one more step on the road . . . in order that the Russian believing man may easily, and as completely as possible, assimilate the great revelations of the Bible given to us for our salvation. . . ." May the God of the Bible cause His Word to have free course in Russia, in face of much godless and wilful opposition to its doctrines and principles, that light and liberty may permeate that nation held in the oppressive grasp of a number of godless men; who are also oppressing Hungary at the present time.

Threats to Israel.

As we write, all news regarding the Israeli invasion of Egypt and the British and French intervention in the Suez Canal area, is the subject of world-wide discussion and controversy. We do not propose to make unnecessary comment here on the present situation. But we herewith reprint significant comment on the background of this situation from what is called a *Prayer Letter*, of September, 1956, issued by the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, with the address, 189 Whitechapel Road, London, E.1, viz. "We pen these notes on the day of the opening of the London Conference on Suez . . . who can guess what the news will be by the time that this letter is in the hands of the readers. . . ."

"Nasser threatened Israel in his Suez Canal speech. He said that Israel's ambition was to control the land 'from the Nile to the Euphrates,' but he would counter that by avowing that he would see the 'Arab homeland extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.'

"The Egyptian Government seems determined to deprive all foreigners of their property and belongings, for in July they seized a Jewish Land Company, and 'legally transferred it to Egyptian hands.'

"At the Security Council Israel accused the Jordan Government leaders of inciting their people to hostility against Israel in the most unbridled and irresponsible language. 'Children in schools are taught to regard the destruction of Israel as the goal to which they must aspire. The newspapers and the radio inject a daily dose of poisonous propaganda calling for the "day of revenge," the "conquest of the stolen Arab paradise," the "complete elimination of Israel," and other such exhortations to war. The Government of Israel, which like all other Governments is responsible for securing the lives, the safety and the property of all who dwell within its borders, cannot be expected to submit to this calculated terrorism pursued by Jordan, and cannot acquiesce in a state of affairs in which those who do violence to the Armistice Agreement are enabled to pursue their evil designs with impunity."

Strathpeffer Convention.

This religious Convention was held once again at Strathpeffer, Ross-shire, in the autumn, and a note appeared in the *North Star*, the Dingwall paper, on the final day's proceedings. As reported in former years, a united communion service was held. A Church of Scotland minister officiated, and the elements were distributed by a minister of the Church of Scotland, a minister of the Free Church, a minister of the Baptist Church, and a leader of the Christian Brethren. The writer of the note said it was "inspiring to see denominational differences sunk in a common loyalty and allegiance to the Redeemer of mankind." No doubt the Convention concerned itself with doctrine, experience, and practice and worship related to the Christian faith. According to the accepted and professed testimony of the above four branches of professing Christians, fundamental differences characterise each one. For example: Recently, the Baptist Union gave notice that they were (naturally) critical of the Church of Scotland's views on baptism unfolded in a lengthy and detailed report on baptism by one of its special committees. The Free Church professes that it is, if anything, a Calvinistic body, and the Church of Scotland and the Baptists are anything but Calvinistic.

The Christian Brethren, if not Plymouth Brethren, yet seem to lay no stress on the New Testament stated ordained ministry, etc. The questions of instrumental music and uninspired hymns in the particular public worship of God were no doubt ignored in the said "common loyalty" once more. Without dwelling on this line of things, we think it may be fairly said that this Convention is a Convention of common compromise; unless, of course, there is discussion and controversy, in an orderly manner, upon the vital and professed fundamental religious differences which characterise those taking part. If this does not obtain, then there must of necessity be a serious limitation of the doctrinal ground of the unity and fellowship said to be experienced at Strathpeffer. The Baptist loses his special identity and the Presbyterian leaves at home much which he professes to hold by conviction. Why, if there is a common loyalty and allegiance to the Redeemer at this Convention, is it not carried to a permanent and continuous activity by a union of those religious bodies concerned? Indeed, this is the up-to-date theme of many religious leaders to-day. Strathpeffer in a small way is following that lead, albeit unwittingly on the part of some.

Site of Gibeon Discovered.

As reported in the Press,, American archaeologists have recently discovered, while excavating near Jerusalem, the site of the Israelite city of Gibeon of which we read in the Old Testament. One outstanding part of the discovery is the disclosure of a pool cut from the solid rock, and large enough to contain a three-storey house. It is naturally believed that this pool is the one mentioned in II Samuel ii. 13, viz.: "And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon. . . ." Although the inspired Scriptures need no external or human testimony to substantiate their absolute trustworthiness; yet men have been, and still are, discovering undeniable confirmation of what is recorded in the Scriptures, and which many sceptics have looked upon as myth and fable.

The Keswick Convention.

The late godly Pastor J. K. Popham of Brighton, and editor of the *Gospel Standard*, declared the Keswick teaching to be false, false to Scripture, and false to experience. "Touch not, taste not, handle not," he writes, "the unclean thing of universal redemption; for it is a deep dishonour cast on the glorious Redeemer who attained eternal redemption, and purchased the Church with His own blood. It impugns the justice of God, of whom it is written, 'A just God and a Saviour.' Have nothing to do with the flattering, natural faith preached—it is not true to the Scripture teaching on this vital subject. Leave the so-called deepening of spiritual life, the consecration, the returning home of the pilgrims with the vows of God upon them. Remember

that underlying all Keswick teaching is a redemption which does not redeem, a Saviour who does not save, a Lord who does not reign, except with the consent of that natural faith, which according to Dr. Scroggie is possessed by the avowed infidel equally with the children of God."—*D. MacL.*

Church Notes.

Communions.

January—Fifth Sabbath, Inverness. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, North Uist. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness and Portree; third, Finsbay; fourth, Kinlochbervie and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, London, Portnalong, Achmore and Stoer; second, Fort William; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow; and fifth, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie and Broadford; third, Edinburgh. *June*—First Sabbath, Tarbert, Applecross, Coigach; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Inverness and Gairloch. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaulay; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton; fifth, Achmore and Thurso. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall and Vancouver (Canada); second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Vatten and Stornoway. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool and Breasclete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert and Stoer. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta and Lochcarron; second, Gairloch and Ness; third, Applecross; fourth, Greenock, Lochinver and Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

SPECIAL NOTICE: All changes in above Communion dates to be notified to Editor, for 1957 (D.V.).

Congregational Financial Statements.

These statements for the year ending 31st December, 1956, are, as usual, to be submitted by Treasurers to respective Presbyteries, when convenient, at the beginning of 1957.

Kirk Session and Deacons' Court Records.

These records are to be submitted, as usual, to respective Presbyteries for examination at the beginning of 1957.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, General Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks the following:—

Sustentation Fund.—A Friend, Edinburgh, £1; In Memory of a dear one, South Harris, £3.

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Portree Congregational Sustentation Fund.—The Treasurer acknowledges with grateful thanks £4 from K. A. M., London, per Rev. D. McLean.

Raasay Manse Building Fund.—Mr. E. MacRae, Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks:—Messrs. J. and M. Wittet, Architects, Elgin, £25; Friend, Raasay, in memory of a beloved Brother, £1; Friend, Raasay, £1, per Rev. J. A. M.; also Friend, Raasay, £1, per E. M. S.

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