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SYNOD SERMON

*Sermon preached by Rev. Angus MacKay, Tarbert, Harris,
retiring Moderator of Synod, in St. Jude's Hall, Glasgow,
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“ And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.”
Esther viii : 17.

In the Book of Esther we have an account of Mordecai, his steadfastness to the Cause of the Jews and his unflinching courage in the presence of friend and foe. He had an inveterate enemy in the person of wicked Haman. His chief aim was to have Mordecai on the gallows so that he himself might have the pre-eminence in the nation. It was not God's Glory that Haman had in view. But in the good providence of God, Queen Esther proved a good friend to Mordecai and were it not for her intervention he would have lost his life.

In God's own time He raised Mordecai up from his humble position and the Cause of the Jews prospered throughout the Persian Empire. God exalted Joseph in Egypt though he lay for a time in prison there, and God will yet raise up His Cause in the world though in our generation it is very low and to a large extent in bondage as far as men in high places are concerned, but the Cause is not in bondage in the Presence of God. “ God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform ” and because He does, wicked Haman and his plans were overthrown and the Cause of Mordecai and of the Jews flourished. The Cause of the Lord will yet be advanced and “ the wilderness will blossom as the rose.”

I shall make a few remarks on some incidents in the sacred narrative by way of analogy as that may be applicable to Christ's Cause which is beset by powerful and unrelenting enemies in this dark hour of the world's history.

- I. Mordecai's nationality and name.
- II. His steadfastness when confronted with strong opposition.
- III. Mordecai's exaltation and the deliverance of the Jews.

Mordecai was a Jew who had been carried away from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. This Mordecai would not bow to Haman or reverence him as others did in the king's gate. We shall now notice some things about Mordecai by way of analogy as that may be applicable to the Cause of Christ in our own day. As Mordecai was a Jew by birth—a Benjamite—so in a spiritual sense all God's people are Jews by the new birth as we have that in Romans ii: 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God." All believers in Christ have by grace that circumcision of heart. They are regenerated by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit through the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God. They are cleansed and washed from their sins in the atoning blood of Christ. Having a place in the church will not save us. Membership or Office in it will not reconcile us to God whom we have offended by our sins. Unless men and women are regenerated—born again by the Holy Spirit—they will remain at enmity with God and will be lost for ever in hell. The will of man is in direct rebellion against God, His Law and Gospel, as God's Word tells us that man by nature is under the power of the carnal mind and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." In regeneration the Holy Spirit by the Word works upon the conscience and will of man. He awakens the conscience to a real sense of guilt before God and brings it to acquiesce in the condemning sentence of the divine law, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The will is renewed by the saving operation of the Holy Spirit and the moment the will is renewed it instantaneously and actively appropriates Christ in the Gospel as the crucified and risen Saviour. The soul is then by the blood of Jesus reconciled to God for time and for eternity. Yes, Mordecai was a Jew and God's people are Jews inwardly having that circumcision of heart in the spirit and not in the letter.

The name Mordecai means "contrition" and unless we have that contrition of heart of which God's Word speaks we are not of the adopted family of God. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." And where do we get this contrition of heart? By becoming church members? No. By

being as good as we can to the Cause? No. By remorse of conscience for some sins? No. Where then and when have poor sinners this holy, evangelical contrition of heart? Mourning over our sins in the light of Calvary's Cross. Beholding by faith Christ crucified and mourning for Him whom by our sins we have pierced. "And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first born (Zech. xii: 10). You will see beautiful contrition of heart in Mary weeping at the feet of Jesus. Oh! that God for the sake of His dear Son would grant us this contrition of heart! It is of a pure, humble and sincere nature, for it is the work of Free and Sovereign Grace in the soul. Yes, Mordecai means contrition. Oh! may contrition of heart be the exercise of our soul before God. What a lovely place this world would be if the vast multitudes were thus exercised and their hearts burning with fervent love to Jesus. Now, where this contrition of heart is that sinner is justified before God. The believer's contrition of heart is not his righteousness. The meritorious cause of his justification is the Righteousness of Christ and that received by faith. This faith implanted in the soul by the saving operation of the Holy Spirit worketh by love and purifieth the heart. Then that believer in Christ is no antinomian. He or she lovingly and willingly accepts the moral law of God—the ten commandments as their rule of faith and obedience.

II. Mordecai's steadfastness when confronted with strong opposition.

Mordecai had an enemy, and the Cause of Christ in our day has its enemies. Haman's chief objective was to destroy Mordecai and extirpate all the Jews from the face of the earth. There is always a Haman confronting and maliciously opposing the Cause of Christ. In Chapter v: verse 13, we read of Haman giving vent to his animosity against Mordecai, "Yet all this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." Ah! God's people wonder that they have enemies, but why? when their Lord and Master exhorts them to marvel not. "Marvel not although the world hate you" (I John iii: 13). "If the world hate you, ye know it hated me before it hated you" (John xv: 18). Zeresh, Haman's wife, suggested that a gallows be made to hang Mordecai thereon. Communism and Popery are of one mind in desiring and endeavouring to abolish the Cause of Christ from the face of the earth. Zeresh and Haman most likely differed on many points but as far as Mordecai's destruction was concerned they were of one

heart and mind. So it is with Communism and Romanism in our dark day. Those infernal powers do differ in many respects pertaining to religious and political issues, but they are of the same satanic household and of the same mind for the annihilation of the Cause of Christ. Yes, Haman caused the gallows to be erected. The gallows of public opinion are set up in our day for the utter destruction of vital Christianity. These gallows are erected by the instrumentality of Broadcasting Corporations, the press and calculated propaganda largely governed throughout the world by Communism and Romanism. Yes, Mordecai was to be hanged as a rebel and a disturber of the peace and that in the very near future. So thought they! And so think ungodly men with carnal rejoicing still. According to their wishful thinking the Cause of Christ wherever it is, in Spain, Italy, China, Britain, and America, and especially in the Free Presbyterian Church is almost extinct. They look forward with greediness to the final destruction of the Truth in the very near future, and they have every iron in the fire for that end. But Mordecai was not hanged and the Cause of the Lord will stand and persevere in the midst of all trials and in spite of all the stratagems of hell. It will endure until it enters the Millennial Glory and to the end of the world. On that very night in which final preparation was made for the death of Mordecai the wheel of Providence took a solemn turn. As another said, "The wheels of Providence grind slowly but they grind exceeding small."

That night King Ahasuerus could not sleep. Why not? The Most High who has the hearts and minds of all in His hand kept him awake and turned his attention to the book of records of the Chronicles—records of daily events. What did he see there? He saw that Bigthana and Teresh had wickedly plotted to take his life and how his life had been spared. Now the time had come in God's Providence to vindicate and exalt Mordecai. The king saw clearly that Mordecai had quietly and humbly saved him from death and the nation from disaster. Now in our day we have a Bigthana in the State and a Teresh in the Church. Men of weak character in the State and hypocrites in the garb of profession in the Church are doing their utmost to have the anti-Christ to reign over us, to have our British throne and all it represents overthrown, to have the Coronation oath changed or utterly abolished. Then Protestantism and Presbyterianism in Scotland would be left open to persecution from the Pope of Rome without any defence or protection from Britain's Civil Law. We as a church in all loyalty send up protests and counsels to our Queen, to the Prime Minister, to the Home Secretary and

to others in authority. Why? To save our British Throne and Protestant Constitution. Little notice was taken of Mordecai's brave and loyal action in protecting the king's life. Little significance is attached to our humble and sincere endeavours to protect our throne and nation religiously and politically. But another day will dawn upon Scotland and England when men in authority, rulers and governors will be awakened by God. Then they will see as clearly as the noon-day sun who those loyal ministers and men were who laboured and prayed for the welfare of our nation and for the eternal welfare of precious, immortal souls. In his divine Providence God will ensure the recording of these faithful warnings, protests and counsels in the pages of our nation's history for all to see when better days will yet dawn upon our beloved land.

It was good for Mordecai that Esther was there to stand between him and Haman and that she could intervene on Mordecai's behalf. How thankful we of the Free Presbyterian Church should be that the civil law still stands between us and the malicious, murdering spirit of the Church of Rome. Were it not for the protection of the Civil Law we would be burned to ashes or drowned without mercy just as our eminent forefathers were. You will notice that Mordecai had nursed and faithfully fostered Esther in her youth, and now in the Providence of God she was his sole defence. In like manner the Church of God took very good care in framing the terms of our civil law. They saw to it that these were based upon the Word of God. That is how our civil law surpasses that of all other nations.

Meanwhile Haman fondly imagined that he and he only was to be honoured by the king and revered by the public. That was Haman's leading objective and such is Rome's aim—that all kings and queens, governments and nations fall down and worship at the Pope's feet.

III. Mordecai's vindication and exaltation.

We have already said that in God's good Providence the time to favour Mordecai had come. Exalted he must be and no obstacle in the form of Haman, Zeresh, Bigthana or Teresh can now stand in the way. Mordecai must be raised from his sackcloth and ashes. In like manner God's time to uplift His own Cause will come. And when it comes the Church of Rome, Communism, unconverted men in Parliament, the world in the garb of profession in the Church such as Dr. Craig and his associates, can no longer impede the progress of the Gospel. When God's time to favour Zion is come no weapon formed against Christ's Cause and people shall prosper. When Mordecai's prospects were most alarming

there was a sudden change in the realm. Haman was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai. His sons were also hanged, and they could no longer trouble Mordecai and the Jews. Though the times are dark, very dark at present, better days are in store for the true Cause of Christ. When Anti-Christ, according to 2nd Thes. ii: 8, will be consumed by the breath of God's mouth and destroyed by the brightness of His coming; then papal, blasphemous doctrines and superstitions will be forever expunged by the glorious Gospel of Christ. Then once more "the voice of the turtle will be heard in our land." Before these blessed days dawn we as a nation as well as other nations may have to suffer from the judgments of God because of our sins against Him.

I shall make no predictions, but when we read our Committees' Reports on Religions and Morals and on Sabbath Observance and then open the Bible at Rev. xvi, should we not humble ourselves before God and tremble. Have the judgments of God foretold in that chapter been fulfilled? We think not and if not they must yet be fulfilled. In the "Scots Worthies" we read of John McClelland's predictions regarding England. There he says that because of England's provocation of God by her sins "the judgments of God upon England shall be so great that a man will yet travel fifty miles through the best plenished parts of England before he hear a dog bark, before he hear a cock crow and before he will see the face of a man." Alexander Peden, as you can see in the same book, says something similar about Scotland. Hear what Alexander Peden said to John Clark of Moorbrook when they met in Carrick in 1685. Clark said to Peden that surely the Cause of Christ would never be lower in Scotland than it was in their own day—a time of bitter persecution. Peden answered that the Cause of Christ would be lower still in days to come. The Cause will be so low that a man seeking counsel for his soul and seeking a man who might tell him the Lord's mind regarding those dark days would go from the east sea-bank to the west sea-bank of Scotland and find none. He further said that Christ in His Cause would be crucified as truly as He was outside Jerusalem and that by Presbyterian ministers who would have little more than the name and that those Presbyterian ministers would bury Christ. John Clark asked "Where will the testimony be then?" Peden answered "In the hands of a few who will be despised and undervalued of all, but especially by those ministers who buried Christ; but after that He shall get up upon them and at the crack of His winding sheet as many of them as are alive, who were at His burial shall be distracted

and mad with fear, not knowing what to do. Then John there shall be brave days such as the Church of Scotland never saw the like."

Can we close our eyes to the solemn fact that the first part of this prediction is now in our day fulfilled to the letter? No. We cannot. And the last part which is great and glorious shall also assuredly be fulfilled. King Ahasuerus recognised Mordecai as a man of integrity, an honest man, a worthy man. Men in high places will yet acknowledge what true Christians were doing for the British Throne, our nation, our civil and religious liberties. When Mordecai was honoured by the king, his scribes were instructed to write to the Jews in all the provinces from India to Ethiopia according to the wisdom and discretion of Mordecai and the writings were to be sealed with the king's authority. Such days will yet come when the true Church of Christ will receive her rightful place among the nations. When she will be respected and consulted by rulers and governors in their deliberations and transactions, politically, religiously, nationally and internationally. Men with the fear of God in their hearts will then open their meetings of Parliament with prayer to God and they will humbly ask for the advice and counsel of the Church. Mordecai wrote his letters with the king's authority and he sent these by posts on horseback and by riders on mules—lines of communication in his day. He transacted his solemn business among the Jews according to his mind and according to the wisdom bestowed upon him. Then every power, province and enemy that resisted the Jews fell down before them. So it shall be yet when the Holy Spirit is poured forth, the Cause of Christ shall flourish and the kingdom of Satan, which is today so strong and mighty will shake, totter and eventually crumble before the power of God's inspired Word applied by the Holy Spirit. The modes of locomotion in current use will be employed to send godly, faithful, learned and earnest preachers of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, to preach the whole counsel of God and to instruct the vast multitudes of the inhabited world. They will be commissioned by the courts of the Church and authorised by the State which will support Christ's Cause with a willing heart and a ready mind. Then there will be joy and gladness throughout the world when countless millions will value the Word of God, lay it up in their hearts and practise it in their lives. Then iniquity will bow her head for shame, anti-Christ will forever be banished from the world and popes will burn to all eternity in the flames of avenging Justice. Oh! there are glorious days ahead for Christ's Cause. In those happy days

swords shall be turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah ii: 4).

What are we to understand by that sacred expression in God's Word? Swords and spears were at one time weapons of war. It means that the weapons of war today so feared by humanity, or at least the energy from which they are derived, will yet be used for the good and welfare of mankind and for the benefit of the Cause of Christ.

The Holy Spirit will yet raise up in His own Church, burning and shining lights—men and women unequalled since the times of the Apostles. Our day is a very dark day but a bright day of Gospel power will yet shine on this benighted world. A day in which the Glory of Christ shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the face of the deep. The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth as He manifested in the days of Mordecai. As He turned the dark night for Mordecai and the Jews into a bright and joyful day so will He do again for His Cause and people world wide.

Let us hold fast that which is good. Let us hold fast the Word of God, our Protestant and especially our Presbyterian heritage. Let us by God's grace hold fast our Free Presbyterian witness and privileges. It is sad, solemnly sad, to see how the so-called Church of Scotland has gone so very far astray in the ways of apostacy. How very sad to see the so-called Free Church of Scotland in such close affinity with Dr. Craig's Church by way of exchange of pulpits, social functions and so on. The mind of the present Free Church of Scotland regarding the distinct and separate position of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland is that our position is a false one—that we are schismatics—that the Rev. Donald MacFarlane ought not to have left the Free Church in 1893. One of their leading ministers said to a student who is now a minister in our church, 'Mr MacFarlane in 1892 and 1893 saw the Free Church in flames and Mr MacFarlane ran out of it and left her to burn.' If we answer in figurative language, what happened was that Mr MacFarlane saw the Free Church, which was then the Declaratory Act Free Church, throw the Bible out into the flames of abominable heresies. Then in 1893 Mr MacFarlane, taking with him the constitution and principles of the Disruption Free Church, lifted the Bible out of the flames of soul destroying dogmas, and opening the Bible, humbly, reverentially and lovingly he preached to the people of Scotland the whole counsel of God.

We shall now notice that the name Haman means "unique" or "alone" and I am sure the enemy of the Jews regarded himself as unique as to his worldly honour and high station over the

despised Jews. Again Haman was "alone" in his malice and stratagems against the Jews. Again he was "alone" or "unique" in his awful, signal and final overthrow and in his terrible end. So it is and shall be with the Church of Rome. She is "unique" in her own eyes. "Always the same" is her boasting. But she will be "unique" in her awful and dreadful final destruction when God shall consume her with the breath of His mouth and destroy her with the brightness of His coming. Then the joy and gladness of the Gospel will be experienced by the vast multitudes throughout the world, when nations shall learn war no more and when the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon shall spread to the uttermost parts of the earth.

May God bless His Word.

POINTS FROM THEOLOGY

No. 1—True Saving Faith Described

(Contributed by Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow)

Nothing is more clearly taught in the Word of God than that without saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ there is no salvation. The question of whether or not they have this faith is one which has exercised the souls of God's people in every age and generation. The following extract from *The Christian's Great Interest* by William Guthrie gives a helpful description of this most necessary grace:—

"This justifying faith, which we assert to be so discernible, is, in the Lord's deep wisdom and gracious condescension, variously expressed in Scripture, according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after Him; so that everyone who hath it may find and take it up in his own mould. It sometimes acts by a desire of union with Him in Christ; this is that *looking* to Him in Isaiah—"Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." (Isa. xlv: 22). This seems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times perhaps in that same person. Men will look to what they dare not touch or embrace; they may look to one to whom they dare not speak; yet God hath made the promise to faith in that acting, as the fore-cited Scripture shows: and this He hath done mercifully and wisely; for this is the only discernible way of the acting of faith in some. Such are the actings or outgoings of faith expressed in Scripture by 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness' (Matt. v: 6) and that expressed by willing—"And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii: 27).

"Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in the act of recumbency, or leaning on the Lord, the soul taking up Christ then as a resting-

stone, and God hath so held him out, although he be a stumbling-stone to others. (Rom. ix: 33.) This acting of it is hinted in the expressions of 'trusting' and 'staying' on God, so often mentioned in Scripture; and precious promises are made to this acting of faith—'God will keep them in perfect peace whose minds are stayed on Him; because such do trust in Him. Trust in the Lord: for with Him is everlasting strength.' (Isa. xxvi: 3, 4.) 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which abideth for ever.' (Psa. cxxv: 1.) I say, the Lord hath made promises to this way of faith's acting, as knowing it will often go out after Him in this way with many persons; and this way of its acting will be most discernible to them.

"It goeth out after God sometimes by an act of waiting. When the soul hath somewhat depending before God, and hath not clearly discovered his mind concerning it, then faith doth wait; and so it hath the promise—'They shall not be ashamed that wait for me.' (Isa. xlix: 23.) Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the soul apprehendeth God thrusting it away, and threatening its ruin—'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him' (Job xiii: 15.) The faith of that poor woman of Canaan (Matt. xv) so highly commended by Christ, went out in this way of wilful acting over difficulties: and the Lord speaketh much good of it, and to it, because some will be at times called upon to exercise faith in that way, and so they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to instance all the several ways of the acting of faith upon, and its exercise about, and outgoings after Christ—I may say, according to the various conditions of man. And accordingly faith, which God has appointed to traffic and travel between Christ and man, as the instrument of conveyance of His fulness unto man, and of maintaining union and communion with Him, acteth variously and differently upon God in Christ: for faith is the very shaping out of a man's heart according to God's device of salvation by Christ Jesus, 'in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell.' (Col. i: 16); so that, let Christ turn what way He will, faith turneth and pointeth that way. Now He turns all ways in which He can be useful to poor man; and therefore faith acts accordingly on Him for drawing out of that fulness, according to a man's case and condition. As for example, The soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storm of God's wrath; Christ is fine raiment (Rev. iii: 17, 18); then accordingly, faith's work here is to 'put on the Lord Jesus' (Rom. xiii: 14). The soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfy; Christ Jesus is 'milk, wine, water, the bread of life, and the true manna,' (Isa. lv: 1, 2; John vi: 48, 51). He is 'the feast of fat things, and of wines on the lees well refined' (Isa. xxv: 6):

then the work and exercise of faith is to 'go, buy, eat, and drink abundantly.' (John vi: 53, 57; Isa. lv: 1). The soul is pursued for guilt more or less, and is not able to withstand the charge; Christ Jesus is the city of refuge, and the high-priest there, during whose priesthood, that is, for ever, the poor man who escapes thither is safe; then the work and exercise of faith is 'to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.' (Heb. vi: 18).

In a word, whatsoever way He may benefit poor man, He declares Himself able to do. And as He holdeth out Himself in the Scriptures, so faith doth point towards Him. If He be a Bridegroom, faith will go out in a marriage relation; if He be a Father, faith pleadeth the man to be a child; if he be a Shepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of His sheep; if He be a Lord, faith called Him so, which none can do but by the Spirit of Jesus; if He be dead, and risen again for our justification faith 'believeth God hath raised Him' on that account. (Rom. x: 9.) Wheresoever He be, there would faith be; and whatsoever He is, faith would be somewhat like Him; for by faith the heart is laid out in breadth and length for Him; yea, when the fame and report of Him goeth abroad in His truth, although faith seeth not much, yet it 'believeth on His name,' upon the very fame He hath sent abroad of Himself (John i: 12)."

MESSAGES FROM THE MOUNTAINS

By Rev. D. M. Macdonald, Edinburgh

Mount of Olives

This mountain might be regarded as sacred and interesting because of its association with the Saviour during his ministry on earth. It was situated outside Jerusalem to the east and splendid views can be obtained to Jericho on the north and east to the mountains of Moab. Jesus was often there for rest and solitude and spent nights in prayer and communion with his Father.

Gethsemane was on its lower slopes and to reach Bethany one had to walk over it. The home of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary was in that village. Christ was frequently their honoured guest and their souls were greatly uplifted by the wonderful and precious statements He made. Their fellowship with Him was intensely satisfying. It was Mary who poured the expensive ointment of spikenard, very costly, on His feet and wiped them with her hair. In this manner she manifested her great devotion to her Redeemer and when found fault with for her extravagance by Judas, Christ commended her action saying she did it for his

burial. Money spent for Christ and his Cause is well spent, and no one will lose by supporting generously Scriptural methods of witnessing for God and for the promotion of righteousness in the earth. That home must be a happy one where Christ is truly worshipped and honoured. In it there will be peace and souls will find rest in the Saviour himself.

Two world wars have not brought about a change in the moral and spiritual welfare of the people. Despite the fact that they have never had it so good, according to politicians, materially, vital religion has not been at such a low ebb as it is now for many years.

On one occasion after leaving the Mount of Olives for Jerusalem the whole multitude of the disciples with Christ began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory in the highest." They proclaimed Him their King and so do all believers, the language of their hearts being "Thine we are and for Thee we shall be, O thou eternal Son of God and glorious King of Sion." The Pharisees urged Him to rebuke his disciples and his reply to them was, "If these should hold their peace the stones would immediately cry out." When drawing near the city He wept over it, manifesting his compassion for its citizens for their unbelief and rejection of Himself, thereby bringing terrible judgments on themselves. Thousands of them were slain and led into captivity, their magnificent temple and city destroyed by the Roman army, and they ceased to exist as a state.

Sinners who reject Christ are destroying themselves. It is written, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life but he that believeth not the wrath of God abideth on him."—John 3, 36. The only way to be delivered from that wrath is to rest on Christ by faith, for all who do so are justified and for them there is no condemnation. It is recorded of Mr Marshall, author of a treatise on Sanctification, that in his early years he was under great distress for a long time through a consciousness of guilt and a dread of the divine displeasure. At last mentioning his case to Dr. Thomas Goodwin, the great Puritan divine, and lamenting the greatness of his sins, that able theologian replied, "You have forgotten the greatest sin of all, the sin of unbelief, in refusing to believe in Christ and rely on his atonement and righteousness for your acceptance with God." This word in season banished his fears. He looked to Jesus and was filled with joy and peace in believing.

The view has been expressed that it was near Gethsemane that the martyr Stephen was stoned to death. It is on one side of Olivet. He was, according to one of the early fathers of the Church, a Greek Jew converted to the faith of Jesus of Nazareth and elected as one of the seven deacons who were to have the administration of the fund for destitute Christian widows.

The great enemy of souls began to do his utmost to prevent the Kingdom of Christ from being advanced by means of the traitor Judas who sold his Master for the price of a slave and some of those who followed the Apostles. They were hypocrites and liars. There have been such in every age of the Church. Some of the bitterest enemies of the Covenanters were themselves Covenanters to begin with but when they saw they could get high positions and riches by serving the Government they became turncoats and in the end died in their sins unless they truly repented. To offset any gloom that might have been caused by the conduct of false professors, Stephen is mentioned as a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, who did great wonders and miracles amongst the people. The Jews who opposed him were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. As his hearers found his arguments irresistible they resorted to the base plan of bringing a charge of blasphemy against him. The Sadducees hated the new doctrine of the resurrection and the Pharisees with great animosity opposed a sect who were bold in stating that there was no further need for the Mosaic ritual because the Gospel knew neither Jew nor Greek and made God's house to be a house of prayer for all Nations. They suborned witnesses who said that they heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. The elders, scribes and people were roused up against him and brought him before the Sanhedrin or ecclesiastical board of seventy-two judges. Stephen begins his defence calmly and reminds his hearers of their own historical records. Beginning with Abraham, he descends from age to age till he reaches the era of Solomon when the temple was built. They may now have become restless and in an outburst of righteous indignation he denounced them as being murderers and betrayers of the *Just One*, with the result that they were cut to the heart and gnashed on him with their teeth. When they heard him say, "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears and ran upon him with one accord and cast him out of the city. He was then stoned, and his last words were, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit and lay not this sin to their charge." After that he fell asleep. It is mentioned and there

must have been a strong reason for it, that the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul and who was consenting to his death.

In the midst of his enraged persecutors the holy martyr sees a wonderful vision that gave him strength and consolation. Turning his face upwards from his fierce earthly judges he sees, "The glory of God." It might have been impossible for him to describe fully the magnificence of the vision but one part was clearly defined—one Person stood forth in this divine picture. That glorious Redeemer that he himself may have seen hanging on the cross as a criminal was now standing on the right hand of God. He describes Him as the Son of Man who because of his humanity and sufferings could enter into his feelings and sympathise with him and all believers in their trials. For as much as He himself suffered being tempted He is able to succour them that are tempted. It is noticeable that the Saviour was seen standing. It appears that He is spoken of in Scripture thirteen times as being seated but only once spoken of as being standing, and that is here. Why, one might ask, did He change his posture at this time? We may venture to say that it was to show his particular interest in his servant and his intense sympathy with him in the cruelties inflicted on him as if they were inflicted on Himself. He heard the taunts and saw the dreadful malice of those around his suffering witness that followed His own example closely and now as the great and tender Shepherd of his flock He was comforting and supporting this choice sheep as he entered the valley of the shadow of death with His rod and staff. How like his Master he was in his fond prayers! In calmness and meekness he said "Lord Jesus receive my spirit" and then prayed for his murderers. "Lord lay not this sin to their charge."

There was a splendid combination of qualities in Stephen's character. He was manly and courageous in reproving what was wrong while at the same time showing love and tenderness towards those who were offending. Being full of the Holy Ghost implied that the graces of the spirit were in full exercise in his soul. His Christ-like conduct might have made some impression on a few of the bystanders. We know there was one there who might have remembered his dying prayer and the great Augustine is of opinion that was answered in the conversion of Paul. On the Damascus road when Christ charged him with persecuting Himself and kicking against the pricks the Apostle might have recollected the dying prayer of Stephen and his gracious end in forgiving his enemies. These things might have been pricks in his conscience. God often overrules evil for good and Saul the

persecutor becoming Paul the Apostle is a remarkable instance of it. What a noble confession he makes in 1st Timothy, chap. 1. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me for that he counted me faithful putting me into the ministry who before was a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

The departing of Stephen is described in the word, "He fell asleep." The Saviour said in connection with the death of Lazarus, "Our friend is not dead but sleepeth." So that sleep may be regarded as a beautiful image of death in the case of all believers when they depart from this world.

In the midst of circumstances so dreadful, the inspired writer describes the end as one of peace, his spirit passing away gently to glory. His great support at this time was the vision he obtained of Christ's glory so that he could not resist proclaiming it to those hard-hearted haters of his Lord surrounding him. That smoothed his death pillow and the feeling that he would be welcomed by his ever loving Saviour.

The image of sleep so far as Christians are concerned might be considered first from the viewpoint that they are finally at rest like a traveller weary after a journey. He may have had troubles from various causes but they cease when he arrives at his destination. Believers have trials arising from sin and their outward circumstances. They know they have come short of the glory of God and are therefore under condemnation. They have realised they cannot give the Law the perfection it demands and being quickened by the Holy Spirit they were led to see that Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to all who believe. By faith in Him they were justified. They now live unto Christ hating sin and loving holiness. Their own shortcomings and original sin give them much trouble and their constant desire is to be found in Christ not having their own righteousness which is of the law but that which is through the faith of Christ. The life of God's people is a struggle against evil to the end.

They may be placed in trying circumstances in their families, business or profession when it may be very difficult to maintain their integrity but they must constantly strive to do so in the strength of grace. Satan will try to mislead them but they must resist him continually. Now all these troubles will end when believers fall asleep. Sin and earthly trials shall pass away

forever, when they lay aside their bodies they lay aside a sinful nature and will no longer be disturbed by a law in their members warring against the law of their minds and when they part forever from their greatest enemy they may be said to sleep rather than to die.

Here a redeemed soul may be disturbed in various ways and lose congenial frames but as soon as it parts with the body it enters glorious liberty and is employed in contemplating that one Person on which all the attention of all the heavenly inhabitants is fixed—Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is fixed on the deep things of God, acquiring clearer insight into his character and ways. It enjoys a most blessed society. The Christians who in the world inspired and strengthened others by their faith and deeds will be seen as well as the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and martyrs by the ransomed soul sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven. These words shall be fulfilled, “Ye are come into Mount Sion and into the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven and to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect.” Praise will be one of their delightful enjoyments.

The image of sleep suggests the idea of rising again and this holds good with regard to all the people of God. When men retire to rest after a hard day's work they hope to rise the following morning with renewed strength and so believers are told with certainty that after their labours are ended in the world their bodies shall rise from their sleep in the grave renewed and united again to their souls. Their bodies are to be fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. The Saviour proves this by taking Lazarus out of the grave and He himself also left the tomb empty. That was a pledge of his infinite love to all his members for the Head having risen the members shall also rise. “I would not have you to be ignorant,” Paul says, “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” Job had the assurance that his Redeemer lived and that in his flesh would he see God. We bury our Christian friends in hope. They shall arise with glorified bodies to meet their Lord in the air and shall be with him for ever.

One object the Lord has in removing his people from the world is to show those of them who are left more and more the emptiness and vanity of it and to make them lean less on earthly props and

more on a heavenly one. It is a call to them to be more in earnest in making their calling and election sure.

To die Christless is to perish for ever and the Gospel call is to all that they come to Him and live by trusting in Him alone for salvation. The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

OBITUARY

The Late Mrs Macdonald, Edinburgh

This Christian lady was well known throughout the Free Presbyterian Church so that the loss caused by her sudden death was felt far beyond the circle of her own relatives. She was among several of the Lord's people, who, during the year 1961, were removed from our church to their everlasting rest. Their departure has left wide breaches on the walls of Zion, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come" (Isaiah lvii: 1).

Mrs Macdonald was born at Evelix, Dornoch, in the year 1884, and was the daughter of Alexander Grant and his wife Margaret, née Campbell. Her parents feared the Lord and brought up their family in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The example of piety in the home, as well as the frequent contacts with the godly men and women who visited her parents' house, made a deep impression on her mind while she was yet young. We have no doubt but that these contacts, by the blessing of God, played no ordinary part in the formation of her very fine character and were always a means of convincing her of her need of the Lord Jesus Christ as her own Saviour.

Among the ministers she knew in childhood and youth were the Rev. Donald Macfarlane and the Rev. Donald Macdonald, the ministers who originally formed our distinctive position as a church. Among the men whom she knew well were David Ross and Angus Murray. Those ministers and men were outstanding both for their piety and faithfulness in their own generation. Mrs Macdonald valued her association with them in the gospel of Jesus Christ and cherished their memory. There were many other godly men and women whom she had the privilege of knowing and from whom she received spiritual encouragement and instruction. She saw the beauty of holiness in the Lord's people and, like that of Ruth, her prayer was—"Intreat me not to leave thee, or to turn from following after thee; for whither

thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God."

We understand that the passage of God's word by which light and liberty came to her distressed soul was—"Teach me thy way O Lord, I will walk in thy truth; unite my heart to fear thy name" (Psalm lxxxvi: 11). This was the prayer of her redeemed soul and it was one which God answered in as much as that Mrs Macdonald was one who was enabled in a goodly measure to "walk in the truth."

On 31st August, 1916, she was married at Inverness by the late Rev. J. R. MacKay to the Rev. D. M. Macdonald who is still spared to mourn her loss. This marriage proved a very happy one and opened a door of usefulness of which Mrs Macdonald proved herself worthy.

Mr and Mrs Macdonald began their married life at Bayhead, North Uist, where their first child was born. After a short ministry in North Uist Mr Macdonald accepted a call from the Portree congregation of our church. Their friends in North Uist felt parting with their minister and his wife, whose services and friendship they sincerely appreciated. Portree congregation gladly received their new minister with his wife and child. Thus began a long ministry, which proved helpful to many, and Mrs Macdonald played her part in making it so. She had the respect and affection not only of her husband's congregation but of many outside who had the privilege of knowing her. She has been described to the writer by those who knew her in the capacity of a minister's wife as the ideal "lady of the Manse."

She hospitably received high and low, rich and poor, for no material gain but because, like the virtuous woman, in her tongue and also in her heart was "the law of kindness." The day after her funeral a friend called to express his sympathy with the bereaved family and spoke of her in the following terms, "She knew when to speak and when to be silent." She loved the Lord's people and never spared herself in ministering to their needs.

At Portree four of their children were born. In 1927 they were bereaved of one when he was yet under two years. This bereavement was sorely felt by the parents, and Mrs Macdonald felt her grief-stricken heart tending to rebel against the will of God who gave and who took away. This became a great burden to her, for she knew it was sinful to complain. She told the writer many years after that while she was in this distracted state of soul, between grief and the temptation to complain, these words came with power to her, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

This message was to her "the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah lxi: 3). From that moment she felt reconciled to the will of Him who "doeth all things well."

It was in August, 1919, that Mrs Macdonald made her first public profession of faith in Christ as her Saviour, notwithstanding the fact that for some considerable time before that she had enjoyed the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free. She had had her doubts and fears but the time came when she was no longer able to delay but rather rejoiced that she was enabled to "pay her vows unto the Lord . . . in the presence of all His people." For over forty years she adorned that profession with "the ornament of a quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." She loved the truth and valued highly the public testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

She never wavered in her faithfulness to its principles, though this, on occasions, necessitated separation from "very friends." She told the writer, when the church was passing through a severe trial, that the scorn poured upon it by the world only enhanced its prestige in her estimation.

Communion seasons at Portree were the occasions of large gatherings of the Lord's people, not only from all parts of the church at home but also from abroad. Among such visitors were Dutch friends who highly valued the doctrines they heard and the example they saw. Mrs Macdonald warmly received these people because she saw in them the image of Christ. We need not remark on her generosity at those times as well as on other occasions, but we know that she seized the opportunity to deny herself in order that she might minister to the needs of God's people. She manifested great interest in the young people, and Portree Manse was a place where the boys and girls attending the school often found kindness. She was loved and respected by the children of the Sabbath School, in which she taught for some time.

After many years of usefulness she left Portree in September, 1948, when her husband retired to Edinburgh. There Mrs Macdonald continued to serve the church as circumstances permitted, and her interest in it never failed but rather deepened with the years. Her health was good until within about a year before her death, when signs of deterioration became evident. She continued to be about her daily duties, and was able to attend church to the last Sabbath she enjoyed on earth. For some time before she took ill she was heard repeating to herself, "Time

is short." Mrs Macdonald was one who had her conversation in Heaven and often remarked on the significance of the saying, "Time is but eternity begun."

She appeared to wait from day to day for the summons of death, and on Saturday, 4th February, 1961, the third day after she was rendered unconscious with a severe cerebral hæmorrhage, the call to eternity came. She passed peacefully away to be with the Lord who redeemed her soul and by whose grace she was enabled to continue faithful unto death.

The funeral was on the 8th of February to Tomnahurich, Inverness, where her body was laid to rest beside that of her infant son. The large attendance at her funeral showed the high respect in which she was held by all.

To her bereaved husband and family, as well as to her brothers, we extend our sincere sympathy . . . "The memory of the just is blessed."—D. C.

LEABHAR CHEISD MU SHUPEIR AN TIGHEARN

Leis an Urr. Iain Mac a Chòmbaich, D.D., Lite

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 57)

Earrann vi

Mu Sheulaibh Cùmhnant nan Gràs

C. Cia meud seula bhuineas do chùmhnant nan gràs? F. Fo'n t-Seann Tiomnadh, bha dà sheula ann, Timchioll-ghearradh agus a Chàisg; agus fo'n Tiomnadh Nuadh tha'm Baisteadh agus Suipeir an Tighearn ann.

C. Ciod an t-ainm a theirear ri seulaibh a chùmhnaint fo'n Tiomnadh Nuadh? F. Theirear gu cumanta riu *Sàcramaidean*.

C. Ciod a tha thu tuigsinn leis an fhocal sin *sàcramaid*? F. Bha e air a chleachdadh bho shean leis na Ròmanaich gu bhi cur an ceill na *mionnaibh* leis am biodh saighdearan ga'n ceangal fein gu bhi *dileas* do'n Ceannard-Airm.

C. Cia mar a tha e nis air a chleachdadh le Criosduidhean? F. Tha e air a chleachdadh a nis le Criosduidhean, cha'n ann a mhàin mar òrdugh *naomh*, ach mar an ceudna mar *cheangal dileas*, gu'm bi iad leis an Tighearn. Mar a mhionnaicheadh na saighdearan Ròmanach nach treigeadh iad a *bhratach* ann an là cur a chatha; mar sin tha fìor Chriosduidhean, aig an t-sàcramaid so, a' gealtuinn gu'n cathaich iad gu dileas fo bhratach Chriosd, Ceannard an slàinte, an aghaidh peacadh annta fein, an aghaidh Shatain, agus an aghaidh n t-saoghail.

C. Ciod e a nis *sàcramaid*? F. Is òrdugh *naomh* i, a tha le

comharaidhibh follaiseach, a samhlachadh a mach, a seulachadh, agus a càradh, ri anamaibh nan naomh, Crìosd Fein, agus uile bheannachdan a chùmhaint nuaidh.

C. C'ar son a theirear òrdugh naomh ri sàcramaid? F. A chionn gu'n do'òrduich Crìosd i air son sluagh naomh, agus gu bhi 'n a àrd mheadhon gu bhi ga'n toirt air an adhart ann an naomhachd.

C. Am feudadh neach air bith eile ach Crìosd sàcramaidean a chur air chois? F. Cha'n fheudadh; oir is E Fein a mhàin Ard-Cheann na h-Eaglais, agus 's ann aige tha ùghdarras, sàcramaidean òrduchadh innte; agus is E Fein a mhàin is urrain na beannachdan a tha air an samhlachadh leis na sàcramaidean a bhuileachadh air a shluagh.

C. Co iad aig am bheil còir air na sàcramaidean? F. Tha còir aca-san a tha ri *aidmheil* air creidimh agus naomhachd gu follaiseach an làthair dhaoine orra; ach is iadsan a mhàin a *sheilbhich* creidimh agus naomhachd aig am bheil còir ann am fianuis Dhé.

C. Cia lion *earrann* a tha anns gach sacramaid? F. Dà earrann; air tùs, comharadh faicsinneach agus nàdurra, a tha air a ghnàthachadh a reir àithne Chrìosd Fein; agus 's an dara àite, an gràs spioradail agus neo-fhaicsinneach a tha air a shamhlachadh a mach leis a chomharradh nàdurra.

C. Ciod iad na comharraibh nàdurra a bhuineas do na sàcramaidean, na h-eilemeidean do bhrìgh gu'r ann orra-san a tha na gnìomharan air an deanamh.

C. C'ar son a theirear comharraibh faicsinneach riu? F. Do bhrìgh gu'm feudair am faicinn, an laimhseachadh, agus am blasad.

C. C'uin a tha comharraibh nan sàcramaidean air an cleachdadh a reir àithne agus òrdugh Chrìosd? F. 'N uair a tha iad air am frithealadh anns 'n a briathraibh a labhair Crìosd Fein 'n uair a chuir E an t-sàcramaid air chois.

C. Ciod e'n gràs spioradail a tha air a shamhlachadh leis na comharraibh nàdurra bho'n an taobh a mach? F. Crìosd Fein, agus uile shochairan a chùmhaint.

C. Ciod iad sochairan cùmhaint nan gràs? F. Gach uile bheannachd luachmhor a th'air a ghealltuinn anns a chùmhaint, agus a tha gu leir air am filleadh ann an gealladh na beatha maireannaich.

C. C'ar son a tha Crìosd agus sochairan a chùmhaint air an ainmeachadh le cheile? F. A chionn gu'm bheil na beannachdan fein ann an Crìosd, agus nach fheudair an sgaradh bh'uaithe, "An tì aig am bheil a' Mac tha beatha aig."

C. Ciod e'n *daimh* a th'aig comharraibh na sàcramaid ri Crìosd agus ri sochairean a chùmhnaint? F. Tha na *comharraidhibh*, tre ghràs an Spioraid Naoimh, a' cumail a mach, a *seulachadh*, agus a *càradh* ri creidmhidh Crìosd Fein, agus sochairean a chùmhnaint.

C. C'ar son a theirear gu'm bheil na *comharraibh* a *samhlachadh* a mach Chrìosd agus a shochairean? F. Do bhrìgh, cha'n e mhàin gu'm bheil na *comharraidhibh* air an òrduchadh le Dia, ach tha mar an ceudna *samhladh-coltais* aig na *comharraidhibh* ris na gràsan.

C. C'ar son a theirear gu'm bheil na *comharraidhibh* a *seulachadh* Chrìosd maille r'a shochairean? F. Do bhrìgh, 'n uair a tha iad air an cleachdadh gu ceart, gu'm bheil creidimh 'n an naomh air a *dhaingneachadh* ann an Crìosd agus 'n a shochairibh, agus mar an ceudna an còir air Crìosd, agus air na sochairean; dìreach mar a tha seula 'n a *dhaingneachadh* air co-cheangal air bith. Tha iad 'n a meadhon a dh' òrduich Dia gu bhi daingneachadh no neartachadh *creidimh*, maille ris gach gràs eile a bhuineas do na naoimh.

C. C'ar son a theirear gu'm bheil na *comharraidhibh* sin a *càradh* Chrìosd agus a shochairean ri creidmhidh? F. Do bhrìgh 'n uair a tha iad air an cleachdadh ann am fìor chreidimh gu'm bheil Crìosd maille r'a uile shochairean air an *toirt thairis* do'n anam; agus gu'm bheil an t-anam mar an ceudna a faotainn *ùrachadh* do ghràs naomhachaidh, agus comhfhurtachd. "Gabhaibh, ithibh; is e so mo chorp-sa a chaidh a bhriseadh air bhur son-sa."

C. Ciod is Rian do shàcramaid? F. An *daimh* no an *co-cheangal* spioradail a th'eadar an comharraidh bho'n an taobh a mach, agus an gràs spioradail anns an taobh a stigh.

C. C'uin a tha 'n a samhlaichean agus na nithean a tha air an samhlachadh leo air an *aonadh* annta-san a tha gabhail na sàcramaid? F. 'N uair a tha'n t-anam a gabhail, cha'n ann a mhàin do 'n samhlaichean, ach mar an ceudna, tre chreidimh, a gabhail do'n a beannachdan a tha air an samhlachadh leo.

C. Ciod a chrìoch air son an d'òrduich Crìosd sàcramaidean na h-eaglais? F. Gu bhi samhlachadh a mach Chrìosd Fein maille r'a shochairean luachmhor; gu bhi cumail cuimhne air ùmhlachd agus air a bhàs; gu bhi toirt comunn da shluagh maille ris Fein agus maille r'a cheile, gu bhi neartachadh an gràsan agus ga'n cumail ann an cleachdadh beothail; a sheulachadh agus a dhaingneachadh a chùmhnaint riu; gu dealachadh follaiseachadh a chur eadar iadsan agus a chuid eile do'n t-saoghal; agus ga'n toirt fodh cheangal gu'm bi iad umhail Dhà.

C. Ciod iad na sàcramaidean a bh'ann fodh'n t-Seann Tiomnadh? F. An Timchioll-ghearradh agus a Chàisg.

C. C'uin a bha'n timchioll-ghearradh air a chur air chois? F. 'N uair a bha cùmhnant nan gràs air ùrachadh do Abraham agus car tamuill, a gabhail tàmh a mhàin 'n a theaghlach-san.

C. Ciod a bha air a chiallachadh leis an timchioll-ghearradh? F. Gu'm feum truailidheachd ar nàduir a thaobh peacadh gin a bhi air a thoirt air falbh; cho feumail agus a tha an ath-bhreith, no gu'm biodhmaid air ar gearradh a mach bho'n a cheud Adhamh mar cheann-cùmhnaint, agus a bhi air ar suidheachadh anns an dara Adhamh; agus ceangal naomh a bhi leis an Tighearn.

C. C'ar son a bha'n timchioll-ghearradh air a fhrithealadh do chloinn nan creidmheach? F. Do bhrìgh gu'n do gheall Dia anns a' chùmhnant gu'm biodh E 'n a Dhia do'n sliochd mar an ceudna. Thug E uime sin àithne gu'm biodh gach leanabh mic air a thimchioll-ghearradh air an ochdamh la an deigh dha bhi air a bhreith.

C. C'uin a bha chàisg air a cur air chois? F. 'N uair a shaoradh clann Israel bho'n Eiphit.

C. C'ar son a theirear a chàisg rithe? F. A chionn gu'n deachaidh aingeal a sgrios thairis air tighibh cloinn Israel 'n uair a bhuail e gach ceud-ghin do 'n a h-Eiphitich le bàs.

C. C'ar son a chaid aingeal a sgrios thiaris air tighibh chloinn Israel? F. A chionn gu'n do chrathadh fuil an uain-chàisg air an dà ursainn agus air àrd-dhoras an tighean; a' ciallachadh 'n uair a tha fuil Chrìosd air a crathadh air a choguis, gu'n toir i làn dìon agus tearuinteachd do'n anam bho fheirg agus bho mhallachd Dhé.

C. Ciod iad 'n a gnàthannan a dh'àithne Dia a choimhead aig a chàisg? F. Dh'àithne E gu'm biodh an t-uain-càisg gu'n ghaoid, firionn, agus bliadhna a dh'aois; gu'm biodh e air a mharbhadh le fhuil a tharruig as; gu'n ròiste e le teine; gu'm biodh e gu leir air itheadh maille ri aran neo-ghoirtichte agus ri luibhean searbh; gu'm biodh e air itheadh air a cheart fheasgar 's an do mharbhadh e; agus air itheadh le co-chruinneachadh chloinn Israel uile.

C. Cia lion sàcramaid a dh'òrduich Crìosd 'n a eaglais fodh'n Tiomnadh Nuadh? F. Dà shàcramaid; am Baisteadh agus Suipeir an Tighearn.

C. An d'thàinig an dà shàcramaid sin a stigh do'n eaglais ann an àite 'n a càisg agus an timchioll-ghearradh? F. Thàinig; thàinig am Baisteadh ann an àite an timchioll-ghearradh, agus Suipeir an Tighearn ann an àite na càisg.

(R. a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met once more on Tuesday, the 22nd of May, 1962; and before this Assembly met publicity was given to three matters which would come within the business of this Supreme Court of the National Church, viz., the Church's attitude to the Pope and the Church of Rome, the question of a more liberal view on Sabbath observance and a modernistic view of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. Among a multitude of other Church business, these three items certainly took preeminence.

Before the Assembly met, the Rev. Dr. Nevile Davidson, who was then Moderator-Designate, held a press conference at which he expressed his personal view that the Church would need to revise or re-write the Church's Confession of Faith. He cited especially two parts which, in his view, would need to be dealt with critically. These were the Confession on Election and Predestination and the Civil Magistrate. Dr. Davidson mentioned that as he would be Moderator of the General Assembly, his mouth would be closed as to bringing this matter up on the floor of the Assembly this year. And why then did Dr. Davidson refer to the *Confession of Faith* at such a time? Our opinion is that he wished this issue to be brought out into the open and that ministers and laity would begin to think of and discuss the parts of the *Confession* which he objected to and have their minds adversely affected toward the Confession, if and when he takes up the whole question of the attitude of the Church to the Confession next year in a formal way. God willing, we shall see. Of course *The Confession of Faith* did come in for discussion at the Assembly in connection with the Lord's Day.

Rev. Dr. A. C. Craig, who visited the Pope, had little to say of his visit when giving his Address as retiring Moderator of the Assembly. He was no doubt conscious of a great deal of dissatisfaction among the people of his own Church and outright indignation on the part of true Protestants in Scotland. He claimed that his visit had set a pattern of courtesy, sincerity and charity and under God's guidance would not be fruitless. If Dr. Craig and his companions profess to have the light of God's Word, then what fellowship hath light with darkness? A limited knowledge of the Papacy in the light of Scripture should be sufficient to prove that the Pope and his so-called Church are enshrouded in spiritual darkness and superstition. But Dr. Craig and many in his Church are determined to ignore this fact and as blind men to lead the blind to be entangled in the subtle

meshes of the Jesuits. They seem to be entirely oblivious to the fact that the R.C. officials see in all this the first steps of a return to the Roman Catholic fold however protracted and long this process will take. The Lord may put a stop to this in His own time and way, but that is how the Pope and his priests will be viewing this betrayal of Reformation principles.

The Lord High Commissioner to the Assembly in his Address admitted that some in the Assembly felt uneasy about the meeting between Dr. Craig and the Pope, but he said he was convinced that they need have no qualms at all. And to further quieten any alarm he asserted that Dr. Craig would never dream for a moment of asking them to accept any of the dogma or ritual of the Church of Rome. He said a great deal more to the same effect. But have the people not been asked in effect to accept the unscriptural office, status and claims of the Pope by such a visit? The answer is "Yes." Lord Mansfield, on his visit to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, again endeavoured to "make light" of Dr. Craig's visit to the Pope before Free Church ministers and elders. He declared: "There seems to have been an idea among church people that this might lead to an undermining of our Protestant standards and would do harm to Protestantism as a whole. But surely to accept such a theory is to imply that that Presbyterian belief of ours is a weak plant. . . ." Here Lord Mansfield talked down to the Free Church Assembly, and to the Free Presbyterian Church, as if we did not understand what we were doing when we deplored with all the sincerity at our command an official visit to the Vatican by a professed Protestant and Presbyterian leader from Scotland. The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland should be grateful that they were not subjected to a lesson in "modern" charity by the Lord High Commissioner in person.

The Church of Scotland Committee on the Religious Instruction of Youth called their Assembly's attention to the need for the Church to open its doors to teenagers, especially on Sabbath evenings. This does not of course mean the opening of doors to divine worship for teenagers, but to adopt methods such as modern clubs to attract youth. These proposals were approved by the General Assembly. Observations upon these modern activities proposed were made by Rev. H. M. Bartlett, Logie, Dundee, who revealed his modernistic views on the religious instruction of the rising generation. First of all he stated what was sadly true, that the vast number of people in their teens were outside the Church's influence and considered the Church an irrelevancy. Then he proceeded to propound that the problem

was in some ways more urgent and more important than "Sunday" observance and the *Westminster Confession*. He further said that many young people saw the Church nowadays as an institution which merely trained people in personal piety. They were therefore not very anxious to come under its influence. As to this reference to personal piety, we are afraid Mr Bartlett's Church has not been insisting on this even from its members for many, many years now. Young people are not desirous of coming under the influence of even a modified Christianity today, because the carnal mind is in enmity against God and home-life in these days is largely devoid of any real Christian example and influence. Mr Bartlett has nothing better to suggest in face of this situation but that the Church cannot use orthodox, old methods alone—it must seek new means—even dances on "Sunday" night—to make contact with these young people. The Rev. Mr Bartlett, a former vice-convenor of this Committee on the Religious Instruction of Youth, has to descend to dances on the evening of the Lord's Day to attract the young. To attract the young to what? The Christian Church and Ministry professes to seek the salvation of young and old. But today the aim is, not the salvation of souls from sin, but to attract persons to merely associate themselves with the organisation of the Church and maybe to become members. The object is not to bring the young to Christ. The Sabbath evening dance cannot do that. The Word of God and the Gospel and instruction in the Truth are the means especially given to bring young and old to the knowledge of the Saviour.

The Church and Nation Committee by its Convener, Rev. John R. Gray, submitted a statement on "The Christian use of Sunday." The Convener tried to make the point that in Old Testament times most work was physical and the proper counterpoise to it was physical rest. And in our modern civilisation the equivalent of that physical rest for the overstrained was physical activity. He stated: "In withdrawing the authority of the *Confession of Faith* on the Fourth Commandment, we are substituting the authority of the Lord Himself as to how we should spend the whole of the Sabbath." And among many other statements, Mr Gray suggested that "observance of the Lord's Day should be based no longer on obedience to the law, but rather on loyalty to the Lord." "Treating the Lord's Day as the Lord's Day and not as the Sabbath, enables allowance to be made for those . . . whose work requires little physical effort." And so Mr Gray led the Assembly away from the Moral Law of God, as to the Fourth Commandment, and from the *Confession*

of Faith based on the Word of God, and endeavoured to separate from these the Son of Man who is Lord also of the Sabbath. In referring again to the *Confession of Faith*, Mr Gray said that in differing from it, it was not that the Committee disliked it, proposed to abolish it, or write a new Confession of Faith. Surely Mr Gray revealed that they did dislike the *Westminster Confession*, and particularly two sections in it *anent* the observance of the Sabbath. Yet not more than 10 per cent. of a vast Assembly of ministers and elders voted against the Committee's deliverances. The majority as the representatives of the people of the Church of Scotland, in the General Assembly, gave another devastating blow to Sabbath observance in our beloved land. Apart from the main trend of the debate, an excellent and Scriptural speech was delivered by Rev. A. E. Wallace, Blochairn, Glasgow, which was a privilege to listen to after all the carnal argumentations of others. Space will not permit us to quote but briefly. But readers will find the keynote of Mr Wallace's speech in his counter-motion to the Committee's deliverances, viz.: "That the Assembly uphold the statement of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* on the Lord's Day as being in agreement with the Word of God, His teaching and example and the practice of Calvin and his colleagues." Rev. Mr Wallace declared that, if they would amend the Confession, they would undermine confidence in the Church's chief subordinate standard, which would lead to spiritual impoverishment and hasten the advent of the Roman Catholic or Continental "Sunday," and to equate the teaching of the *Westminster Confession* with the false Sabbatarianism of a dead Jewish Phariseism or an equally dead Protestant orthodoxy, was a complete misrepresentation of the truth. He said that the *Confession* taught them to keep the Lord's Day in the beautiful way in which the Lord kept the Sabbath. One remark of Mr Wallace's which we thought striking—it was, that the Sabbath was made for *MAN*, not for the Jews. If Rev. Mr Gray was listening it must have demolished in his mind some of his main arguments.

At the close of the main debate on this Sabbath observance deliverance an interesting and fundamental discussion was aroused by a member of the Assembly who considered that the Church and Nation Committee's proposals should go down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, as this member considered an Act would be required to be agreed upon by the Church if an alteration was now to be made in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Rev. Mr Gray appeared to be taken aback at this turn of events and sought to argue that the Committee were but putting forward

an interpretation of the *Confession* and not an alteration. Finally this question was remitted to the Administration Committee.

On Tuesday, the 29th May, the General Assembly heard the Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Committee, Rev. Prof. Wm. S. Tindal, submit his Report which largely consisted of references to Dr. Craig's visit to the Pope and the conferences which had been held in Edinburgh and Glasgow between representatives of the Church of Scotland and priests of the Roman Catholic Church. He stated that they had become aware that the solid, formidable barriers separating them from the Church of Rome might yet have some gates built into them . . . and now in Scotland, unofficial meetings had taken place which raised the question of whether the estrangement between them could no longer be accepted as an enduring feature of the ecclesiastical landscape. Prof. Tindall continued: "The issue had been raised on the world scale by the presence of six Roman Catholic observers at New Delhi (World Council of Churches Meeting) and by the visit of the Moderator to Rome." Referring to the Roman Church and the Church of Scotland, Prof. Tindall said that they hoped for friendlier relations and that they had much to discover about one another after the long separation. The Committee *believed the day had come when informal meetings between members of the two Churches should be welcomed*. This last sentence seems to sum up the present official and determined resolve of the leaders of the Church of Scotland. The Church of Rome is no longer to these men the anti-Christ, the evil system from which the Reformers, under the Lord, delivered Scotland a few centuries ago. Prof. Tindall should surely know that any intelligent, fairly well-read, Protestant knows more than sufficient regarding the doctrine, worship and practices of the Church of Rome to enable him to come to a clear judgment, without the dangerous procedure of being involved in conferences with men who are the avowed enemies of the gospel of Christ as we understand it. The Protestant Church has available to it volumes of authentic information regarding the Pope and his system.

Rev. John Welsh, Wemyss, made an able and strong speech opposing the views of the aforesaid Committee and statements made by Rev. Prof. Tindall. He said that Christian truth, freedom and the Christian life were not less important than Christian unity. Their Christianity did not demand that they should suspend their judgment on what was better or worse or flaunt their intelligence by accepting doctrines repugnant to their acceptance of the truth. Rev. Mr Welsh also declared that some of the doctrines of the Church of Rome to him were untrue, and

some were both untrue and blasphemous. He also referred to the intellectual nonsense to which the Romanists must subscribe; and to the fact that in Spain, Portugal or South America, the Roman Church was supporting the oppressive governments, commanding obedience to authority, however corrupt. He further told the Assembly that they must not forget the truths of the Reformation, or if any did, let them submit to Canterbury or Rome without causing disruption in the Church of Scotland. Mr Welsh spoke as a man and a minister who saw the terrible dangers into which his Church was being led. After this speech on the side of truth, the Rev. Prof. J. Pitt-Watson sprang to his feet and attacked the tenor of Mr Welsh's speech, stating that the Reformed Churches were not altogether innocent of the charge of standing with the forces of oppression, and that in Spain young priests had recently protested against the actions of the regime. But Prof. Pitt-Watson did not overthrow one single statement made by Rev. John Welsh. In our view, as we looked and listened, the Professor revealed his personal distaste for the real Protestant and Scriptural tone of Mr Welsh's attack upon the Romeward movement. And so it clearly appeared that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at this present time is not the place to expect anything else but a weak minority support for Reformation principles. Finally, the Assembly welcomed the meeting between the Moderator and the Pope as a sign of the improved relationships, and also welcomed informal meetings between Roman Catholics and members of the Church of Scotland in this country. One member of Assembly moved to end the talks forthwith, but no one in the whole Assembly seconded him, and his motion was thus rejected. During the debate, the Free Presbyterian Church was mentioned on the floor of the Assembly as opposed to the visit to the Pope.

It was made known in the Assembly that there have been conversations between the Church of Scotland and the Congregational Union of Scotland on closer relations. These talks are to be held up for 18 months to allow for wider education and discussion. After the positive trend toward Rome in the Church of Scotland, the Congregational Union of Scotland has not made any criticism of these activities as far as we know. It seems that Congregationalists are not apprehensive of being caught in the net of Romish influence. Truly, darkness covers the land and gross darkness the people throughout the most of Scotland.

Space will not permit us to report further on these matters; but it is hoped that many of our readers at home and abroad who have not been able to read reports of this recent General

Assembly, will find our notes informative, although mostly sad reading. Much earnest prayer is called for on behalf of Scotland. May Christ Jesus, the King and Head of His Church, manifest Himself graciously to our beloved land in connection with His Word and ordinances in His Church.

Castro of Cuba Excommunicated

We have no place for Communism, and that being so, it is yet rather difficult to decide from information supplied by the press as to whether Fidel Castro, the Cuban Prime Minister, and his regime are solid, out and out Communists or in fact non-Communists seeking to raise and reform their country economically, politically, educationally, etc. At anyrate Castro and his leading officials, being Roman Catholics by religion, saw reason to expel Bishop Eduardo Boza Masvidal and 135 priests last September, and many nuns were also deported to Spain from Cuba. On January 3rd, this year, it was announced from the Vatican by Archbishop Dino Staffa, that Castro and leading officials of his regime have been ex-communicated from the Roman Catholic Church. They have also been accused by the Vatican of making speeches "injurious" to bishops, the Pope and the R.C. Church. Once again the oft-repeated question can be asked: How are countries wholly Roman Catholic and priest-ridden turning against their Church and becoming extreme Socialists or Communists? Italy, of course, is the outstanding case where the Pope himself resides. It is a lie and a delusion that Rome is a bulwark of any kind against Communism. And where is the temporal power of the Pope? Where is this vaunted power of the Romish religion? And where is the unity of the Church of Rome throughout the world? And did the Vatican get President Kennedy to launch a blundering invasion upon Cuba to save priests and nuns and the R.C. Church there?

CHURCH NOTES

Communions

January—Fourth Sabbath, Inverness. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, North Uist, Kyle of Lochalsh. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness, Portree and Tarbert; third, Finsbay; fourth, Kinlochbervie. North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Achmore, Portnalong. Fort William and Stoer; third, Greenock; fourth, London, Glasgow; fifth, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaulie; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Bracadale,

North Uist and Plockton; fifth, Achmore, Thurso. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Vatten and Stornoway. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool and Breasclete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert, Stoer and Vancouver (Canada); fourth, Applecross. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta, Lochcarron, Fort-William; second, Gairloch and Ness; fourth, Greenock, Lochinver and Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Staffin and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

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7 BURY LANE,
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Dear Friend,

We have recently added to the list of our smaller publications a small folder entitled "The Law of the Lord," containing the first Psalm, the Ten Commandments and other relevant portions of Holy Scripture, all selected from the Authorised Version of the English Bible. We shall be very glad to supply copies at 250 for 7/6d. If you are able to distribute more copies than available funds can purchase we shall allocate a free grant if you will kindly let us know the number required.

We trust that these portions of God's Holy Word will be the means of spiritual blessing to many readers.

Yours sincerely,

TERENCE H. BROWN, *Secretary*.

A Correction

In our June issue of the Free Presbyterian Magazine, there appeared the obituary of the late Rev. John P. MacQueen, London, beginning on page 37. We regret very much that in the first line of this obituary the year 1962 is recorded. This should of course read 1961. Will readers correct this in their copies of the Magazine.

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