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A PROMISE AND PRAYER

We deem it most appropriate at the outset of another year to draw the attention of all the Lord's people in our Church to the promise uttered by the Redeemer in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter XI, and verse xiii, viz., "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" This promise and injunction to prayer follow upon the Lord's response to His disciples' request that He would teach them to pray, when He gave them the words of what we call the Lord's Prayer and also amplified the answer with these and other words: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." We are sure that those who fear the Lord are agreed that one of the greatest needs of the Church, now, and in the immediate future and, of course, always, is the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

It is a great and invaluable privilege which the Church possesses and enjoys, that we have the inspired and infallible Word of God, the whole counsel of God and of the gospel of Christ preached and the sacraments administered according to Scripture. In addition, there have been and there are evidences that God has been working in our midst by His Spirit in bringing sinners, here and there, to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, to the encouragement of God's people among us.

Yet the times are very dark spiritually and morally, and Satan is exceedingly active in drawing away young and old to cisterns, broken cisterns, of many and varied kinds which satisfy the lusts of the flesh and increase the distaste for divine things among all classes. The majority who do attend the public means of grace regard not the claims of law or gospel, and it is but a small remnant who gave evidence of having believed to the saving of the soul upon the Lord Jesus Christ, who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." It is the few who willingly take the burdens of the Cause of Christ among us and thus serve as unto

Christ Jesus and not to men. It may be said that this has always been the way; but that even now there are encouraging signs of the Lord's work in grace here and there. Yet be that as it may, we see a great need to look to the promise referred to and for prayer in respect of this precious promise.

Undoubtedly there are those who are continually praying among us for the Holy Spirit to be bestowed richly and abundantly upon the ministers of the gospel in our Church and upon our congregations and upon themselves, thus seeking spiritual blessings in connection with the means of grace. And exercised servants of the Lord Jesus Christ are also thus engaged that the Word shall be with power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance to the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers among us.

Now our purpose here is not to attempt an exposition of this promise in relation to the Holy Spirit, but to emphasise the vitally important need and obligation of prayer on the part of the Lord's people in connection with the terms of this promise: "... how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" And so this promise ought to be taken to the throne of grace in prayer in a very particular manner according to the teaching of Christ thus: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" The answer inherent in this question is: "No!" He will give him bread. And so the Lord Jesus leads up to the matter of asking the Most High for the Holy Spirit. And so there is a call here for constant and importunate pleading with God, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the presence, power and work of the blessed Spirit, in connection with family worship, our prayer meetings and the preaching and reading of the Word of God from week to week and Sabbath to Sabbath.

We recognise, as we must, that it is the divine purpose and will that shall be done in relation to the conversion and salvation of sinners and the times of spiritual refreshing in soul which believers may be favoured with. The secret purpose and will of God belongs to Him; but the revealed will of God belongs to His Church and people thus: "... how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." Surely these divine words of our Lord are plain enough. An illustration of our point may be drawn from the record of the exercise of the apostles on one occasion, as we see in Acts, Chapter IV, verses 27-31: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered

together, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of Thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." Now what was the result and the effect of their supplications as far as their hearers were concerned? "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul . . . "

In this matter the Apostles are our example, who in the midst of a Christ-hating world had recourse to prayer in the name of Jesus, that the hand of the Lord would be stretched forth on their behalf. And for us to limit the Holy One of Israel now, is a more heinous sin than that of the children of Israel in the wilderness. The modern Church is still trying to keep in and draw to the Church young and old, by instruments of music, choirs, sacred concerts, guilds, youth clubs, etc. The true Church of Christ requires none of these vain and worldly methods in addition to the Word of God, the gospel of Christ crucified and the sacraments. But she needs increasingly the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the comforter. "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment . . . He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." So declared the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel, Chapter 16, in verses 8 and 14.

However orthodox in doctrine and beliefs a Church and her people may be, and however consistent the outward observance of religious services and duties, may be in relation to the Scriptures, spiritual formality and coldness can prevail. This will be felt by exercised and gracious believers, unless the Spirit of truth and grace and power dwell in the hearts of the people making them living, lively believers on the divine Saviour and His fullness and blessing them with spiritual, humble, active devotion to God and the things of God and His service. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5: 24, 25). "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8: 26). And so let the Lord's people and ministers be deeply concerned to walk

in the Spirit, in the realm of their hearts, in their fellowship one with another, in their worship, in preaching the gospel of Christ, in their listening to the Word of Truth and in their public witness for the Lord. Let them pray that God in His free and sovereign grace would convince Christless and careless sinners of their sins and danger and lead them to look by faith to the one and only Saviour for "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" And this He alone can do through the application of the word of the truth of the gospel to their souls by the mighty power of His Holy Spirit.

And lastly, let us weigh well the words of the Lord Jesus in His sermon on the mount when He gives direction and a promise with regard to prayer, viz., "But thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt.: 6, 6).

A SERMON

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah lv.: 10, 11.

Beginning at the fortieth chapter of this prophecy the prophet speaks of the advent of John the Baptist and the coming of the Messiah and what the Messiah was to meet with in His humiliation. In the fifty-third chapter we have a graphic picture of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that was to follow. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." Part of that glory was to be the calling of the Gentiles, as that is brought before us in the fifty-fourth chapter where we read the exhortation given to the Church, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." In the chapter which we have read in your hearing there is a wonderful invitation given to the thirsty and to the poor, and a promise to make with them an "everlasting covenant" "even the sure

mercies of David." This invitation is in the ears of all to whom the Word of God comes, but alas, in our own day, very few take any notice of it. Nevertheless that Word will bring forth all that God purposed it should bring forth. This is the import of the words chosen at this time as the basis of a few remarks, and from them we shall notice, as enabled, three things. I. The Word spoken of. II. The manner of its going forth. III. What it is to do.

I. The Word spoken of.

In the Bible we have the term "Word" used in a two-fold sense. There is the incarnate Word and the written Word. It is true of the incarnate Word, even the Lord Jesus Christ, that He came forth from God, and had a work to do which was finished on Calvary, which brought forth much fruit, and part of that fruit is the giving of the written Word. Christ is the incarnate Word and came forth from God. He could claim an eternal union with the Father. "I and my Father are one." Thus all the attributes which belong to the Father belong to Christ also, and He possessed these attributes when He tabernacled in the flesh, for He was both God and man in two distinct natures, and one Person forever. He undertook a work on behalf of His own people which no mere man could accomplish. It required His Divinity to support His humanity in accomplishing what the Justice of God required, and thus we find a Divine Person, even the Son of God, taking His place as the Substitute of His people, under the terrible stroke of the sword of Divine Justice, and rendering a complete satisfaction to all the attributes of the Godhead, and thus finishing transgression and bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

We have the incarnate Word in His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King. He reveals God, and the will of God, to sinners. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." John i: 18. He began early in the history of mankind to execute the office of a prophet. Considering the fact that God could not deal with sinful man after the Fall but through a Mediator we are warranted to conclude that it was the Second Person who appeared to Adam and Eve, and acted in His prophetic office by which, in passing a sentence of condemnation upon the Devil, He conveyed to our first parents God's purpose of mercy by intimating that which was to be the most awful conflict which was ever to be waged in this world—a conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, a conflict which was to issue in victory when Christ cried on the Cross, "It is finished."

True it is that the conflict between the seed of the woman in the members of Christ's mystical body, and the seed of the serpent in those who walk "according to the course of this world" is still being waged, but through Him who finished the work on Calvary, Christ's members are now made "more than conquerors." This He reveals to His own by His Word and Spirit. By that same Word and Spirit they get glorious views of His Priestly and Kingly offices.

We believe, however, that it is His written Word that is more particularly brought before us in our text. That Word is what we commonly call the Bible. It reveals to us all that is necessary for us to know in answer to that all-important question, What is it that saves a sin-ruined soul? It is very much in the nature of man to seek after other revelations. This is clearly brought before us in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man thought that if one rose from the dead it would turn his brethren from their sins. No doubt such a happening might strike terror into them so that, for the time being, they would forsake their outward practices, but it would not touch their hearts. The Rev. Archibald Cook, Daviot, used to say that if you would dip a sinner in the lake of hell in the morning for a particular sin of which he was guilty he would be quite ready to commit that same sin before the sun would go down for which he was dipped in the lake of hell in the morning. The terrors of a lost eternity, described by one who had risen from the dead, though he should speak with the greatest eloquence which was ever found among men, would avail nothing. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Luke xvi: 31.

In the Bible we have God's law set before us as the standard which we must attain to, if we are to have life through our own works, and it is a standard which no sinner can attain to. It only serves to show us our sinful condition for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." It was so with the children of Israel at the giving of the Moral Law on Mount Sinai. They were made conscious of their need of a Mediator between them and the holy God who proclaimed this law. In the same manner when the Word of God comes, accompanied by the power of the Spirit, to the sinner, that sinner is brought face to face with realities of which he was not conscious before. All his false hopes melt away, and the fortifications in which he thought to find shelter are broken down. "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. xxiii: 29.

The Bible has more than terrors for an awakened and wounded soul. There is to be found there a healing balm. Christ, as a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, is set before us, and all that He became for His people. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Isa. liii: 5. This Saviour is not far off, but near. He is the near kinsman who is able and willing to act the part of a kinsman. He can be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, for He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The Word of the Lord reveals that the ignorance and brutishness of those who trust in Him will not keep Him from showing His interest in them for He has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." This puts the Lord's people in a position that is desirable indeed, whatever their outward circumstances may be. This enabled the Apostle Paul to say, "I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil. iv: 11. The Christian may well afford to act thus when the Word of the Lord says, "Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. xiii: 5.

There are also in the Word of the Lord, God's great and precious promises, none of which will fail. A fellow-creature might promise many things which, through inability or change of circumstances, he might never be able to perform. It is not so with the Lord. He is both able and willing to perform His promises. Micah was confident of this when he said, "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." Micah vii: 20. His eye is on His poor ones, and He will perform His promises to them. "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ps. lxxii: 12, 13.

This Word goeth out of the mouth of the Lord. Job valued highly the word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord when he said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job xxiii: 12. It is so with the Lord's people in every age of time. With them it is not, What saith man? but, What saith the Lord? That Word is for their guidance, their instruction, their comfort, and it is meat and drink to their soul. It is used in their sanctification. In the Saviour's prayer on their behalf, he said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy

word is truth," John xvii: 18, and by way of encouraging them, He says, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Psalmist, under the inspiration of the Spirit, shows the efficacy of the Word to cleanse, when he says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." Ps. cxix: 9.

II. I now come to notice something as to the manner of its going forth.

The emblems used are the rain and the snow coming down from heaven. We are here directed to the purity of the Word. We read that "the words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Ps. xii: 6. Efforts were made by many to corrupt the Word of God. This was done at times by deliberate attempts to introduce corrupt readings and glosses into the manuscripts, and in later times by showing a preference to these corrupt readings rather than those which bore unmistakable marks of being genuine. Many of the so-called "assured results" of the Higher Critics are based on these spurious readings, and they have succeeded well in inoculating a generation not well-grounded in the doctrines of God's Word with a poisonous dope which only the saving work of the Spirit can put out. Those who love the Word of God, however, will take up the attitude of the Apostle when he said, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." II Cor. ii: 17.

The emblems used here show that the Word of God is irresistible when it comes with power. This evening, as you know, is wet and stormy, and no doubt every one of you would rather that it continued dry because of your crops. Could any of you keep back the rain? Have any of our most clever scientists ever been able to devise means by which the rain and the snow could be held back? No. It is beyond their power or their wisdom to do so. In the same way when the Word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord comes with power, the most hardened sinner is unable to keep it back. Yea, I may add that the Devil himself cannot do so. Where could you find anyone more immersed in superstition and idolatry than Manasseh, or one more mad against the Lord Jesus Christ than Saul of Tarsus, or one more a slave to the Devil than Mary Magdalene, and yet when the Word came from the mouth of the Lord to them, it turned them to be humble followers of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. They could not resist it, and they were made willing in a day of the power of the Spirit to be

saved by Christ, and to give Him the glory of their salvation, setting Him before us "with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Song iii: 11.

This going forth is in accordance with God's sovereignty. When the rain and the snow fall on some parts of the earth, and are withholden from other parts, it does not just happen that it is so. It is God who sends it or withholds it. "Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures." Ps. cxxxv: 6, 7. Thus also does the Lord with His spiritual bounties, and dispenses them to whom He will. You may find many having the privileges of the gospel, and the gospel is a savour of death to them, and one among them plucked out as a brand from the burning, and raised up to be a monument of free and sovereign grace. There were many who were professing religion in the days of the Saviour who were passed by, and the poor illiterate fishermen of Galilee taken and taught by the Spirit of God. The Saviour Himself gives the explanation of this when He says, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. xi: 25, 26.

When the Lord visits a place or a people with the gospel, or leaves it there for a long period without anything to be seen but spiritual barrenness, who can tell what His purpose may be. Among ourselves we have the gospel from our infancy, but it is very little fruit that is to be seen. This ought to cause each of us to have heart-searching in company with the Searcher of hearts. We cannot deny but that you are attentive on the public means of grace, and it may be that the Lord has a gracious purpose towards some of you. In sending the rain and the snow upon the earth He does it that "it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater," and there may be some of you who are ordained from all eternity to be "vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." The most suitable Scripture exhortation to you is to be found in this chapter; "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Verses 6 and 7.

III. The third matter to which I would seek to draw your attention is, That which the Word going out of the mouth of the Lord will do.

It is to give seed to the sower. The sower is the preacher of the gospel. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow." It is the good seed of the kingdom that he sows, and therefore it is to the Word that goeth forth out of the mouth of the Lord that he must turn. There are many today who profess to preach the gospel, and if you turn to their church advertisements in the Saturday papers, you will find that they discourse on the most trifling subjects which are not remotely connected with the condition and needs of immortal souls, but the sad thing is that the people love to have it so. When the true gospel preacher goes out with his seed basket he takes his seed out of the rich treasures of the Bible, and sows it in handfuls.

One handful which he sows, forms the answer to the first question in the Shorter Catechism; "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." We are to glorify God in all things that we do; "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I. Cor. x: 31. The preacher of the Word ought to glorify God by his example and by his doctrine, for he must study to show himself "approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II. Tim. ii: 15. It is thus that one can follow in the steps of the Apostle Paul when he said, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. vi: 14. When this end of our creation is sought after there is also the enjoying of God. He is enjoyed in the public and private exercises of His worship, in the Word and in the sacraments, and also in the fellowship which the Lord's people have with each other in Christ.

Another handful which the preacher of the gospel must sow is man's ruin by the Fall. Jacob's sons could say that they were the "sons of one man," and so can we. We are all the children of fallen Adam, and that Fall has ruined us so that our nature is wholly corrupt, as is clearly manifested in our thoughts, words, and actions. Of the whole human race it can be said, "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." Is. i: 6. Until we realise that this is our condition we can never appreciate God's provision in the gospel. Those preachers who deny the Fall have no gospel to preach, for the gospel is for

fallen man, not for good men and women. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

In going out with the good seed of the Word, the preacher must make much of Christ. James Durham, one of the most eminent of the divines of the Second Reformation in Scotland, said that Christ ought to be the text of the sermon, the beginning of the sermon, the body of the sermon, and the conclusion of the sermon. There must, at all times, be a holding forth of a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, as God's only remedy to meet with the lost and ruined condition of man, for "neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv: 12. His wonderful love in veiling His Godhead, and coming into this world to suffer and die for sinners, set forth in the gospel is that which draws sinners to Him. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii: 32.

Again, the sower must bring before sinners the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Alas, there are a great many congregations in Scotland who can say with the men who met the Apostle Paul at Ephesus, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Acts xix: 2. The preaching where there is nothing said about the work of the Holy Spirit is not the preaching of the gospel. Sinners are being deceived for eternity when they are told that they themselves can believe. Many so-called evangelists, if they get unconverted men by the hundreds to say that they believe, they give glowing reports of the great success of their mission when, sad to say, their poor dupes are still in the gall of bitterness and under the bond of iniquity, without God and without hope in the world. The result of this is, that in a short while they go back like the dog to his vomit again, and like the sow that is washed to its wallowing in the mire. When the Holy Spirit works, the result will be what Christ says, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi: 14. It is true of those in whom that work is done that they are among those on whose behalf the Apostle speaks when he says, "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. x: 39.

It gives bread to the eater. Those who come under the power of the gospel are no longer, like the prodigal son, seeking to eat of the husks of the swine. They are feeding by faith upon Christ to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. They have a Saviour who is very God and very man, thus, though He

is the eternal God, He can have compassion on His poor people in their infirmities, temptations, and persecutions, and at the same time He makes His grace sufficient for them and His strength perfect in their weakness, carrying them through to the hour of their death, accompanying them in the dark valley of the shadow of death, and bringing them home to glory, giving them in all their difficulties the assurance that "my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." John vi: 55.

It is bread to the eater for the Lord's people that their Saviour is not only a Saviour who has suffered, but also a triumphing Saviour. Why is it that death could not hold the Saviour in the grave? It is because that for which He suffered and died no longer existed. He died for the sins of His people, and in making atonement for their sins, He made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness. Yea, even death, which is the wages of sin, He abolished, and thus, in His atoning death, He satisfied for ever the Justice of God on behalf of the elect, and gave them a right to sing triumphantly, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory." I. Cor. xv: 55. "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Verse 57.

As bread gives strength to the weakening body, so the Lord's people are strengthened by experiencing that Christ is a Saviour who can be approached. It is on very rare occasions that poor people are permitted to approach the Sovereign of this realm, and before that takes place many rules and regulations have to be observed, but, in this case, the approach is to be made to One Who is infinitely higher than the Sovereign of Great Britain. It is to be made to the King of kings and Lord of lords, yet we are exhorted to come boldly to Him. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. iv: 16. He invites those who labour and are heavy laden, He has compassion on the ignorant and on those who are out of the way, He has made provision for the poor and the needy, and He Himself has become to them a protection from every tempest that may meet with them in the way. By these things He says to His Zion, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." Ps. cxxxii: 15. By this Word which goes out of His mouth He is accomplishing what He has purposed from all eternity concerning a countless number of the race to which we belong. May He bless His Word.

POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL DANGERS OF ROMANISM

*By the Rev. Dr. Hugh Farrell, formerly a Carmelite Friar **

(Continued from page 240)

Heathen Origin

Now why is this great devotion so prevalent? Well, it is easy to understand if you know anything about the people of the Mediterranean. At the time of the coming of Christ, the slaves, and the lower classes of the Roman Empire, had great devotion to a deity called "The great mother of the gods." She was known as Isis among the Egyptians. If you go to the British Museum any afternoon you will see the truth of the statement I am about to make. You merely have to go into the Egyptian display, the second floor at the north end, and you will see many little statuettes there of Isis, and in her arms she is holding Horus, the boy god, on her knees. Then if you want to compare, go down to the Edward VII room, north end also, and see some of the medieval madonnas, Mary and the Child. It will be very difficult for you to distinguish between the two. At the time of the preaching of Christianity, the people of the Mediterranean races were very devoted to this "great mother of the gods." Her worship was so vile that actually any Roman nobleman who participated in it was deprived of his citizenship, and, under many emperors, was actually ordered to be put to death. Her priests were eunuchs, and were called Galli. Part of the worship of this "great mother of the gods" as she was called was to flagellate themselves until they fell in their own blood. When a member was converted to Christianity from among the Roman nobility, he ordered his whole house to become Christians. In many cases, the slaves did not even know what he was talking about. But because they were slaves, and had no will of their own, they conformed to the so-called Christian standards of the master. But they never forgot their worship of this "great mother of the gods." In their minds they said, "Well, I cannot worship the 'great mother of the gods' any more, but I will take Mary, because Mary is very like the 'great mother of the gods' and she too had a child." Gradually the transfer took place and that is why you find so prevalent, among the Mediterranean races, this great devotion to Mary.

You may ask how it got to Ireland. It reached Ireland because of the constant connection between Ireland and Italy, and it was brought there mainly by the men who had been in Italy and

* This article appeared in "The English Churchman," 29th September, 1961, and is published here by permission of the Editor of the said paper. It is of interest in view of the present Vatican Council in Rome.—Editor.

returned to Ireland. If you read the history of Roman Catholicism in the Scandinavian countries, you will note that devotion to Mary was never prevalent even during the greatest period of the Roman Catholic power in those countries. You will notice also under the old British Church, and remember the British Church existed here long before the Roman missionaries came (the Roman missionaries came with Augustine of Canterbury), that at that time, churches were called "Christ." As a matter of fact, many of the Cathedrals are called "Christ and St. Mary" showing that the "St. Mary" was later added. You will find in the early Celtic or British church that devotion was to Christ, and to the Godhead, as it should be.

These may seem small points to you; the Papacy and Mary, and the sacrifice of the Mass. But you must stop them from coming into the Anglican Church. Of course you may believe in them already. There are vicars and rectors in this country who pray for the Pope daily. As a matter of fact at the Benedictine Fathers priory in Three Rivers, Michigan, they pray every day at the end of their Masses as they call them, for the Intention of the Pope. This priory is a daughter house of the Anglican Benedictine Abbey of Nashdom. They hold that they are in union with the Pope although he does not recognise them at the present time. But as soon as he recognises them they will join. So, consequently, if these devotions creep into the Evangelical churches, you are going to have a lessening of the preaching of the Gospel, because as I pointed out to one young man here a short time ago, as ritualism increases, the gospel goes out of the window. There is not enough time in the hour's service for both. When you emphasise the gospel there is no time for extreme ritual. Besides you do not need it. Whenever a rector does not have a sermon prepared, or he does not have anything to say, he can march around the church four or five times, throw a little incense, have a procession, and the people go away happy, feeling they have been to worship.

We have to watch these things. There is another serious situation facing you at present. *It is that the highest bishops in England are intent upon union with Rome.* They claim it is good to compromise with Rome because we want one church, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." But do we want it if it means compromising our own Christian heritage? Think what would have happened in the days of the Evangelists if they had been willing to go ahead and worship the Roman gods, saying, that by doing so, we will win the Romans to Christ. They would not have won the Romans, and to-day we would not have been here

giving honour to the Christian faith and receiving the blessing of Almighty God. *You can never win anyone by compromise.* Years ago when I started out in the Anglican ministry, I used to compromise on many occasions because I thought it was a good thing. Now as I look back I realise I was being very weak. How many Roman Catholics are willing to compromise? Count them on your fingers. For example, you may say to a Roman Catholic, "I will go to your church if you will come to my church." A few of them may. However they will show you while they are there that they do not intend to participate. But most of them will say, "No, it is against the law of my church to participate in the worship of your church or to pray with you." At least, you have to give them credit for being firm in their faith, mistaken as they are. Now if we take the same stand we shall have much more respect from them. Also we shall show them that we have the gospel of Jesus Christ to uphold. If we do not, we shall lose our priceless heritage.

You here constitute a remnant of the last evangelical group here in England. You would be amazed at the spiritual apathy existing here in England. You have to come from the outside. Now as a citizen of the United States, I am not criticising. Please do not feel that way. I know that in the United States we have only too much to criticise. You may say, "What are you doing over here to begin with; why do you not stay in the United States?" Well, I have a particular mission of telling people not only of the dangers confronting them concerning Roman Catholicism but also how they may witness to Roman Catholics. I am over here for that purpose. In the United States we have many organisations doing the very work that I am trying to do over here. Unless you safeguard this preaching of the gospel, unless you keep out ritualism as much as possible, and unless you strengthen the hand of the evangelical ministers who are trying to fight for the proper canons of the Church of England—the canons that will safeguard your priceless heritage, then you will lose the battle.

NOTES OF A SERMON

By late Mr Alex. B. Mpofu, Africa

AFRICAN NATIVES PREACHING IN SCOTLAND

Eminent Highland preachers of the past foretold that natives of Africa would yet come and preach the gospel in Scotland. We saw this fulfilled in June last year.

The late Mr Alexander Mpofu was in Halkirk for one weekend. At worship on Sabbath morning he said in prayer, "Unless we be armed by Thee we cannot fight this battle to the end. Thy Word is thy spear

and thy Holy Spirit is thy shield, and we need them." It was evident to us that he had what he prayed for, and we believe he is now with the redeemed in glory.

He conducted the service on Sabbath morning *in English for the first time*, and enjoyed liberty. Notes of his sermon are given herewith.

Rev. P. Mzamo spent that weekend in Wick, but on Sabbath evening he preached a sermon in Thurso, notes of which we will give *next month* also for the benefit of others.

These sermons were not taken down by shorthand, and consequently are not as complete as one would wish them to be.

We recall their interesting conversation regarding our African Mission, and pray that the Word will have free course, and be glorified in the ingathering of many souls to Christ there.—W. Grant.

Acts, Chapter III: Verse 19.

We shall try to meditate from the 19th verse: "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." These words were said by the Apostle Peter one day, when they did a certain miracle which no man could do himself. There was a man lame from his mother's womb, that is before he was born he was lame. His heart and wishes were as good as others and his desire of things the same as others. His friends thought of a plan of how he could get his wishes, so they put him at the gate of the temple and people dropped something into a box to satisfy his wishes. Different people would give money, some clothes, others handkerchiefs, and when the sun sets he would have many things to satisfy him, but in all there would be nothing to cure his lameness. One day two men came where he was and when he looked at their faces he saw something different. He saw they were good men and said to himself, I'm sure I'll get something good from them. That was the hope he had. When they came he stretched his hand to receive something. They stopped; he looked for a while expecting to receive. At last one said: "Look on us." That was a new thing. No one ever asked him to look at them before, but he said, Look on us, and he lifted up his eyes and looked at them, and they seemed to bring something new. Others would say, Aren't they foolish asking him to look at them. Peter said: "Silver and gold have I none but such as I have give I thee." That word struck the mind of others and this man too. It meant they had something great to give. They said, In the name of Jesus Christ stand up, in the name of Jesus who was crucified, stand up. When they uttered in the name of Jesus Christ the man felt something in himself, his limbs felt power. He didn't say, How shall I stand. That name had power, it brought power and there was surprise. He stood up for the first time, filled with joy and jumping like a lamb following its mother. He enjoyed the pleasure of jumping.

Now, what has that to do with us? We are not lame. Has it? Oh no, I am not lame. I was born as a child, started sitting,

then creeping, then walking. We are all born lame. We received sin from our forefathers and we are born lame. Two men—the Word of God and the Holy Spirit—these are two men coming to us in the same name of Jesus, the crucified Saviour. He says, Come unto me all ye that are lame and I will make you walk. How long are you lame at the gate? Some are over sixty years, some thirty, some fifty years. Some have gifts that profit nothing, but this man has a gift that profits for evermore. Shall we remain in sin evermore? If it were not for our sin Christ would not have come to die. God would not be so foolish to let sinners go free unless we repent. We all say away with him as others did in Pilate's day. They chose Barrabas, a murderer and denied Christ. Some say we would not be so foolish as them. Are you saying Christ is not for you? You would be pleased without Christ would you? But we read of repentance. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out."

One of Jesus' disciples said he would not leave Jesus, but Jesus said, "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice"; and when they came to arrest him he pulled out his sword. Christ said, Put it back, I must do my Father's will because the cup that my Father has for me I must drink it. When Jesus was arrested they took him away to the High Court. Peter followed behind, not to be seen. When he was discovered in the house he denied him thrice and the third time the cock crowed. Jesus looked at Peter and Peter remembered what Jesus said to him and he went out and cried bitterly.

We read he was forgiven that sin. He says: "Though your sins be red like crimson they shall be as wool." If you repent you will be white as snow. Some think repentance can be bought by the cross they wear round their necks. A repentance bought is no repentance. The Lord has power to renew our hearts and take away our old hearts. Some, I notice, think repentance is got by being baptised. No; repentance comes when the Holy Spirit by his power inside the heart sweeps out all the dirt and makes a new heart. Then we will be made new creatures in the name of Jesus Christ. They should not be surprised but repent of their sins. In Rhodesia some come to the session and ask for baptism. When we ask why, they often say so I may repent. When should we repent? It is now, before the time comes. What time is that the apostles speak of? The time of death. Only the living shall praise Thee in the land of mercy. One thought he could repent later, and later he found a big distance between him and Heaven and found he could not repent. The Word says repent now and your sins will be

blotted out. The Apostles said repent and if we turn from our own way to the Lord Jesus, who has power to blot out all our sins, nothing we have done but He can easily blot out, because He came and died for sinners. He has power to raise you up and the day Christ was crucified was to cleanse all sinners who come to Him.

Will you remain in your sins? Will you refuse to look to Him? He says in Revelations: "Behold I stand at the door and knock." How long shall you shut your ears? He is knocking and says, If any man open I will come in and I shall be his Lord.

Pray to Christ that He may send His Holy Spirit today. If your friend knocks at your door you rush to see who is at the door, and you receive your friend with joy. Why keep the Saviour at the door? He alone could be with us if we repent and receive Him—to leave our own ways and come to Him. He says take my yoke, it is light, not as heavy as your own. He will guide them to the end, for how shall we go, who know not the way. He says, "I am the way." God is still pleading with us. May we ask strength from Him. The Saviour is calling us in his own kindness. We are hasting to a place where the worm dieth not. If a friend calls to you there is a big hole or a snake in front of you you would heed him. Will you not listen to the Saviour? Shall we continue in our evil ways and die? At the Judgment Day sentence is passed, but to them who believe they shall be saved.

NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS : 1866

DEAR READER,

The sand-glass is running out. Another year is gone! Three hundred and sixty-five days past! How silently—yet how quickly again—has grain after grain, particle after particle, hour after hour, dropped in this glass. Deathless hours they are; uncounted, unnoted, and forgotten it may be by man, but every falling grain has been noted by God. The busy pen of Heaven has been marking every moment. Ask thyself the searching question, "Has it been with me a happy year? It has brought me nearer Eternity; but has it brought me nearer God? Does it find me better fitted for Heaven, with more of the pilgrim spirit than I had when the year began?"

What a time for serious thought! Another new year summons thee to a Pisgah-Mount—from the top of one of life's memorable eminences solemnly to review time past—consider time present—and prepare for time to come. Cast, then, thine eye on the past year's journey, and how full of impressive recollections is the retrospect!

God has been dealing with thee individually, and speaking to thee surely, in language not to be misunderstood. Hearest thou not the rustling wings of the Angel of Death? Have not his arrows been flying fast and thick, and thousands made his victims? Look back! Seest thou that crowd of fresh-made graves?—they are silent preachers to thee! and this is their silent text and sermon, “Be ye also ready.”

Many of those who slumber underneath these sods were cut down without a note of preparation. One was busied in the market-place; the Angel of Judgment met him there, and before evening he was DEAD! Another was seated at his fire-side, planning bright thoughts and schemes for the future—he never saw the morrow's sun. Another was in company, loud in godless merriment, and breathing out his blasphemies—a few hours more and he was arraigned at the bar of God! Another flung himself prayerless on his nightly pillow—next morning he awoke—but it was in ETERNITY!

And, reader, has He spared thee? What! cut down others and left thee to count in the review of a past year—fig-tree after fig-tree blighted and fallen—and yet thyself, the most “barren” of all—a fruitless cumberer—still “spared!”

Canst thou calculate on another year? Let these green graves answer. Another year! Thine own grave may be among the number of these silent preachers on another anniversary. Who can tell but the summons may even now be on the wing, “Get thee up and die!” Thou mayest this time next year be reading to others the solemn lesson now read to thyself, “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Dear reader, if this be a possible thing, take one look forward. If the arrow of death were indeed during this coming year to mark thee out, how would it fare with thee? Couldst thou say with exulting Paul, when he had the prospect of death before him, “I am Now ready”? (II Tim. iv: 6). Are you at peace with God? Are you resting your eternal all on his dear Son? Are you in that blessed state of holy weanedness from this world, and holy preparedness for another and a better, that “living or dying” you can say and feel that “you are Christ's”?

Would the angel-summons, “Behold! the Bridegroom cometh,” find you exclaiming in joyous rapture, “Even so! come Lord Jesus! come quickly”? Would you be ready to pass from a death full of hope to a judgment divested of all terror—a God reconciled—an immortality of endless glory? These are solemn things and solemn thoughts! Answer them on thy knees—with the solemnities of the past year behind thee—an unseen God above thee—a great eternity before thee. Answer them speedily.

And as ye begin to descend the mount and commence the journey of a new year, let the feeble voice of the old one whisper its dying accents in thine ear, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near;" for He who testifieth these things saith, "Behold I come quickly!"

(By D. Matheson, Evangelist, born at Huntly—November, 1824)

OBITUARY

The Late Mrs Marion MacDonald, Licisto, Harris

The subject of this short obituary was born in Scalpay, Harris, in the year 1872, and departed this life on December 17th, 1961, at the advanced age of eighty-nine. For the long period of seventy years, she publicly professed the Lord Jesus, and adorned her profession, to the end, with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; the possession of this gift of grace was evident to those who knew her best, not only in prosperity, but also, and perhaps more particularly, in adversity. She had her own share of the trials of this life, but, being blessed with an abiding consciousness of a Saviour's loving care over herself and her loved ones, she was enabled thereby to commit all to Him and found peace in the exercise of faith.

During the period of our acquaintance with this gracious lady, she was deprived of the privilege of attending the public means of grace, owing to the infirmities of old age, and the distance of her home from the public highway. It was her delight, however, to recall the "days of old," when, with many other like-minded men and women, she used to make her way to the courts of God's house, and her soul seemed to be refreshed, as she recounted to us some of the sermons which were blessed to her soul, during those years. Among such were two of outstanding sweetness to her—both were preached in the open air, on the evening of a Communion Sabbath at Finsbay, one, on Jeremiah, chapter 8, verse 20, being by the late Rev. N. Macintyre, Edinburgh, and the other, on Exodus, chapter 12, verse 7, by Rev. D. N. MacLeod, Ullapool, then minister at Tarbert.

It was also her custom to quote certain passages of Scriptures aloud, which would show where her soul was feeding, in the pastures of the Word, at the time, and was often heard to say, "O that I might be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness . . ." (Philippians iii: 8). The Psalms of David, the sweet singer of Israel, were often on her lips, especially as she neared the end of her earthly journey, when the words of Psalm cxxi were often with her:

“ I to the hills will lift mine eyes,
From whence doth come mine aid.”

Her last words, spoken in Gaelic, were from Psalm cxviii: v. 19: “ Jehovah, molaiddh mise ” (“ and I the Lord will bless ”).

She was one who loved the Lord's people and treasured their fellowship. Even during the last three months of her life, when she was confined to bed, she still manifested the same utter dependence upon the Lord, which had characterised her whole life. Towards the end, she made a remark to her daughter, who was nursing her, regarding the portion of Scripture in John's Gospel, chapter x: verses 27 and 28, which had just been read to her, “ on that pillow I rest my weary head.” We believe that this was indeed the manner of her passing from this vale of tears, to the place in the heavens where the sun shall no more go down for her, nor her moon be darkened.

The last year of her life was saddened by the death of her elder son, Finlay, who had been her constant companion, since the death of her husband in 1938. Her resignation to the will of God, however, was very marked. To the remaining members of her family of seven we would offer anew our sincere sympathy, and pray that the words of wise counsel so often and lovingly given, and the godly example set before them, might be abundantly blessed to their own eternal welfare.

“ The memory of the just is blessed.”

A. M. C.

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 251)

Cùis 3. 'S e'n treas cùis a tha'g eirigh gu bhi labhairt oirre, so: Cia mar a dh'fhaodas cridheachan maoth agus aig am bheil suil air gnothuichean follaiseach a bhi air am fuasgladh agus air an cumail suas 'n uair a tha iad trom-luchdaichte le mothachadh cudthromach air trioblaidean Shion? Tha mi'g aideachadh, gu'm bheil e cruaidh air-san a tha ròghnachadh Shion air thoiseach air uile aoibhneas àrd, a chridhe a ghleidheadh a chum nach rachadh e fodha fuidh mhothachadh ceart air trioblaidean; agus, gidheadh, bu chòir dha so a bhi air a dheanamh, agus faodaidh e bhi air a dheanamh, le bhi deanamh feum de sheolaidhean a tha daingneachadh a chridhe mar iad so. Thugaibh an aire do na seolaidhean a leanas:

(1) Suidhichibh an fhirinn mhòr so 'n 'ur cridheachan, nach tachair trioblaid air bith do Shion, ach le ceadachadh Dia Shion;

agus cha cheadaich E nì air bith as nach toir E mach mòran maith, mu dheireadh, da shluagh.

Tha da-rireadh steidh sàmhchair ann an ceadachadh, mar ann an toil Dhé a tha E 'g àithne. Faic e ann an Daibhidh, " Leigibh leis mallachadh, a chionn gu'n d'thubhairt an Tighearna ris, Mallaich Daibhidh: agus co their, C'ar son a rinn thu mar so? " (II Samuel xvi: 10). Agus ann an Criosd, " Cha bhiodh cumhaohd air bith agad a'm' aghaidh-sa, mar tugtadh dhuit o'n àirde e " (Eoin xix: 11). Bu chòr dha so ar spioradan a chiùnachadh gu mòr gu'r e toil Dhé a cheadachadh; agus mar a robh E air a cheadachadh, cha b'urrain e gu bràth a bhi mar a tha e. Chiùnaich a bhi beachdachadh air so Iob, Eili, Daibhidh, agus Hesechia; bu leoir dhoibh gu'n d'rinn an Tighearna e, agus c'ar son nach biodh e mar sin dhuinne? Ma's i toil an Tighearna Sion a bhi air a treabhadh mar mhachair, agus a clachaibh briagha 'n an luidh anns an duslach; ma's i a thoil gu'm biodh an t-ana-criosd air bhoile ni's fhaide, gu bhi sàrachadh naoimh an Ti is Airde; ma's i a thoile gu'm biodh latha na trioblaid, agus an t-saltairt sios, agus na h-ìom-cheisd ann an gleann an taisbeanaidh, gu'm biodh an t-aingidh ag itheadh suas an duine is ionraic na e, co sinne gu'm biodh sinn a stri ri Dia? Is freagarach e gu'm biodh sinne striochta do'n toil sin bho'n d'thàinig sinn a mach, agus gu'm biodh sinn air ar riaghladh Leis-san a rinn sinn mar is àill Leis. Faodaidh E dheanamh mar is maith Leis gun ar cead-ne: am bheil an duine bochd a seasamh air bonn anns am bheil e co-ionnan ri Dia, gu'n deanadh e a chòirichean a thagradh r'a Chruithear, na gu'n toireadh Dia cùntas dhà ann an aon de ghnothuichean? Tha e anns a h-uile seadh cho reusanta gu'm biodh-mid toilichte, cia b'e air bith mar a dheiligeas Dia ruinn, agus a tha e gu'm biodh-mid umhail dhà gach nì a dh'àithne E dhuinn.

Ach an sin, ma leanas sinn an reusanachadh so ni's fhaide, le bhi toirt fa'n ear gu'm bheil ceadachaidhean Dhé uile a coinneachadh mu dheireadh ann am fìor mhaith a shluaigh, ciùnaichidh so ni's motha ar spioradan. Am bheil na naimhdean a giulain air falbh na figean maith, cadhon a chuid is fearr de'n t-sluagh do'n bhraighdeanas?

Tha so coltach ri freasdal duilich, ach gidheadh tha Dia ga'n cur an sin a chùim a' maith (Ier. xxiv: 5). Am bheil Dia a gabhail an Assirianaich mar lorg 'n a laimh gu bhi bualadh a shluaigh leis? Tha na builean so goirt, agus a toirt orra a bhi gladhach; ach 's i so a chrìoch air son am bheil E ga dheanamh, " Gu'n dean e dioghaltas air toradh cridhe uaibhreach rìgh Asiria, agus air sealladh àrd a shùl " (Isaiah x: 12). Ma's urrain Dia mòran maith a thoirt as an olc is miosa de'n a pheacadh,

nach motha na sin gu mòr a bheir E a àmhghairean aimseireil; agus tha e cho soilleir gu'n dean Se e agus a tha e gu'm bheil E comasach air a dheanamh. Oir tha e calg-dhireach an aghaidh neach cumanta a bhi ceadachadh ni air bith, a dh'fhaodadh e bhacadh na'm b'e a thoil e, a dhol tarsuinn air a dheilbh mhòr agus a chrìoch: agus an gabhadh e smuainteachadh gu'n deanadh an Dia ro-ghlic so?

Uime sin, mar a thubhairt *Luther* ri *Melancthon*, "Leig le gliocas, cumhachd, agus gràdh neo-chrìochnach;" oir leo so tha gach creutair air a riaghladh, agus gach gnìomh air a stiùradh, a thaobh na h-eaglais: cha'n e ni dhe ar n'obair-ne a bhi riaghladh an t-saoghail, ach a bhi strìochdadh Dhà-san a tha deanamh sin: tha gluasadan an Fhreasdail uile breithneachail, tha na rothan làn de shùilean: is leoir e gu'm bheil cùisean Shìon ann an deagh laimh.

(2) Beachd-smuaintich air an fhirinn so a tha cumail taic ris a chridhe, a thaobh àmhghairean Shìon: ge b'e cho lionmhor 's a tha h-àmhghairean, gidheadh tha a Rìgh 'n a meadhon.

Ciod e. an do threig an Tighearna eaglaisean? An do reic E iad do laimh an nàmhaid? An e nach eil suim Aige do na h-uile ni a thachras dhoibh? a chionn gu'm bheil bhur cridheachan a dol sìos anns an tomhas so. Nach eil e ro-nàrach a bhi mar so ag isleachadh luach an Dé mhòir, agus ag àrdachadh tuilleadh 's a chòir daoine bochd, eu-comasach, le eagal agus crìth a bhi òirne roimh chreutairean, am feadh 's a tha Dia 'n ar measg? Faodaidh sinn aideachadh gu'm bheil nàimhdean na h-eaglais lionmhor agus cumhachdach; gidheadh tha'n argumaid leis an d'oidheirpich Caleb agus Iosua a bhi togail an cridheachan fein, a cheart cho cumhachdach a nis 's a bha i 'n uair sin: "Tha'n Tighearna maille ruinne: na biodh eagal oirbh rompa" (Air. xiv: 9). Tha fear-eachdraidh ag innse dhuinn 'n uair a chuala *Antigonus* a shaighdearan a cùntas cia cho lionmhor 's a bha'n nàimhdean, agus mar sin a mì-mhisneachadh aon a cheile, thainig e gu h-obunn a stigh 'n am measg leis a cheisd, "Cia meud a tha sibh a cùntas air mo shon-sa?" Anamaibh air a mì-mhisneachadh, cia meud a tha sibh a cùntas air son an Tighearna? Nach eil e ni's treise na a nàimhdean uile? Nach eil Aon Uile-chumhachdach ni's motha na mòran chumhachdach? Nach eil a làthaireachd a ciallachadh ni air bith dhuinn? "Ma tha Dia leinn, co dh'fhaodas a bhi 'n ar n-aghaidh?" (Rom. viii: 31). Ciod, a reir 'ur beachd, an t-aobhar air son an dèuchain mhòr a rinn Gideon ann am Breith. vi? Tha e cur oheisdean, rann 12, 13; tha e'g iarruidh comharadh, rann 17; agus an dèigh sin aon eile, rann 36; agus ciod e bu chrìoch dha so uile, ach a chum gu'm biodh e cinnteach gu'n robh an

Tighearna maille ris, agus gu'm b'urrair e so a sgrìobhadh air a shuaicheantas, "Claidheamh an Tighearna, agus Ghidioin?" Agus, uime sin, na'm biodh tù ro-chinnteach gu'm bheil an Tighearna maille ri shluagh, gheibheadh tù le sin os ceann do mhi-mhisneachaidhean; agus gu'm bheil e mar sin, cha leig thu leas, coltach ris-san, comharadh iarraidh bho neamh; feuch, tha comharadh agaibh fa'r comhair, eadhon an gleidheadh miorbhuil-each ann am meadhon an nàimhdean uile. Mar eil Dia maille r'a shluagh, cia mar nach eil iad air an slugadh suas gu luath? Am bheil an nàimhdean a dh'easbhuidh mi-rùn, cumhachd, na cothrom? Ni-h-eadh, ach tha lām neo-fhaicsinneach orra. Uime sin, mar a tha e ann an Ecsodus xxxiii: 14. Deonaicheadh a làthaireachd dhuinn fois; agus ged a bhiodh na beanntan air an tilgeadh do'n fhairge, ged a mheasgaicheadh neamh agus talamh r'a cheile, na biodh eagal oirbh, tha Dia ann a' meadhon Shìon, cha bhi i air a gluasad.

(3) Beachd-smuaintichibh air na cothroman mòr a tha leantuinn sluagh Dhé ann an suidheachadh àmhghaireach. Ma's e suidheachadh iosal agus àmhghaireach anns an t-saoghal, da-rìreadh an suidheachadh is fearr air son na h-eaglais, an sin tha do shuidheachadh muldach-sa, cha'n e mha'n mi-reusanta, ach neo-thaingeil. Gu dearbh, ma tha thu meas sòlas na h-eaglais le a sochair shaoghalta, le a mòralachd, a saoihbreas, an sin bithidh na h-amaibh sin cle dhith; ach ma tha thu meas gu'm bheil a glòir a co-sheasamh ann an ioraslachd, creidimh, foghaidean, agus a bhi de dh'inntinn neamhaidh, cha'n eil suidheachadh anns an t-saoghal a tha cho làn de chothroman riutha sin, mar a ni a suidheachadh àmhghaireach. Cha b'e geur-leanmhuinn, na prìosan, ach saoghachd agus neo-shuim, a bha'n a phuinnean do'n eaglais: cha mhotha b'e glòir thalamhaidh an luchd-aideachaidh, ach fuil na martarach, a bha 'n a shìol-cur do'n eaglais. Cha d'fhàs cumhachd na diadhachd riamh ni b'fhearr na ann an amhghair, agus cha robh e riamh ni b'isle na ann an amaibh an t-soirbheachaidh a bu mhotha: 'n uair a tha sinn air ar fagail 'n ar sluagh an-shocrach agus diblidh, an sin tha sinn a fòghlum a bhi'g earbsa ann an ainm an Tighearna (Seph. iii: 12). Ciod a tha sibh ag ràdh? am bheil e da-rìreadh a chum buannachd leanabh Dhé a bhi air a chasg bho ghràdh, agus bho thlachd a ghabhail ann an diomhanasan ribeil an t-saoghail. A bhi air am beothachadh, agus air an sparradh air adhart leis an tuilleadh cabhaig gu neamh, seallaidhean ni's soilleir a bhi againn air ar cridheachan fein, a bhi air ar teagasg gu bhi'g ùrnuigh ni's dùrachdaich, ni's tric, ni's spioradail; a bhi ni's dùrachdaich agus a miannachadh an deigh an fhois ri teachd? Ma thasò a chum am buannachd, tha

fein-fhiosrachadh a teagasg dhuinn, nach eil suidheachadh a tha gu h-àbhaisteach air a bheannachadh le leithid de thoraidhean riutha so, mar a tha suidheachadh àmhghaireach.

Agus am bheil e air a dheanamh gu maith, uime sin, a bhi seargadh agus a tuiteam sìos 'n uair a tha sùil an Athar ni's motha air buannachd bhur 'n anamaibh, na tha i air a bhi toirt toileachas da'r miannaibh? Do bhrìgh gu'n toir E sibh air slighe ni's dlùith air neamh na tha sibh toileach a dhol? 'N e dioladh ceart air a ghràdh-san, a thoilich a bhi gabhail uibhir de chùram dheth bhur maith-se? ni anns am bheil barrachd 's a tha E deanamh do mhilltean anns an t-saoghal, air nach leag E a shlat, na chleachdas E àmhghair air son a' maith (Hos. iv: 17; Mata xv: 14). Ach mo thruaighe. Tha sinn a toirt breith a reir ar mothachaidh agus tha sinn a meas nithean, maith na dona, a reir mar a tha sinn, air son an àm a tha làthair, ga'm blasad agus ga'n laimhseachadh.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The New Year

We extend to our readers and friends at Home, in Canada, America, Africa, Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere, gospel and prayerful good wishes for time and eternity, at the outset of 1964; and in the words of Paul to Timothy, wishing you all as individuals, families, ministers and congregations: "Grace, mercy and peace, from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord." The Lord's people, in casting their minds back upon the year that has just past, may remember tokens for good and manifold mercies from the God of their salvation, and also may have reason to remember trials, sorrows and afflictions in the Lord's dealings with them. And yet at the beginning of another year they have to humbly say that He hath not forsaken them according to His promise, "I will never leave thee." For the present and whatever days lie ahead according to the divine will, Christians will need grace, mercy and peace from the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ, for every step and stage of their pilgrimage journey through the world to that better country, even an heavenly. As to those who are still without God in the world, every day, every month and every year brings them nearer to a dark eternity, the perdition of the ungodly. What need such have of being convinced of this by the Holy Spirit, that they may seek grace, mercy and peace from God, in His Son Jesus Christ, crucified and risen and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour! And finally—may the Most High send times of refreshing from His presence and by His Spirit

upon the Church at Home and Abroad in the immediate days to come.

The Real Attitude of Rome to Christian Unity

The real, official, attitude of the Roman Church to present-day ideas on Christian unity is beginning to appear gradually without any cover. Last month we noted the forthright statements of a Romish clergyman that those who wanted union with Rome would need to submit to the doctrines and discipline of the Papacy. And now since the Vatican Council has met again in Rome, so-called Protestant observers at the Council are, in cases, beginning to discern the Roman Catholic official attitude to professing Christians outside the Roman fold. They did not need a great gathering in Rome discussing Ecclesiastical trifles to bring them to know that Rome will not change one iota in doctrine, etc., to assist in Church unity. Professor Edmund Schlink, of the Evangelical Church in Germany, has stated, as an observer at the Council, that he took particular issue with one statement which meant that "the one holy, catholic, apostolic Church is the Church directed by the Roman Pope, thus identifying the Church of God with the Roman Churches. The Professor also noted that references to non-Catholic Christians as individuals made no mention of non-Catholic Churches. He said, according to *The English Churchman*, "Needless to say non-Roman Christendom feels that these statements fail to understand it." It is the Professor who appears not to have understood before he left home the true character of Rome. How many like him today! Meet another supposed Protestant observer at the Vatican Council, Church of England Bishop of Ripon (Dr. Moorman), who said he believed the Anglican communion as a whole would be prepared to accept the fact of the Papacy. He also said that there will have to be a central head of the Church, and that head will clearly have to be the Bishop of Rome. These utterances, even by bishops, mean nothing and have no value whatsoever, but such men must say something as observers at the Vatican Council. One would think that union between the Church of England and Rome was but a short way off by what the bishop says. There will need to be a lot of abject submission to Rome before that day arrives; although we deplore the Romeward trend now.

Malta Constitution and Roman Catholic Church

In a recent issue we referred to discussions which took place in London about a new Constitution for the Island of Malta, in which Britain has an intimate interest. Dr. Borg Olivier, Prime

Minister of Malta, and Mr Dom Mintoff, leader of the Labour Party there, did not then settle outstanding issues, such as the influence and interference of the Roman Catholic Church in politics and past elections on the Island. Mr Mintoff has been fighting a stiff crusade for the insertion in the new Constitution of a provision forbidding the Church to interfere in political elections. It appeared later in press reports in November last that Dr. Olivier had been again in London then having talks with Mr Duncan Sandys, Colonial Secretary. The chief constitutional point, which we have mentioned above, is the issue of the political power of the Roman Church, which Mr Mintoff wants to see reduced by legislation. We are interested in this business, as we, as a nation, should not tolerate such undemocratic conduct on the part of the bishops and priests in Malta, as long as we have a say in forming a new Constitution for the people of Malta. Mr Duncan Sandys seems to be hesitant over this business and Mr Mintoff is far from satisfied. He knows better than Mr Sandys the oppressive and evil influence of the Roman Church when it goes unchecked. Mr Mintoff himself was a Roman Catholic and that fact speaks volumes. Probably the Church look upon him as a Communist. But we have no reason to believe this. We hope he gained his point.

The New Church

There appeared a notice in a Scottish daily paper with the heading "A New Church." It stated that "The true Christian religion for our own age is revealed in the works of the distinguished scientist, Emanuel Swedenborg, who was divinely inspired, and on his works the New Church was founded." An introductory course of instruction was offered free of charge from an address in Edinburgh. In contradiction of the above obviously false claims, we just need to state that the true Christian religion is revealed infallibly in the Holy Scriptures given by inspiration of God, and that the true Apostolic Christian Church was founded nearly two thousand years ago, and is now founded upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. The above false and bold claims are advanced in support of not merely a new church but a false church, which calmly sets aside the Word of God and puts in its place the delusion of an inspired Swedenborg. We live in times wherein Satan appears to be employing many and diverse weapons to undermine the true religion of the Bible and the Church which owns Christ Jesus as her Saviour and Head and holds to His Word supremely for her doctrines and practices. In addition, the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses

and the Mormons, etc., are all busily engaged doing the work of Satan in opposition to the gospel and cause of Christ in our land. What a sad reflection it is upon the people of our land that so many false religions are getting a footing within our borders! What a cleansing is needed by a day of the power of the Holy Spirit with the gospel! As a footnote: Swedenborg was born in 1688, in Sweden. He was a great scientist of his day, and in his later years claimed to have his sight opened into the spiritual world and claimed that he was enabled to converse with spirits and angels.

The Death of President John F. Kennedy

Our readers will, of course, be familiar with every detail of the assassination of the late President J. F. Kennedy of the U.S.A., at Dallas, on Friday, the 22nd November, 1963. We record our sense of abhorrence at the dastardly work of the assassin in shooting the President, who died shortly afterwards. At the age of forty-six years he was the most powerful political figure and leader in the world. From different sources we have gleaned the view that he was not an ardent, emotional and rigid Roman Catholic, although he was the first Roman Catholic to become President of the United States and thus a potential danger to the cause of Protestantism. Yet we cannot but acknowledge with millions of others all over the world that he was devoted to aiding poverty stricken and needy peoples throughout the world and that he was firm on the question of all civil rights for the American negroes. In conjunction with British statesmen he had a firm but balanced attitude to Russia. And in recognising that "the Lord reigneth," we must accept his death as a striking and clear fulfilment of the Scripture: "God is Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another"; as Mr Lyndon B. Johnson, Vice-President, immediately entered upon the office and responsibilities of President of the United States. On assuming this high office, Mr Johnson spoke most wisely when he declared to the American people that he could but do his best with their help and God's. May God indeed endue him richly with grace and wisdom for his tremendous tasks.

Dance-band Takes Over Church Service

The Rev. Ian Hutcheson, Church of Scotland minister of Gilcomeston and St. Colm's Church, Aberdeen, took a back seat on a Sabbath evening last November, when he placed the service entirely in the hands of a "teenagers'" dance band. A girl of sixteen years delivered what was called a 15-minute sermon, another young girl read a portion from the New English Bible to background music from a guitar played by a young lad. All

the hymns were sung to modern dance-band tunes, and so on. Thus the vain, careless, unconverted world continues to enter the realm of the professed Christian Church in Scotland, bringing the flesh and the sensual atmosphere of the dance hall into what purports to be the house of God. Holiness becometh God's house and they that worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in truth. But ministers (by office only) and congregations who tolerate the above are completely bankrupt religiously. Truly the god of this world, Satan, hath blinded the minds of them that believe not. Apparently apostolic doctrine, gospel and practice are not for the old or young in Aberdeen today. The same applies elsewhere. The Lord's Day and His house must be "purged" of a heavenly and holy atmosphere and be likened unto a week-day with its revellings to satisfy an irreligious generation. But let men know that for all these things, God will bring them to judgment.

An M.P.'s Partial Testimony for the Lord's Day

An invitation from the Scottish Trades Union Congress General Council to attend a conference on unemployment at Aberdeen, on Sabbath, 15th December, 1963, was accepted by Mr A. F. Hendry, M.P. But Mr Hendry pointed out in his letter of acceptance that such conferences should not be held on Sabbath, "which many of us regard as a day which is unsuitable for the discussion of secular subjects." Mr Hendry further stated that should the conference interfere with his attendance at church he would not be able to attend. To say the least of it—what a pity Mr Hendry did not refuse the invitation out and out on the ground of his objection to such conferences on Sabbath! Thus his testimony would have been most valuable on the side of God's commandment, and as coming from a Member of Parliament. May Mr Hendry obtain strength in future to witness fully for the Sabbath by deed as well as by word.

M.P. Condemns Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Peter Henderson, Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health, in a speech last July, in so many words condoned anti-nuptial fornication. Sir Cyril Black, M.P. (Con., Wimbledon), took this matter up in the House of Commons on 19th November, 1963, and accused Dr. Henderson of condoning fornication and said the officer's statement was reprehensible. Sir Cyril Black was right and within his rights in taking this matter up in the House. He further said that everyone had expected that Sir Edward Boyle, Minister of Education, would have strongly repudiated the views which were expressed to a seminar of teachers at Cambridge. But Sir Edward Boyle, in replying, said among

other things: "It is no part of my function to prescribe what moral teaching should take place in the schools." What a deplorable answer this was for the Minister in charge of Education in Britain. Has he no responsibility at all for this? If not, who has this responsibility? The Churches no doubt have a say in religious matters in the schools but not apart from the sanction of the Department of Education in Scotland and England surely. We think the Minister of Education's statement requires to be investigated.

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

Scourie and Kinlochbervie Manse Building Fund Appeal

The construction of the new manse at Kinlochbervie is well advanced, and we wish once again to commend this undertaking of the Scourie and Kinlochbervie congregation to the prayerful interest and generosity of the Church at large. Our loyal people in their remote north-western outpost need to be, and would be greatly encouraged by, receiving practical support in their present effort to provide a manse. We therefore respectfully appeal to all friends throughout the Church to do their utmost to send subscriptions to their Treasurer, Mr D. A. MacLeod, "Tighnamara," Tarbet, Foindle, by Lairg.

D. A. MACFARLANE, *Moderator of Presbytery.*

A. F. MACKAY, *Clerk.*

Home of Rest Special Appeal

Interested friends enquire as to Ballifeary House progress. Preparatory work proceeds as required. Payment of purchase, etc., made it necessary to obtain a loan of £6,000, and we hope

this will be repaid without much delay, avoiding prolonged interest payments. With this appeal for further donations we tender sincere thanks to those who have so generously given.—W. Grant.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.2, acknowledges with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3; Miss Cameron, Drimnin, £3; Mrs MacKellar, Lochfyne, £5; Miss S. MacLeod, Skelmorlie, £2.

Home Mission Fund.—Miss C. Nicolson, per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £20; M.S.K.D., £3; Mr MacKay, Ladyfield Farm, by Inveraray, per Miss Dewar, £1; Mr R. D. Nicolson, Penifiler, £1.

Foreign Mission Fund.—Elgin Meetings, per Rev. A. F. MacKay, £5; A Friend, per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £50; Miss C. Nicolson, per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £20; M.S.K.D., £3; Ontario Friends, £25; Mr R. D. Nicolson, Penifiler, £2. The following for Mbumba Mission Hospital: A Friend, per Rev. J. Colquhoun, £50; Ontario Friends, £10; Old Age Pensioner, £2 10/-; Vatten, £2 10/-.

Agend and Infirm Ministers', etc., Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

College and Library Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

Organisation Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

General Building Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

Mission to the Jews Fund.—Ontario Friends, £5.

China Mission Fund.—Ontario Friends, £5.

Home of Rest Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3; Friend, Inverness postmark, per Rev. A. F. MacKay, £1; Farr Friend, per Rev. A. F. MacKay, £5; Mrs Martin, Marig, £1 8s 6d; Miss D. MacKenzie, Innellan, 12/6; Miss M. MacLeod, Drumbeg, 12/6; Interested, £5; Mr J. MacKenzie, Islay, £2 6s 7d; Tomatin Congregation, Harvest Thanksgiving Collection, £9 12s 6d.

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