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FOOLISH TALKING

Believers in Ephesus were exhorted by Paul in his Epistle to be on their guard against conduct of every kind which was sinful and inconsistent with the conduct and character becoming a Christian. He refers to heinous sins such as fornication; and also to that which might not be thought by some to be unbecoming, such as "foolish talking." The latter has reference to talk characteristic of fools which reveals "the ignorance of foolish men" and is frivolous and senseless. But we would extend, in these notes, the application of these words to a variety of cases which we find in Scripture, wherein there is revealed in the speech or talk of men their spiritual ignorance and the folly of their natural hearts and outlook.

Concerning God. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," (Ps. 14: i), and many such there are who give voice to this tremendous delusion in the sinner's mind. And in cases it will be in a manner according to the saying, "The wish is father to the thought": when there is some natural apprehension in the conscience of sin and judgment to come before God. Although there are hardened atheists who declare that they have no belief in the existence of the God of the Bible. And yet they are sustained every moment by that same God, in whom we all live and move and have our being as to our existence and life in providence. Of course, such talk is blasphemous and a violation of the third Commandment.

Concerning Good and Evil. The prophet Isaiah speaking for the Lord pronounced "Woe" against those "... that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." And he adds to this, "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." (Isa. 5: 20). And surely those who speak in contradiction of the holy requirements of the divine law and propagate what is

called to-day " the new morality " are by their expressed views calling evil good and good evil and are chargeable with " foolish talking " of a dangerous nature to the morals of their fellow-men. There are, of course, many ways in which men indulge in this type of " foolish talking " and reveal that they reject the light of God's Word and delight in the darkness of their own carnal wisdom.

With Intent to Deceive. When godly King Jehoshaphat was enticed to join with wicked King Ahab to go up to battle against Ramoth-gilead; Ahab was encouraged to proceed by many false prophets with a false promise of success from the Lord. But Jehoshaphat desired to hear what a prophet of the Lord had to say. And Micaiah, a true prophet of the Lord, whom Ahab hated, was sent for. The messenger who went to call Micaiah said to him: " Behold now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good." (Kings 22: 13, 14). Micaiah treated this advice as " foolish talking " from an ignorant man who would have him to join in deceiving King Ahab to engage in an enterprise which was to be disastrous to Ahab and Israel. Micaiah therefore replied as a true prophet of the Lord " . . . as the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." And the Lord's people to-day have to listen to a great deal of " foolish talking " from those who are embarked on the movement toward Rome to join in a campaign fraught with disaster for the Protestant faith. The Lord's faithful people are determined to abide by the Word of God in their view of such activities.

With Respect to Worldly Possessions. In one of the parables by the Lord Jesus, He relates concerning a rich man who said " . . . I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry." This was " foolish talking " indeed when this man without any reference to the possible intervention of God, assumed that he had many years to live and to find all his satisfaction and pleasure in worldly possessions. In his talk he reveals his folly in completely disregarding God, the uncertainty of time and the reality of Eternity. When he thus spoke to his own soul, God said unto him, " Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? " (Luke 12: 19). How true this has been of many in their inordinate, carnal and foolish attachment to worldly things!

In a Religious Praise of Self. To illustrate this, we have another parable by the Lord Jesus in which He relates the prayer of the Pharisee to God; and which prayer is "foolish talking" religiously from beginning to end. He prayed ". . . God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." (Luke 18: xi). Later in this chapter the Lord Jesus asserts the solemn truth which was applicable to the Pharisee: "For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased." The Pharisee exhibited his great ignorance of the sinfulness of his own nature and heart where the roots of every sin are to be found. He did not know "That all have sinned and have come short of the glory of God," and that what he needed was divine mercy as much as the poor publican. For any sinner to address the Most High in a similar manner as the Pharisee, manifests an unholy boldness arising from ignorance and folly bound up in the heart of the unregenerate.

With regard to Afflictions and Trials. The first two chapters of the Book of Job describe the beginnings of the afflictions and trials endured by Job. And after Job had been smitten with boils by Satan his wife said to him: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die." (Chap. 2: 9). This is exactly what Satan thought would happen and desired to take place as we see in chapter one, where Satan says to God: "Doth Job fear God for naught?" Whatsoever else may be said regarding Job's wife, Job considered what she uttered with her lips in his trouble to be "foolish talking." "He said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh" in advising him to turn his back upon his God because of the afflictions which had come upon him. One of the most trying experiences an exercised believer can meet with is, when they hear one of their fellow-men expressing in words a rebellious frame of mind against God in time of affliction and adversity. Job exposes the folly of his wife's words when he replied further to her thus: "What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And no doubt the Lord's people themselves when tried have had to meet with a rebellious spirit rising up in their own breasts and have had reason to grieve over words unadvisedly uttered by their lips. "Foolish talking" indulged in, is made a grief to the child of God, when it is discovered to them that they have been finding fault with the disposing of the Lord in time of affliction and trial. How foolish of any man to question the wisdom of God, or the justness of God at such times! The Lord reigneth and it is not for any man to say unto Him: "What doest thou?"

And so there are innumerable cases of " Foolish talking " continually occurring among men in the world. We need grace and power from the Lord Jesus Christ to regulate our hearts and our lips, so that our speech be seasoned with " salt " when we speak to God and our own souls, to believers and before the world.

A SERMON

(Preached by the late Rev. D. J. Matheson, at St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, on Sabbath evening, 22nd September, 1946.)

Text: "*Turn you at My reproof; behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you*" (Prov. i: 23).

(Continued from Page 9)

But there are three classes in particular that the Lord addresses in this passage and this chapter. There are, first of all the simple ones: " How long, ye simple, will ye love simplicity? " And who are the simple; who are those who are here designated simple? Those who act as if they were devoid of the reason that God gives. And there are multitudes who act as if they were just bereft of reason, they are simple. The adversary sets many a net and snare for young and old in this generation. If ever there were a generation in which the devil was busy setting nets, and snares, and gins, to entangle boys and girls, and young men and women, it is in the very day in which we live, The net is set in order that you may be entrapped. Many are the temptations of the devil, and he will get many people in the net that he may ruin them for eternity. How many by each other's example ensnare one another: " When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." And let us see that we will not be sinning against light, against knowledge, against the warnings that we receive from the Word of God, and from parents, and from those who wish us well for eternity. See that we will not be striving, as it were, against these warnings to our own ruin and destruction. " How long, ye simple, will ye love simplicity? " " Surely in vain is the net set for any bird." The Lord gave understanding to the very birds. When they see a net laid for them, they fly away, they do not wish to be ensnared. We have become more stupid even than the very birds, and we who are rational creatures see clearly, our consciences tell us, the Word of God tells us, there is a snare. There it is before your eye, and, knowing it to be a snare, we walk right into it. Let us heed then, every one of us, that we shall be vigilant, for the devil is walking about " as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

This class is also addressed—the scorner. There are those in the world who scoff and mock at sacred things. On a Sabbath day, after hearing a sermon, the first word that may be said concerning the service is a word of scorn. There are multitudes who laugh at the very thought of being eternally tormented in the lake of fire that burneth for ever and ever. There are multitudes in this age who laugh at it. If they mention the word “hell,” it is likely in ridicule. But the joviality of such will end. Those who laugh now will weep eternally if they repent not. These are things that we ought never to scoff at, things we ought never to laugh at, things that pertain to God and to our own souls. Now the Lord is addressing those who scoff, who mock at eternal realities: “Fools make a mock at sin.” They make a mock at these very things which ought to be a source of terror to them. They mock at sin itself when they think little of it. They may recall their former wickedness, and only laugh over it. Instead of being grieved in their spirits and ashamed of it, they only laugh and scoff at it. “Turn you at My reproof,” that is the Lord’s exhortation, even to those who may be scorners.

And there is this class also—those who hate knowledge. Though we would acquire all the knowledge that is attainable in this world, without saving knowledge it would avail nothing. We do not disparage education and learning. They can be used to the glory of God. But we do denounce seeking knowledge of those things that pertain to time as if they were the chief end of man, whereas his aim and object ought to be to have knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul had a right estimate of things, and he could say, that for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord, he viewed all things but loss and dross, even as dung, that he might win Christ. He was seeking spiritual knowledge. Those who seek spiritual knowledge will find it. There are many who are simpletons, and who are ignorant, and yet they view themselves as if they were endued with much knowledge and wisdom, as if they were pleasing the Lord in a very marvellous way. That shows the fearful deadening influence of sin.

3. Then again, in the next place let us notice the duty which is here enjoined, and the duty is to “turn,” “Turn you at My reproof.” It matters not who the sinner may be, whether he be a scoffer, a scorner, one of those simple ones, one of those who hate knowledge—it matters not who he may be, he is welcome to come to One who can instruct, who can have compassion upon them that are ignorant and out off the way. They are called upon to turn. Now, we are all coming into this world in a course that leadeth to destruction. There is a passage in the 32nd of

Genesis, and 17th verse: "Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee?" And we might well ask ourselves these three questions tonight. Whose are we? Who owns us? Are we for Christ, or are we for Satan? Whither are we going? What is the course in which we are? Is it a course that leadeth to eternal ruin and destruction, or have we come out of that fearful way? Have we chosen for ourselves the narrow way that leads to everlasting life and blessedness? We cannot be in the two ways at the same time, in the way to heaven and in the way to woe; that cannot be. And if we are not in one way, we are in the other. We are heading nearer and nearer to our destination.

"And whose are these before thee?" Is it the world or Christ you are following? We cannot follow both. Well, the exhortation is given: "Turn you at My reproof." If your conscience tells you here this night: "I have not been regenerated or converted," are you to continue in that fearful state? You say: "I cannot turn, I cannot convert myself, no minister on earth can convert me." Well, it is good to have that knowledge. But it is sheer excuse and hypocrisy, if we say, we cannot turn ourselves, having never put forth a single effort to return. It is these who are at their wit's end that they are in the way that leads to ruin, who realise in a day of mercy that they cannot turn themselves. "Turn Thou me, and then I shall be turned." It is those who know their inability that the Lord will encourage, and own, and help, and strengthen. "Turn you at My reproof."

And what is implied in this? There is implied repentance. We cannot be saved without repentance: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." There is no possibility of salvation without repentance. And what is next in this? There is this—forsaking of sin. That is what we are to turn from, we are to turn from our sin. We are to turn with grief, with sorrow of heart, that we have so long been despising and rejecting the Lord Jesus. Our unbelief will become the greatest sin to us, that Christ should have been revealed, and we would have none of Him. But if the Holy Spirit were to come, He would reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in Him. There is sorrow then in connection with true repentance. There is a forsaking, an abhorring of sin, a hating of it as against God and one's own best interests.

4. And then we have the encouragement here given, "Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." And without the Holy Spirit, nothing is of any avail: "Not by might, nor by power: but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." That is, not by human might, not by human

power, but by the Lord's own Spirit, can sinners be converted. Turn from thy evil ways. You may be certain, if a sinner turns from the ways of sin and death, that was not apart from the Holy Spirit's work in that soul. We are not just here speaking about mere nominal turning from sin, but a forsaking of it because it is against God, against holiness, against one's own best interests. It is because the Holy Spirit is leading, and guiding, and working in that soul. Now every one of us needs this. Whether we be sinners, individual believers, whether we be the Church collectively in the world, we all need the Holy Spirit, and without Him nothing will be done. How necessary it is that this should be impressed upon us, that the Lord Himself would impress upon us, the need of the Holy Spirit! At the time of the revival in Scotland and in other places, we believe it was brought home very forcibly to the Lord's people how much they should seek the Holy Spirit. Preachers seek the Holy Spirit, that they may have the Word of God brought unto their remembrance, that they may speak what is according to the mind of God. "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God." Oh if we were dependent upon the Holy Spirit as to what we should say, do you not think it would be very evident? Don't you think it would be necessary for the Holy Spirit to equip them that they may speak boldly, not with an ungodly boldness of presumption, but a boldness begotten of God? Do they not need the Holy Spirit to show that they have need of the Holy Spirit for the conversion of sinners? And we have no right boldness apart from the Holy Spirit. Don't preachers need the Holy Spirit in order that the word preached might be powerfully applied by Him? Though we should talk to the end of our days about the most solemn things that ever were uttered by mere men, they will have no effect without the Holy Spirit's application of them. And let us ever seek to give a right and lawful place to the third Person of the Godhead.

Individual believers need Him in order that they may be taught, that they may know these things that even the most intellectual in this world will never be able to get near. Apart from the Holy Spirit, these deep things of God will never be known: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." So that the Holy Spirit is needed in order that we may be taught, that we may experience what regeneration is, that we may be able to meditate upon the truth. Can we sit down, say, on a Saturday afternoon, and have power ourselves to meditate upon

the truth so as to bring out of it things new and old? Can we in any time in the week meditate in a way that will be God-honouring? Apart from the Holy Spirit, we will not be able to do it. We need Him in order that our minds may be exercised aright. We may have gifts and much mental endowment, but shall never be able to meditate aright apart from the Holy Spirit. "I will pour out My Spirit unto you."

Do we not need Him to strengthen us? What are we but weak frail creatures at best? And so the Lord's people realise their need of being strengthened and comforted by the Lord Himself? He is the Comforter. You are here who can say: "If it were not for the Lord's word in my trouble and my distress, I should have fainted. I can say to His glory that it was His word that encouraged me amidst all the discouragements, it was His own word that enabled me to continue to this day." Well, it will be Himself that will enable you to continue unto the end and He will receive you at last into glory, who are thus dependent on the Holy Spirit. He is the Comforter, He is the Revealer to reveal Christ to the soul: "He shall receive of Mine, and show it unto you."

Oh that the Holy Spirit would reveal to us the glory of Christ, so that it would humble us in the dust! It would have a humbling influence upon a sinner who realises something of his own sinfulness and unworthiness, as Christ is revealed by the Holy Spirit to him. "Who am I and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" We need the Holy Spirit to warm those who are cold-hearted, and to heal those who are broken in heart. And when He convinces of sin, He wounds, and He puts the balm of Gilead into that soul.

We need the word, "Turn you at My reproof," and we are left without any excuse, for the Lord says this: "If ye, 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." And may those who are a praying people in this congregation keep before their minds continually the need there is for the Holy Spirit to come to work in us; and if He comes, then marvellous things will be done in the name of Jesus and He will have all the glory. May He bless this word.

**LETTER FROM JOHN BERRIDGE (1716 - 1793)
TO THE REV. MR B.**

Dear Friend,

I perceive by some hints in a late discourse, the rough draft of the portrait of my soul has reached your hands; the lines perhaps were strong in many parts; but yet imperfect. This I

call its fellow; but alas! were I to write whole volumes upon the subject they would still be but small sketches.

To anatomise my own soul and point out the irregular turnings and windings of a deceitful heart, is beyond my skill.* Satan is always beating and hunting the powers of my soul; watching what will start next, whether pride, sensuality, covetousness, worldly pleasures, &c., and whatever sins they are he will be sure to strike in and follow. How often has the soul gone hand in hand with Satan, in chase after carnal pleasures, till it has been even tired, and then what fruit has it produced but sorrow and shame!

But, sir, in order to my deciphering the combined forces of sin, hell, and the world, against me, you have justly opposed the three-fold grand alliance that is for every believer, namely Father, Son, and Spirit. True; but the query still remains: can such an one as you, be in alliance with the King of heaven, or bear the image and stamp of the Lord Jesus? Where is the consistency? I want to know the worst myself. I own a spark of real grace shall be kept alive: let the wind of temptation blow ever so high and strong, or the waves of temptation beat ever so hard, true grace shall be victorious. This is a matter of comfort, to find a smoking ember under a load of ashes.

There may be, indeed, two men in one person, the *old* and the *new* man, flesh and spirit. Rom. vii. 15-23. So upon a medal, there may be on one side the image of the devil, rebellion, slavery, lust, and tyranny; and on the other side, the effigy of a good prince, loyal subjects, peace and plenty, and the enemies' hearts trampled upon as conquered. This I think a lively representation of the case; and it would be a happy turn could I make it out so to my own soul.

I want to see the divine image carved more legibly on my own heart.† I am sure I see the picture of the devil strong enough there. I do not so much fear the allied army of the Prince of the world, and the world itself, under the command of its captain-general, the devil, as I fear the rebellion in my own bowels, the restless monster, sin, within me. Civil wars are the most shocking, and the most fatal; besides, my soul is the seat of wars and conflicts, and you know, sir, what havoc is made usually in such places.

I know all the powers of the enemies, let the devil call them invincible if he will, cannot harm me, were it not for *inbred* foes. It is the corruptions within me, not the contagion of commerce without me, which I fear, or the bloody armies around me: it is

* Well might the prophet say, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"—Jer. xvii. 9.

† Where there is true grace implanted in the heart, there will be desires for its increase.

that unruly, rebellious regiment of banditti within my heart, my lusts, appetites, and passions, that I fear will destroy me.* It is I that infect myself; and therefore it is my daily prayer, Lord, deliver me from myself! This is always a part of my litany, and sometimes the first voice of my retired ejaculations.

Indeed, sir, this is an unnatural rebellion, to be in arms and in conjunction with one's own inveterate foes, who are aiming at my heart's blood. What, fight against myself? Yes, so it is; flesh against spirit; the unrenewed against the renewed; sin against grace. Indeed, I have proclaimed war in the name of the King of heaven, against the states-general of hell, so far as it is in league with Satan, and against the potentate of sin; but to tell you the times how often I have been foiled and beaten, or raised the siege, or been wounded, or had a limb shot off, or been trepanned, or taken prisoner, I know not; but I can never sign a truce; and I am determined, through grace, if I die to die sword in hand.†

I must own I have sent out a hue and cry many a time after the traitors, and have sometimes hoped I had secured some of them. I have had them in prison and in fetters, perhaps for weeks and months together, and they have been brought out to several courts of judicature, particularly the court of conscience, but that is partial. There have been bribes at times, and not sufficient chastisement but at other times there have been very severe rebukes, and conscience has condemned the vassals to run the gauntlet, with horror, doubt, and despair. The charges of the court of conscience have been read aloud; terrible peals have been rung, and the chains of hell have rattled in the ear.

Though sometimes conscience has given the verdict on the side of grace, at other times there has been an arrest of judgment, and a citation before the lord chief justice of the King's bench of heaven: and though the wretch deserves no hearing, as being outlawed, yet, to the honour of the grace and mercy of the sovereign, the criminal is brought to the bar; and though there is no room to say anything but Guilty! yet every plea that can be made in his favour is heard; ‡ how they were drawn in by some of the clans of hell, perhaps forced, as it were, against the settled judgment of the soul; and perhaps through weakness and infirmity, could not get out of the way; or from ignorance of the crime, or from extenuation of the guilt, or from being hurried away into the service of the invader, without so much as giving time for a cool thought. And sometimes the poor soul has been like a gally slave,

* A Christian's worst enemies are those of his own house.

† The Christian life is a warfare all the way through. "He" only "that endureth to the end shall be saved."—Matt. x. 22.

‡ See Bunyan's Holy War.

wishing for deliverance from the bond of corruption, and crying out of the load and fetters of sin, and saying with him of old, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name!" Psalm cxlii. 7.

The high court of judicature hears particularly the relenting groan; and the attorney-general of heaven has compassion enough to put in a petitionary plea for the guilty wretch whose hand is still upon the bar. But the death-warrant is come down from heaven for the execution of sin, and all the heads of the clans of hell. "Mortify, therefore, your members which are on the earth, fornication," &c. Coloss. iii. 5. So, if an eye or hand offend thee, cut it off.

A reprieve at last has been issued out for the soul; and the repenting rebel has gone again in pursuit of those invaders of the peace and court of grace, and the soul has laid hold of some of them, and cried out afresh for justice and revenge against these traitors in his own breast, and has laid the sacrificing knife to the throat of these brats of hell. But how often have they raised up their seemingly dying heads when on the very block, and asked for pity, and during the very execution have done much mischief, and made me bleed and groan afresh.

I hope at times they are crucifying; but crucifixion is a lingering death, and I find they have still life, which with the help of Satan, their grand ally, they too often discover and break out again; and all I can do is to cry out Murder! Murder! to the Lord Jesus! I may truly call them murderers, for they often destroy my peace and comfort. I long to see them dead! dead! dead! I desire your prayers for the poor wounded, but

Your affectionate humble servant,

J. B.

NOTES ON MARTIN LUTHER

Calumnies and Slanders

The falsehoods circulated concerning Luther, both during his life and since his death, would exceed all belief, did we not consider the great success vouchsafed to him in overthrowing the kingdom of Satan, whose children have spread these slanders and calumnies, worthy of the father of lies. That he was a drunkard, a libertine, a man given to all vices, and serving his own selfish and ambitious purposes, we might expect to be told. More systematic falsehoods were spread in countries where the influence of his teaching was dreaded. Thus it was reported throughout Italy

that he died in horrible agonies, while attempting to receive the holy sacrament during an illness. His body being buried, such fearful noises proceeded from the grave that it was opened, but neither flesh, nor bones, nor grave-clothes appeared; only a stench of sulphur so overpowering as to strike down all who were present!

This lying report actually was printed at Naples, and a copy sent to the Landgrave by a merchant of Augsburg, was preserved in the archives of Weimar. Luther reprinted this document, which would be amusing, but for its baseness in deceiving the poor papists, for whom it was prepared. Luther says "I have read it joyfully, except those blasphemies wherewith they have blasphemed the Divine Majesty. In every other respect it has given me pleasure to see that the devil and his servants, Pope and papists, are so fiercely opposed to me. God convert them from the devil! But if it be decreed that my prayer for these sinners unto death shall be in vain, then may God grant that they fill their measure by writing nothing else than such falsehoods, to their own joy and consolation!"

A very common rumour spread, was, that Luther had a familiar spirit; and even Dr. Eckius stopped to endorse this stupid assertion. He said he was informed by others of something he could scarcely credit himself, viz., that the monk had concealed in his smelling-bottle a familiar spirit or a learned demon, who assisted him!

"The Solitary Monk Who Shook The World"

In Luther's reply to Henry VIII of England he says: "My Leader is Christ, and with one and the same blow I will dash in pieces this church and its defenders, who are but one. My doctrines, I am convinced, are of heaven. My doctrines will remain, and the pope will fall, notwithstanding all the gates of hell, and all the powers of the air, earth and sea."

Luther was in peril of assassination although he had the protection of the Elector and the watchful care of Ulric von Hutten and other friends. Several attempts at secret assassination were made. As early as 1520 a man representing himself as ex-chancellor of the late Emperor Maximilian, came to Wittenberg and obtained a private interview. When alone the man expressed surprise that Luther so readily received him, saying that he could now take his life if so inclined. Luther said that he would, in that case, certainly forfeit his own, as he could scarcely escape. The stranger replied that "though I might have to die for it, the Pope would make a saint of me, and send you to the devil as a heretic."

When Luther heard this he began to suspect the bad designs of the man, and went to the door and told his servant Wolfgang to be on the alert, on which he returned to his visitor and conversed

as before. The man showed no disposition to stay, and going out abruptly, he left the city and was never seen there again. Luther believed the man was an assassin, hired to kill him, but God caused his courage to fail, or so turned his heart that he could do him no harm.

From secret poisoning it was more difficult to be on guard. In 1520 some Polish bishops bribed a doctor of medicine, promising him 2,000 ducats if he would poison Luther, which he undertook to do. But these bishops mentioned the plot to another doctor, who sent word to Luther by some people of Breslau, in Silesia, giving a description of the Doctor Franciscus, who was going to Wittenberg. After nearly a year a certain man who arrived from Prague came, and got an introduction to Luther. He was warned, however, to leave the city, which he did speedily.

Some years after another doctor, a Jew, came and gained access to Melanchthon and Luther, but his designs were also frustrated.

Respecting the danger to Luther from this source Mathesius writes: "I have often asked him if attempts had ever been made to poison him. 'Doubtless,' he replied, 'for a person of rank is known to have observed that poison seemed to have no effect upon me. I am sure that on more than one occasion I have taken rank poison, and had severe pain and sickness; but the Lord ever and again delivered me from this danger'."

There is no doubt that Luther was in peril from these plots, but the good providence of God preserved him till his appointed time had come, and his work was accomplished.

A Prayer During an Illness

In all his attacks of illness Luther displayed unwavering faith in God, and submission to His will. Once he began to pray thus: "Dear Heavenly Father, if thou wilt that this shall be my last hour on earth, Thy gracious will be done." He continued, with uplifted eyes, and deep devotion, to recite the Lord's Prayer and the fifty-first and sixth Psalms. Shortly after he began again to pray, and said "Lord God, who art dear to my heart, Thou knowest how cheerfully I would have shed my blood for the sake of Thy Word; but I am not worthy of the honour, and Thy will be done. If Thou pleasest I will cheerfully die. Only let Thy Holy Name be glorified, whether I live or die. But Lord if it were possible, I would desire to live longer only for the sake of Thy holy elect people, but if the hour has come, do as it seems right in Thy sight; for Thou art the Lord, one in life and death. Thou hast led me into the cause of the Reformation. Thou knowest it is Thy word and truth. Do not suffer the enemies to rejoice so that they should triumphantly ask of us: 'Where is their God?' But

glorify Thy Holy Name to the confusion and shame of the opponents of Thy saving truth. Oh my blessed Lord Jesus, Thou hast graciously vouchsafed to me a knowledge of Thy Most Holy Name. Thou knowest that I believe in Thee, together with the Father and the Spirit, as one true God, and I comfort myself with the precious doctrine that Thou art our Mediator and Redeemer, who hast shed Thy blood for our sins. Stand by me in this trying hour, and uphold me with Thy Holy Spirit."

His last illness and death came in 1546. He was asked to endeavour to make peace between the Counts of Mansfield. Being in feeble health he dreaded the journey but could not refuse the call to be a "peacemaker." His wife parted with him with sad foreboding, as if she had a presentiment she would see him no more. He tried to cheer her, and on the journey he wrote several times. He had a narrow escape from drowning in crossing the Saale during a flood. To his wife he wrote "Read St. John and the Little Catechism, my beloved Kate, for thou seemest to fear for thy God as if He were not almighty, and could not create ten Dr. Martin's, if the old one were drowned in the Saale."

The Mansfield disputants received him with honour, and although he partially succeeded in arranging their quarrels his own health broke down.

It was a remarkable providence that brought Luther back to the country of his boyhood, and the town of his birth, to die. On the 18th February he was seized with his fatal illness. The spirit of the dying saint was supported by faith in his God and Saviour. He said many precious things and the following prayer or meditation was taken down by one who heard it. "Oh, my Heavenly Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou God of all consolation, I thank Thee that Thou has revealed to me Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, and whom I have loved and preached, and confessed, and whom the pernicious Pope and all wicked men dishonour, persecute, and blaspheme; I pray Thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul into Thy care. Oh Heavenly Father, although I must leave this body and be taken away from this life, I nevertheless know assuredly that I shall be with Thee for ever, and that no one can pluck me out of Thy Hands.

The last utterance heard from his lips was in response to the question put to him in a loud voice by Dr. Jonas: "Reverend father, do you die in firm adherence to Christ, and the doctrines you have preached?" He answered so as to be heard by all who were standing around, "Yes, yes!"

Not long after he fell asleep peacefully in the Lord, February 18th 1546, at Eisleben.

OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE

Exposition of *The Confession of Faith*, by Robert Shaw, D.D.

Section I.—God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under him over the people, for his own glory and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.

Section II.—It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth, so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

Exposition.—The Sacred Scriptures are a perfect “rule of faith and manners.” They prescribe the duty incumbent upon men in every station and relation, whether as members of the church or of the commonwealth—whether as rulers or as subjects. Any summary of Christian doctrine, therefore, which did not exhibit the duty of civil rulers, especially in reference to religion and the kingdom of Christ, would be extremely defective. This subject accordingly occupies a prominent place in the Confessions of all the Reformed Churches; and the harmony of these Confessions is a strong presumptive proof that the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures on this interesting topic is neither ambiguous nor “hard to be understood.”

It is true that sects have sprung up at various periods, which have held principles subversive of all civil government, and hostile especially to all interference of the civil magistrate about matters of religion. The German Anabaptists, who in the sixteenth century produced such dreadful commotions, maintained that “in the kingdom of Christ civil magistrates were absolutely useless.” And even after their principles were modified by Menno, they “neither admitted civil rulers into their communion, nor allowed any of their members to perform the functions of magistracy.” They also denied “the lawfulness of repelling force by force, and considered war, in all its shapes, as unchristian and unjust.”* Similar sentiments were broached by the English sectaries at the period when the Westminster Assembly was sitting. Among the many pernicious errors vented at that time, we find the following: “That ’tis not lawful for a Christian to be a magistrate; but, upon turning Christian, he should lay down his magistracy: That

* Mosheim’s Eccl. Hist. cent. xvi. sect. 3, part 2, chap. 3, cap. 5, 16.

it is unlawful for Christians to fight and take up arms for their laws and civil liberties."† It is well known that the lawfulness of war is still denied by the Society of Friends or Quakers.

In opposition to such opinions, our Confession here teaches:—

1. That magistracy or civil government is the ordinance of God.
2. That magistrates are appointed for the promotion of the public good, in subordination to the glory of God.
3. That Christians may lawfully accept the office of a magistrate.
4. That magistrates ought to maintain piety as well as peace and justice.
5. That they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

1. Magistracy or civil government is the ordinance of God. Several eminent writers have supposed that government is founded in the social compact; but it has been more generally held that government is founded in the will of God.* When it is asserted that magistracy is a divine institution, it is not meant that it is of direct and express divine appointment, like the office of the gospel ministry. Nothing more is intended than that government is agreeable to the will of God. It is his will that the happiness of mankind be promoted. But government is indispensable to their happiness—to the preservation of peace and order—to the safety of life, liberty, and property. Nay, it is necessary to the very existence of any considerable number of mankind in a social state. The deduction natively follows, that it is the will of God that government should exist; and this deduction of reason is amply confirmed by the expressed declaration of an inspired apostle: "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." (Ro. xiii: 1, 2). It is to be observed that magistracy was instituted by God, as the moral Governor of the world, and is not derived from Christ as Mediator. This forms an important distinction between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers. "The King of nations," says Gillespie, "hath instituted the civil power; the King of saints hath instituted the ecclesiastical power. I mean the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, who exerciseth sovereignty over the workmanship of his own hands, and so over all mankind, hath instituted magistrates

† Edwards' *Gangraena*, part i. p. 29, 30.

* Among those who have pleaded for a social compact as the foundation of government, the venerable name of Locke may be specified; and among those who have advocated the opposite opinion, we may refer to Paley ("Moral and Political Philosophy," book vi, chap. 3) and to Dwight (Ser. 113).

to be in his stead, as gods upon earth; but Jesus Christ, as Mediator and King of the Church, whom his Father hath set upon his holy hill of Zion (Ps. ii: 6), to reign over the house of Jacob for ever (Lu. i: 33) who hath the key of the house of David upon his shoulder (Is. xxii: 22), hath instituted an ecclesiastical power and government in the hands of church officers, whom in his name he sendeth forth."† It may be further remarked, that although God has instituted civil government, yet he has not enjoined any one form of government as obligatory upon all communities; he has left it free to the several countries to choose that form which they think fittest for themselves; and in this respect the apostle Peter calls it "the ordinance of man." (Pe. ii: 13).

2. Magistrates are appointed for the promotion of the public good, in subordination to the glory of God. Magistrates are called "the ministers of God for good." (Ro. xiii:4). They are invested with dignity and power, not for their own honour and advantage, but for promoting the welfare of society, especially "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." As this is the design of civil government, so this end is in some measure gained even by the worst of governments. But when this design is systematically and notoriously disregarded—when rulers become habitual tyrants, invading and overthrowing the liberties and privileges of the nation—the governed must have a right to remedy the evil. This is a principle essential to true liberty, and it was acted upon in our own country at the Revolution.

3. Christians may lawfully accept of the office of a magistrate. It cannot be questioned that, under the former dispensation, some of the most pious men, such as David, Josiah, and Hezekiah exercised this office with the divine approbation. There are also many predictions which clearly intimate that Christians should execute this office under the New Testament dispensation (Is. xlix; 23; Ps. lxxii: 10, 11). Those who consider it unlawful for Christians to bear such an office chiefly rest their opinion upon the example of Christ (Lu. xii: 14), and upon his declaration to his disciples (Mat. xx: 25, 26). But although Christ came not to exercise temporal dominion, and though he repressed the ambitious temper which then manifested itself among his apostles, and interdicted them and the ministers of the gospel in succeeding ages from holding such an office, this does not exclude *all* Christians from executing that function. Were it unlawful for

† Gillespie's Aaron's Rod, p. 185.

Christians to accept the office of a magistrate, it would follow, either that there must be no magistrate at all in Christian countries—which would involve them in anarchy and dissolution—or else, that magistrates who are not Christians must be established among them; and who does not perceive the absurdity of this?

4. Christian magistrates ought to maintain *piety*, as well as justice and peace. The apostle (2 Ti. ii: 1) exhorts, that prayers be made by Christians “for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.” “What Christians are here to pray for, that magistrates must be bound to promote as their end; and this is not simple ‘a quiet and peaceful life,’ but ‘in all godliness and honesty.’” Rulers are not, in their official capacity, to be indifferent to *godliness* any more than to *honesty*; both are to be countenanced and promoted by them (Ezr. vi: 8-10).

5. Christian magistrates may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions. War must be regarded as a great evil, but in the present state of the world it is sometimes necessary, and if a nation were to adopt and act upon the principle that war is absolutely unlawful, it would soon become a prey to its ambitious neighbours. Under the Old Testament, wars were undertaken by the express command and with the approbation of God; but he could never command and approve of what is morally wrong. In the New Testament, too, there are various circumstances stated which countenance the lawfulness of magistrates waging war, and of Christians bearing arms. When the soldiers inquired of John what they should do, he said unto them, “Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely”; but he did not command them to relinquish their profession, as unlawful; on the contrary, the precept which he added, “Be content with your wages,” supposed them to continue in their situation (Lu. iii: 14). The first Gentile convert who was received into the Christian church was a centurion; but Peter, when he baptized him, did not require him to give up his situation in the Roman army (Ac. x). To determine the several cases in which war may be justifiable would be out of place here; it may, however, be generally stated, that aggressive wars, or such as are undertaken to gratify views of ambition or worldly aggrandizement, cannot be justified; but that defensive wars, or those which, as to the first occasion of them, are defensive, though in their progress, they must often be offensive, are lawful.

(To be continued)

ANECDOTES

Robert MacLeod's Prayer

Robert Macleod was an honest and ardent Christian, and lived in Killearnan, Ross-shire, and was much given to prayer. The story of his first prayer in Donald Macpherson's family is worthy of repeating. To Robert's bewilderment, his host abruptly asked him to pray at family worship, during a visit which he paid him. He dare not refuse; so turning on his knees, and addressing his Creator, he said: "Thou knowest that though I have bent my knees to pray to Thee, I am much more under the fear of Donald Macpherson than under the fear of Thyself." Not, perhaps, a bad beginning. It was at once earnest and honest.

A remarkable instance of Robert's warm love to the brethren, and of his nearness to God in prayer, has been often repeated, and is undoubtedly true. The case of the godly John Grant was pressed closely on his spirit, along with an impression of his being in temporal want. He was strongly moved to plead with God for "daily bread," for His child, and so constantly was he thinking of him for three days, that at mid-day of the fourth, he resolved to set out for John's house, and he gave himself little rest till he reached it. Full of the impression that stirred him from home, he arrived at the house, and entering it, went at once to the place where the meal chest used to be and to his astonishment found it nearly full.

"This is a strange way, Robert, of coming into a friend's house," John said, as he advanced to salute him; "were you afraid I had no food to give you if you should remain with me to-night?" "No," was Robert's answer, "but that meal chest gave me no small trouble for the last few days; but if I had known it was so far from being empty, as I find it is, you had not seen me here to-day." "When did you begin to think of it?" John inquired. Robert mentioned the day and the hour when his anxiety about his friend began. "Well, Robert," John said, "the meal chest was then as empty as it could be; but how long were you praying that it might be filled?" "For three days and a half I could scarcely think of anything else," Robert answered. "O what a pity," his friend said, "you did not complete the prayers of the fourth day; for on the first I got a boll of meal, another on the second, and a third on the following; but, on the fourth day, only half a boll arrived, but now you are come yourself, and I count you better than them all." Then, rejoicing in each other's love, and in the love of their Father in heaven, who heareth the cry of the needy, they warmly embraced each other.

David Hume and the Child

David Hume, the celebrated infidel philosopher, and author of a History of England, was once dining at the house of an intimate friend. After dinner the ladies withdrew; and in the course of conversation, Hume made some assertion which caused a gentleman present to observe to him, "If you can advance such sentiments as those, you certainly are what the world gives you credit for being, an infidel." A little girl, whom the philosopher had often noticed, and with whom he had been a favourite by bringing her little presents of toys and sweetmeats, happened to be playing about the room unnoticed; she, however, listened to the conversation, and, on hearing the above expression, left the room, went to her mother, asked her, "Mamma, what is an infidel?" "An infidel my dear," replied her mother; "why should you ask such a question? An infidel is so awful a character, that I can scarcely know how to answer you." "O, do tell me, mamma," returned the child, "I must know what an infidel is." Struck with her eagerness her mother at length replied "An infidel is one who believes there is no God, no Heaven, no Hell, no hereafter."

Some days afterwards Hume again visited the house of his friend. On being introduced to the parlour, he found no one there but his favourite little girl; he went to her, and attempted to take her in his arms and kiss her, as he had been used to do; but the child shrunk with horror from his touch. "My dear," said he, "what is the matter? — do I hurt you?" "No," she replied, "you do not hurt me; but I cannot kiss you, I cannot play with you." "Why not my dear?" "Because you are an infidel!" "An infidel!—what is that?" "One who believes there is no God, no Heaven, no Hell, no hereafter." "And are you not sorry for me, my child?" asked the astonished philosopher. "Yes, indeed I am sorry!" returned the child, with solemnity; "and I pray to God for you." "Do you indeed, and what do you say?" "I say, O God, teach this man what Thou art!" A striking illustration of the Words of sacred writ, "Out of the mouths of babes and of sucklings Thou hast ordained strength, because of Thine enemies, that Thou mightest still the enemy and avenger."

Dr. Begg on How to Treat Opponents

The Rev. Dr. Begg was a man of determination and activity. He took an active part in many public movements, and was a member of various committees and boards. He had also the courage of his opinions, and was a powerful debater in ecclesiastical courts and elsewhere. When a member of the Edinburgh School Board he had an earnest and animated discussion on one

occasion on the subject of temperance, in which he contended in opposition to another member. The contention was a little sharp on both sides, and feelings were considerably aroused. When the meeting was over the Doctor left the room with his opponent, and they had not gone far when they were overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. They sought shelter in a passage at hand, and were enjoying a quiet crack when a lady member of the Board made her appearance. When she saw the two former disputants in cheery converse she held up her hands in astonishment, and said: "If it had been two ladies who had differed as much as you two did an hour ago, they would not have spoken to each other for years." "Ah," said the Doctor, "that would have been far wrong. I never allow feelings of a personal kind to enter into my public life, when I know others are as honest as myself. Fifty years ago, and more, my father said to me, 'Now, James, you are going into the world to mingle with men who have as good a right to have their opinion as you have. When they differ from you treat them with respect, and after the discussion is over, let the whole be ended. Act on this principle, James, and you will prevent much mischief and much pain to yourself.' I have always endeavoured to act thus, and I have found it a good plan." Dr. Begg then hailed a car, and the two went home together.

Guthrie of Fenwick

This most worthy minister of the gospel, cousin of James Guthrie the martyr, took a great interest in his flock and all others who would receive him. He took all the means he could think of, to win men's hearts and lead their thoughts to eternal things. One man whom he urged to have family worship pled as an excuse that he could not pray. "Try it," insisted the minister. At last the man, in perplexity exclaimed: "Oh, Lord! Thou knowest that this man will have me to pray, but I cannot." "Stop," interrupted Guthrie, "you have done enough," and then prayed himself so fervently, that, when he finished, the woman said to her husband, "Surely this must be the minister." He was one evening travelling home very late. Having lost his way on a moor, he laid the reins on the neck of his horse, and committed himself to the direction of Providence. After long travelling over fields and ditches, the horse brought him to a farmer's house, into which he went, and requested permission to sit by the fire till morning, which was granted. A Popish priest was administering extreme unction to the mistress of the house, who was dying. Mr Guthrie said nothing till the priest had retired; then he went forward to the dying woman, and asked her if she enjoyed peace in the prospect of death

in consequence of what the priest had said and done to her. She answered that she did not; on which he spoke to her of salvation through the atoning blood of the Redeemer. She understood and believed the message of mercy, as it fell from his lips, and she died actually triumphing in Jesus Christ her Saviour. After witnessing this astonishing scene, Mr Guthrie mounted his horse, and rode home to Fenwick. On his arrival, he told Mrs Guthrie that he had seen a great wonder during the night. "I came," said he, "to a farmhouse, where I found a woman in a state of nature; I saw her in a state of grace, and left her in a state of glory."

LITERARY NOTICES

Papers on Scottish Reformation

These Papers were read at the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church, in May, 1960. Copies of the valuable and instructive book of "Papers Commemorating the Quarter-Centenary of the Scottish Reformation" at 6/- per copy, are still available from Mr J. Grant, Publications Treasurer, and also in several congregations.

In the preface Rev. D. A. MacFarlane says: "If we, and the ends of the earth, were blessed with both the inspired Word, and, with it, the testimony of the Holy Spirit — or otherwise His divine unction — His impartation of eternal life to receive the Gospel of Christ, and Christ in and through the Gospel, then all such would have the Spirit, in measure, of these Reformers of 1560."

The eight chapters which deal widely with the subject of the Reformation are as follows:—

- (1) The Church from which the Reformation delivered Scotland.
- (2) Causes and Progress of the Scottish Reformation until the year 1560.
- (3) John Knox: Central Figure of the Reformation.
- (4) Pen Portraits of Fellow Reformers — George Wishart, John Willock, John Wynram, John Row, John Craig, John Spottiswood, John Douglas.
- (5) The First Book of Discipline (1560).
- (6) Theological Principles of the Reformation.
- (7) The Benefits of the Reformation.
- (8) The Present Position and Prospects of the Reformed Church in Scotland.

Each chapter is by a different minister and the chapter on John Knox is from the pen of our late friend Rev. J. P. McQueen.

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Lies an Urr. Iain Flavel

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 25)

Cùis 5. Cia mar a dh'fhaodas an Criosduidh a chridhe a ghleidheadh bho bhi an-earbsach ann an Dia, na bhi gearain 'n a aghaidh, 'n uair a tha bochdainn bho'n leth a muigh aon chuid air a faireachadh na ag aobhrachadh eagain.

Is airidh a chùis a bhi air beachdachadh oirre gu stòlda, agus gu h-àraidh 'n uair a tha e coltach ris gur e rùn Freasdail a bhi falamhachadh sluagh Dhé dhe gach lànachd a thig bho'n a chreutair, agus ga'n deanamh eolach air na cruaidh-chàsan sin dha'n robh iad roimh so 'n an coigrich. Nis, gu bhi gleidheadh a chridhe bho'n a cunnartan a dh'ainmicheadh a cheana a tha leantuinn an t-suidhichidh so, tha na nithean a leanas, tre bheannachadh an Spioraid, 'n a nithean a dh'fhaodas a bhi eufachdach. Agus so a cheud aon.

(1) Ma tha Dia ga do thoirt a dh'ionnsuidh cruaidh-chàsan agus bochdainn, gidheadh ann an sin cha'n eil E ga'd fhiosrachadh-sa, ann an rathad air bith, eadar-dhealaichte ris mar a rinn E ri cuid de'n a mhuinntir a b'adhartaiche agus a bu naoimhe a bha riamh air an talamh.

Cha'n eil bhuir suidheachadh-sa air leth; ged a bha sibh gus a so 'n ar coigrich do bhochdainn 's do chruaidh-chàsan a bha naoimh eile gach là 'n an cuideachd agus mion-eolach orra. Eisdibh ciod a tha Pòl beannaichte ag ràdh, cha'n ann uime fein a mhàin, ach ann an ainm naoimh eile a bha air an toirt a nuas gu leithid sin de shuidhichidhean, "Gus an uair so fein, tha sinn araon acrach, agus iotmhor, agus lomnochd, agus air ar bualadh le duirn, agus gun aon àite-còmhnuidh seasmhach againn" (I. Cor. iv: 11). A bhi faicinn a leithid de dhuine ri Pòl a dol sìos agus suas anns an t-saoghal le druim rùisgte, le luaghainn fhalamh, agus gu'n tigh aige anns an cuireadh e a cheann a stigh, aon a bha cho fad bhos do cheann ann an gràs agus ann an naomhachd, aon a rinn barachd do sheirbhis do Dhia ann an latha ni's docha a rinn thu ann ad laithibh uile, agus gidheadh gearainidh tu mar gu'm biodh tu air t-fhiosrachadh gu cruaidh. An do dhi-chuimhnich thu ciod e bhochdainn agus na cruaidh-chàsan a dh'fhuiling eadhon Daibhidh? Cia cho mòr 's a bha a chruaidh-chàsan agus a bhochdainn. "Thoir, guidheam ort, do d' sheirbhisich," tha a 'g ràdh ri Nàbal, "agus do d' mhac Daibhidh, ge b'e nì a thig a dh' ionnsuidh do laimhe" (I Sam. xxv: 8). Bha *Musculus* iomraiteach fodh eiginn a bhi cladhach ann an cladhan a bhaile air son teachd-an-tir. Bha *Ainsworth*

ainmeil (mar a bha e air innse dhomh le daoine creideasach) air a cho-cigneachadh gus an leabaidh air an robh e 'n a luidh a reic gu aran a cheannach. Ach ciod a tha mi'g ràdh mu'n timchioll-san? Feuch bha aon a bu mhotha na neach dhiubh, eadhon Mac Dhé, "neach is e Oighre na'n uile nithean agus tre'n do chruthaich e fos na saoghail;" gidheadh aig amaibh a bhiodh toilliche air ni air bith, 's gidheadh gu'n ni Aige r'a itheadh: "Agus air an là màireach, an uair a chaidh iad a mach a Betani, dh'fhàs e acrach. Agus air faicinn craoibh-fhige fada uaithe, air an robh duilleach, thainig e, dh'fheuchainn am faigheadh e ni sam bith oirre: ach air dha teachd da h-ionnsuidh, cha d'thuair e ni sam bith ach duilleach; oir cha robh am tionail nam figean fathasd ann" (Marc. xi: 12, 13).

Uime sin, le so cha do chuir Dia aon chomharadh fuath ort, ni motha is urrain dhuit a leughadh bho chion arain gu'm bheil cion gràidh Aige dhuit. 'N uair a chuireas do chridhe gearaineach a cheisd, An robh bròn riamh ann coltach ri mo bhròn-sa? Feoirich de na fiughalaich sin, agus innsidh iad dhuit, ged nach do ghearain agus nach robh iad ri cànrán mar a tha thusa, gidheadh gu'n robh iad air an cur gu cruaidh-chàsan cho mòr 's a tha thusa.

(2) Mar eil Dia ga'd fhàgail anns an t-suidheachadh bhochd so gun ghealladh, cha'n eil aobhar agad a bhi gearain agus a bhi fodh mhi-mhisneachd.

Is e suidheachadh duilich da-rìreadh a th'ann, dha nach buin gealladh. Tha cuimhne agam gu'm bheil *Calvin* air na briathran so, "Gidheadh cha bhi an doilleireachd mar a bha i ri linn a h-àmhghair, an uair a bhual e gu h-eutrom an toiseach talamh Shebuloin agus talamh Naphtali, agus na dheigh sin bhual e na bu truime e, air slighe na fairge, taobh thall Iordain, Galile nan Cinneach" (Isaiah ix: 1), a fuasgladh an teagamh, a thaobh ciod e'n seadh anns nach robh dorchadas a bhraighdeanais cho mòr agus a bha na truaighean a bu lugha a bha air a dheanamh le Tilgath Pileser. Anns a bhraighdeanas bha chathair air a sgrios, agus an teampull air a losgadh le teine, cha robh coimeas anns an àmhghair; ach gidheadh cha robh'n dorchadas a reir sin, agus 's e'n t-aobhar, tha e'g ràdh, so: "Bha gealladh air a dheanamh a thaobh so, ach cha robh aon a thaobh an aoine eile."

Tha e ni's fearr a bhi cho iosal ri ifrinn le gealladh, na ann am pàras gun ghealladh. Cha bhiodh dorchadas ifrinn fein 'n a dhorchadas cho mòr idir na'm bhiodh gealladh ann gu bhi ga shoillseachadh. Nis, dh'fhàg Dia iomadh gealladh milis air son creidimh a shluaigh bhochd gu bhi beathachadh orra, anns an t-suidheachadh so: mar a tha iad so: "Biodh eagal an Tighearna

oirbh, a naoimh-san; oir cha bhi dith air a luchd-eagall-san. Bithidh easbhuidh air na leomhanaibh òga, agus bidh ocras orra: ach orra-san a dh'iarras an Tighearna cha bhi maith air bith a dhith " (Salm. xxxiv: 9, 10). " Feuch, tha sùil an Tighearn' orra-san d'an eagal e; orra-san a chuireas an dòchas 'n a thròcair; chùm an anam a theasairginn o'n bhàs, agus an cumail beo anns a ghorta " (Salm xxxiii: 18, 19). " Cha chùm e maith air bith uatha-san a ghluaiseas gu h-ionraic " (Salm lxxxiv: 11). " An tì nach do chaomhain a Mhac fein, ach a thug thairis e air ar son-ne uile, cionnas maille ris-san nach tòir e mar an cedna dhuinn gu saor na h-uile nithean?" (Rom. viii: 32). " An uair a bhios am bochd agus an t-ainnis ag iarruidh uisge, agus nach bi e ann; agus a bhios an teangadh air tiormachadh le tart; mise Iehobhah freagram iad; Dia Israeil, is mì nach treig iad " (Isaiah xli: 17). Ann an so chì sibh a' mòr uireasbhuidhean, air do uisge bhi air a chur air son na nithean a tha beatha cur feum air; agus 's e am fuasgladh cinnteach, " Mise Iehobhah freagram iad;" anns am bheil e air a chur fodh'r comhair gu'm bheil iad a glaodhaich Ris 'n an cruaidh-chàs, agus tha E 'g eisdeachd ri'n glaodh.

Air dhuibh, uime sin, na geallaidhean sin a bhi agaibh, c'ar son nach co-dhùnadh bhur cridheachan an-earbsach maille ri Daibhidh, " Is e an Tighearna mo bhuachaille: cha bhi mì ann an dith " (Salm xxiii: 1).

Cur an aghaidh. Ach tha na geallaidhean sin a gabhail a stigh annta cumhachan; na'm biodh iad gun chumha, bheireadh iad an tuilleadh sàsachaidh.

Freagairt. Ciod e'n a cumhachan sin mu'm bheil sibh a labhairt ach iad so:—1. An dara cuid gu'n dean E suas bhur 'n uireasbhuidhean na gu naomhaich E iad. 2. Gu'm bi agaibh uibhir agus a chì Dia iomchuidh air bhur son. Agus am bheil so a deanamh trioblaid dhuibh? Am bu mhaith leibh an tròcair a bhi agaibh co dhiubh bhiodh i air a naomhachadh gus nach biodh? co dhiubh chì Dia iomchuidh air 'ur son gus nach fhaic? 'S e mo bheachd nach bu chòir do chàil nan naomh a bhi cho gionach an deigh nithean talamhaidh agus gu'n deanadh iad greim le lon air cùis-aobhnis air bith, gun chùram aca cia mar a gheibheadh iad e.

Ach O, 'n uair a bhios sinn ga'r fàsgadh, agus nach fhaic sinn cia as a tha fuasgladh a tighinn, an sin bithidh ar creidimh anns a ghealladh air a chrathadh, agus bithidh sinne, cosmhuil ri Israeil ghearaineach, a glaodhaich, " Thug E aran, an urrainn E uisge thoirt? " O chridheachaibh eas-creidmheach, Cuin a dh'fhàilnich a ghealladh? Cò chreid ann, agus a bha air a chur

gu nàire? Nach fhaod Dia coire fhaotainn dhuit air son t-eas-creidimh mhi-reusanta; mar a tha E 'g ràdh, " An robh mi 'n am fhàsach dhuibh? " (Ier. ii: 31). Na mar a tha Criosd ag ràdh r'a dheisciobuill, " Bho'n a bha mi maille ruibh an robh uireasbhuidh nì air bith oirbh? " Seadh, nach fhaod sibh sibh fein iomchuir? Nach fhaod sibh a ràdh maille ri seann *Pholycarp* diadhaidh, " An àireamh mhòr so de bhliadhnachan rinn mì seirbhis do Chrìosd agus thuair mi e'n a Mhaighstier maith? " Gu'n teagamh faodaidh E àicheadh oirbh na bhitheas bhur n-anamaibh ag iarraidh, ach cha'n àicheadh E oirbh na bhios bhur fìor fheuman ag iarraidh. Cha toir E freagairt do ghlaodh bhur n-anamiannaibh, agus cha dean E dimeas air glaodh bhur creidimh. Ged nach sàsuich agus nach cuir E suas le'r cail shalaich, gidheadh cha bhreugnaich E a gheallaidhean dileas fein. 'S e na geallaidhean so bhur 'n urras is fearr air son a bheatha mhaireannach; agus tha e neonach mar a sàsuich iad sibh air son aran làitheil. Cuimhnichibh briathran an Tighearna, agus thugaibh comhfhurtachd do bhur cridheachaibh leo ann a' meadhon bhur 'n uireasbhuidhean uile. Tha e air a ràdh mu *Epicurus*, 'n uair a bha cuairtean uamhasach de'n ghreim-mionaich air, gu tric gu'n d'ùraich se e fein le bhi cuimhneachadh innleachdan fein co-cheangailte ri feallsanachd: agus mu *Possidonius* am feallsanach, ann am pian ro-chràiteach gu'n d'thug e comhfhurtachd dà fein le òraidean mu dhleasdanasan modhannail; agus 'n uair a bhiodh am pian ga ghlacadh, theireadh e, " O phein, cha'n eil thu deanamh nì air bith: ged a thà thù nì-eigin draghail; ach cha'n aidich mi gu bràth gu'm bheil thu 'n d' nì olc. " Ma bha, air a leithidean so de bhunaitean, iad so ga'n cumail fein suas fodh phianntaibh cho goinnteach agus cho cràiteach, agus eadhon a mealladh an trioblaidean leo, cia mòr gu mòr is motha a bu chòir do gheallaidhean luachmhor Dhé, agus na fein-fhiosrachaidhean milis a tha dol ceum air cheum 'n an lorg, toirt oirbhse bhi di-chuimhneachadh 'ur 'n uireasbhuidhean uile, agus comhfhurtachd a thoirt dhuibh fein anns gach cruaidh-chàs.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Marriage of Princess Irene of Holland

Princess Irene who was second in line to the Dutch throne, was married on April 29th, 1964, to Prince Carlos Hugo, Carlist claimant to the Spanish throne. This marriage meant for this former Protestant Princess becoming a Roman Catholic, causing

strained relationships between her parents and herself, offending the Dutch Government, losing all constitutional standing in her own nation, and being married in Rome without one of her own family present. No doubt the Princess entered this marriage knowing full well what she was doing. But our comment would be that her husband's family and the Roman Catholic Church officials had a great deal to do with the arrogant and secret manner in which this event was arranged and carried through. The couple visited the Pope after the marriage ceremony, the man who also arrogantly claims to be Ruler and Potentate over all kings and queens and rulers throughout the world. Princess Irene no doubt imbibed this empty boast with the rest of Romish false dogma. The Dutch Protestants will now have an up-to-date view of Romish activities.

Further Convent Meeting Between Scottish Churchmen and Roman Catholics

Last April a hundred and fifty Scottish Churchmen met at Dowanhill Convent, Glasgow, as guests of the Abbot of Nunraw. They were given a talk on the Teaching of the Bible by a French priest. Things have reached a low level when Scottish Churchmen have a mind and time to be lectured by a priest on the Bible. Rev. J. Hay Hamilton, moderator of Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland was one of the prominent guests, who stated that the Roman Catholics are to be invited later to a further meeting. The Scottish Reformation has been completely forgotten by such professed Presbyterian ministers; and no one in the Church of Scotland seems to have the mind, power or influence to denounce and oppose these most deplorable activities in the light of Scotland's Protestant and Presbyterian heritage. The Abbot is reported to have said, that the Roman Catholic should be able to show that his doctrine is founded on Scripture. With an open Bible, it is a hopeless task to show that the infallibility of the Pope, the Mass, Purgatory, the Assumption of Mary etc., are dogmas founded on Scripture. They are all false in the light of Scripture. The Rev. J. Hay Hamilton did venture to say that it rendered no service to our commune to gloss over the fact that there are differences but they were talking about them. The talk of so-called Protestants will make no impression upon the minds of skilled Jesuits. The Lord alone could do this by His Word and power, and the Word in its purity. These comments are based on a *Scottish Daily Express* report.

Expenditure On Drink

It is reported by the Advertising Inquiry Council, that the total consumption of alcoholic drink in Britain increased by an average

of £50 million worth a year between 1959 and 1962. £23 million a year is spent on advertising and it is suggested that much of the advertising is designed to attract young people. This last observation is obvious to anyone reading some of the daily press. The conscience of the Christian rises up against a campaign to induce the young to begin drinking or to indulge more frequently in the use of alcoholic drink. The temptations besetting the rising generation are numerous enough without inducements which may well lead to drunkenness and other evils.

The Scottish Daily Express and Religious Advertisements

In our March, 1964, issue, we had a *Note and Comment* upon a Roman Catholic advertisement which appeared in the *Scottish Daily Express* of 23rd January, 1964. At the end of our Comment we asked: "Would the *Daily Express* take an advertisement of a similar nature from a Protestant Society, even at the same payment?" In a letter we received from the Editor of the *Scottish Daily Express* anent our question, he states *inter alia*, "... the *Scottish Daily Express* will not exclude any religious institution wishing to advertise in its columns." This statement we were pleased to receive as well as to know from the Editor that the *Scottish Daily Express* supports the Presbyterian doctrine officially.

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, Achmore, 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, Shildaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaul; 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; fifth, 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.

Mr A. Ndebele received as Church Student

"At a meeting of the Southern Rhodesia Presbytery held at Mbumba on the 15th of April, 1964, Mr Aaron Ndebele was received as a student for the ministry.

"We trust the Lord's people will be praying that he will be

kept and guided, and that the Lord in His providence will fit and prepare him for His service."

D. M. Campbell (Clerk), S. Rhodesia Presbytery.

Induction at Ness

The Lionel Church, Ness, was packed to capacity at noon, on Tuesday, 21st April, 1964, when the Outer Isles Presbytery met for the purpose of ordaining and inducting Rev. John Nicolson, Probationer, to the pastoral charge of the Ness Free Presbyterian congregation. Close on 400 people, mostly from our congregations in Harris and Lewis, gathered to witness the solemn service. The proceedings followed the normal pattern for such an occasion, and were carried out with order and fervour.

After the usual preliminaries, Rev. D. M. Macleod, Stornoway, conducted public worship and preached most suitably from 2nd Timothy ii: 15. He divided his subject as follows:—

- (1) The workman.
- (2) The way in which the workman should labour.
- (3) What would be true of the workman if he laboured thus in the strength of grace.

In the course of Mr Macleod's sermon, he pointed out that all true ministers of the Gospel must be born again, called by the Lord to the work of the ministry, and equipped for that solemn and holy office, by special gifts. He then proceeded to demonstrate that a work which concerned the glory of God, the redemption of the Church, and the highest interests of sinners, required more than human strength and sufficiency. A deep sense of one's own insufficiency was an absolute necessity for the discharge of a work so weighty and honourable as that of the Christian ministry. Mr Macleod further emphasised the need for diligence. If the world diligently pursue their labours, counting no pains too great to obtain what they desire, how much more (asked the preacher) should Gospel ministers labour diligently in the Lord?

At the close of the sermon, the Moderator, Rev. A. M. Cattenach, Finsbay, gave a brief narrative of the Proceedings in the Call to Rev. John Nicolson, and addressed to him the questions appointed to be put to Probationers on their ordination and induction to a pastoral charge. These, Mr Nicolson answered satisfactorily, and then signed the Formula in the presence of the congregation. Whereupon, the Moderator, after solemn prayer, did, in the name of the Presbytery, and by authority of the great Head of the Church, ordain to the office of the ministry and induct the said Mr Nicolson as minister to the pastoral charge of the

Ness Free Presbyterian congregation. Thereafter the Brethren gave Mr Nicolson the right hand of fellowship.

The Moderator then returned to the pulpit and addressed the newly inducted pastor, on the basis of Colossians iv: 17, in fitting and impressive terms. To begin with, he laid stress on the first part of the exhortation, namely, to take heed to the ministry received in the Lord. He then proceeded to show how this ministry was to be fulfilled. This was to be done by filling it to the full with Christ. The Moderator then touched on various aspects of the work of the ministry, such as instructing, feeding, guiding, as well as praying with, and for, the flock. These remarks, Mr Cattnach supported by Scripture reference. Before the Clerk, Rev. F. Macdonald, endeavoured to offer a word of exhortation to the congregation, he read a touching message of affection and goodwill from Rev. William Maclean, Gisborne, formerly minister of the Ness congregation. He then exhorted the congregation to the duty of encouraging their minister in the terms of Deuteronomy i: 38. Beginning with a reference to the discouragements common to all true ambassadors of Christ, he went on to suggest several ways by which a congregation could encourage their minister:—

- (1) By a prayerful and regular attendance of old and young at the means of grace on Sabbaths and week-days.
- (2) By a loyal and unswerving adherence to the Free Presbyterian Church.
- (3) By striving after, and zealously cherishing, a spirit of love and unity among themselves.
- (4) Above all, by fleeing to Christ as the only Saviour, and giving evidence of this in a humble, practical, circumspect walk.

We earnestly hope, and pray, that the settlement of Rev. John Nicolson in Ness may redound to the glory of God, the good of His Church, and the salvation of perishing sinners.

Fraser Macdonald, Clerk of the Outer Isles Presbytery.

Binding of F.P. Magazines

There is now the prospect of being able to have the church magazines bound at the reasonable figure of about 5/- per volume.

At present we wish to know how many volumes of magazines would likely require to be bound. It would be helpful if those with magazines ready for binding could let the Publications Treasurer, Mr J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, know the number of complete years of magazines (from May to April) they

wish to have bound. Even a close approximate number would be sufficient at present, and we would be glad if this information could be sent before the 30th June.—W. Grant.

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

Sustentation Fund.—Mrs MacLeod, Brora, £3; A Friend, Raasay, £2; G. Ross, Lochcarron, £5; K. MacLean, Peterhead, £3; Miss Brown, Hamilton, per Mr J. G., 8/6.

Home Mission Fund.—A Friend, Raasay, £2; Passer-by, £1; K. MacLean, Peterhead, £1.

Foreign Mission Fund.—Mrs MacLeod, Brora, £2; A Friend, Raasay, £2; A Friend, per Mr D. MacPhail, £22 10/-; K. MacLean, Peterhead, £1; Mrs Reid, Sheerness, Canada, £6 9s 7d, and Mrs E. Kirkham, Leeds, £1, both per Mr J. G. For Mbumba Hospital, the following: J. & R. MacDonald, Ardheslaig, £2; Mrs MacKerlich, U.S.A., 5 dollars; Young People in Holland, per Rev. C. Smits, Sliedrecht, £20 9s 10d (250 Guilders), per Mr J. G. For Zenka Development, the following: R. M., Skye, £2; Three Skye Teachers, £48.

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General Building Fund.—A Friend, Raasay, £1.

Organisation Fund.—Mrs R. S. MacKenzie, Grosse Ile, £8 9s 3d.

Mission to the Jews Fund.—A. M., Tobermory postmark, per Rev. M. MacSween, £5.

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Welfare of Youth Fund.—Friend, Raasay, 10/-; Psalm 60, v. 4, £6.

Free Distribution and Magazine Fund.—Mr J. M., Gourrock, £1; Mrs E. K., Leeds, £1 0s 9d; Psalm 60, v. 4, £6; Mr I. McL., Inverness, 2/6; Mrs A. McD., Leckmel, 2/6; Anon, Inverness, 7/6; Mrs J. Z., Houston, Texas, U.S.A., 8/11; Mr N. McL., N. Uist, 4/6; Mrs A. McG., Brynport, 10/-; Mr A. F., Redding, £5; D. McL., Broxburn, 2/6.

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