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THE PRACTICE OF FENCING THE LORD'S TABLE

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Lord of His people, instituted the Lord's Supper as recorded in Matthew's Gospel: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." (Chapter xxvi, verses 26-28).

The Apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Church at Corinth, declared that he received from the Lord what he delivered to them regarding the institution and the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, as we read in Chapter xi, v. 23, onwards. In this divinely given statement there is a solemn warning given against partaking of the Lord's Supper unworthily, viz.: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." (Ver. 27). Dr. Charles Hodge observes: "To eat or drink *unworthily* is in general to come to the Lord's Table in a careless, irreverent spirit, without the intention or desire to commemorate the death of Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, and without the purpose of complying with the engagements which we thereby assume." Then Paul further warns: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (Ver. 29). Such eat and drink *judgment to themselves* and as Dr. C. Hodge puts it: "... he incurs the manifestation of God's displeasure by the act of eating ... not hopeless and final perdition ..."

Paul also, as he received from the Lord, enjoins upon those who would partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner, to examine themselves, viz.: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (Ver. 28). Such are to examine themselves, in the light of Scripture, seeking the aid of the Holy Spirit, as to their faith, their hope and their love in relation to Christ and His love to His people and His death for them. Their motives in coming to the Lord's Table

are to be brought under examination, as also their life and conversation, as to whether these are consistent with the mind and gospel of Christ. The examination should resolve itself to this: Is the person contemplating partaking of the Lord's Supper, a sinner saved by grace and now a true, humble, penitent believer upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Confession of Faith states in relation to these matters (1) "Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death . . . " (2) Wherefore all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord's Table, and cannot without great sin against Christ, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto." (Chapter xxix, Sections VII and VIII).

Now, the service leading up to the administration of the Lord's Supper, in our Church, is conducted by a minister presiding and begins in the usual manner. It includes principally a sermon upon a suitable part of Scripture which sets forth some truths and doctrines bearing upon the Person and redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thereafter, following upon prayer and the singing of a psalm, the minister proceeds to engage in what is called "Fencing the Lord's Table," and just prior to the administration of this sacrament.

First of all, he endeavours on the ground of the Word of God, the law of God and the principles of the Gospel, to indicate who are debarred from partaking of the Lord's Supper because of their personal unworthiness spiritually and morally. This action derives its scriptural authority from the words of the Apostle Paul already quoted and briefly explained. And surely it is the duty of the Church at such a solemn part of the service to warn men against adding sin to sin and to prevent as far as possible dishonour being done to the Lord of the Table. And the Lord Jesus in His sermon on the mount enjoins: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you." (Matthew: Chapter vii, v. 6). The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a holy and precious ordinance and not to be given to the unconverted, natural man. They that are in the flesh cannot understand nor appreciate holy things.

Secondly, the minister in "Fencing the Lord's Table," seeks in the light of Gospel doctrine, spiritual and saving experience and practice which is according to godliness, to indicate who

they are, who have a scriptural right and authority to be partakers of the Lord's Supper. True believers and friends of the Saviour are to be helped, encouraged and required to obey Christ's command, "This do in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." (1st Corinth. xi, v. 26). There is a portion of Scripture in The Song of Solomon, not inappropriate here, as a Scriptural warrant to extend to believers publicly an invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper, viz.: "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Chap. V, verse 1).

The place and time of "Fencing the Lord's Table," is solemn and appropriate, when the minds and consciences of the congregation, immediately prior to the actual administration of this sacrament, may be duly affected by the authority of statements based upon the Word of God. And thus the ignorant are finally warned not to venture to the Lord's Table and believers are given that needed encouragement and help, under the blessing of God, to obey the command of their Redeemer.

And finally, this practice is no recent innovation in the Church in Scotland. It was thought proper and wise by the Westminster divines, three hundred years ago, to enjoin upon the Church of Christ this very practice prior to the administration of the Lord's Supper. In *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, appended to *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, the following words appear under that part dealing with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, viz.: "Now, he is, (minister) in the name of Christ, on the one part, to warn all such as are ignorant, scandalous, profane . . . that they presume not to come to that holy table . . . ; and on the other part, he is in an especial manner to invite and encourage all that labour under the sense of the burden of their sins and fear of wrath and desire to reach out unto a greater progress in grace than yet they can attain unto, to come to the Lord's Table; assuring them, in the same name, of ease, refreshing, and strength to their weak and wearied souls."

On reflection upon these few observations, we cannot but be astounded at the widespread guilt which lies upon multitudes of men and women in this land, who partake of the Lord's Supper regularly, and yet manifest in many ways that they know not the Lord Himself as their Redeemer from sin. And great guilt lies upon Church leaders and professed ministers of the gospel who have since many years now encouraged all and sundry in their congregations to partake of the Lord's Supper, irrespective of whether they are true believers in Christ or not. But the Lord knoweth them that are His and will at last separate the precious

from the vile with infallible accuracy. Let us as a Church continue to endeavour to distinguish between unbelievers and the true children of God, as far as the Lord may give light and spiritual discernment to that end. "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not." (Malachi iii, v. 18).

MOTIVES OF SELF-EXAMINATION

By Rev. John Flavel, from "Touchstone of Sincerity."

We'll then, if it be so that all must go into the furnace, let every man try his own work; examine yourselves, professors, search your hearts, commune with your reins, nothing more concerns you in all the world than this doth. O that you would be more in your closets, and oftener upon your knees! O that you would look into the Bible, then into your hearts, and then to God, saying with David, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; prove me and try my reins, and see if there be any way of iniquity in me!" Never did religion thrive in the world since men's heads have been so over-heated with notions and controversies, and their hearts so sensibly cooled in their closet-work.

Here I shall urge the duty of self-trial by some pressing motives and awakening considerations.

Motive 1. And the first shall be the exceeding difficulty of this work: difficulty in some cases may be a discouragement, but where the matter is of absolute necessity, as it is here, nothing provokes more to diligence; "Strive, (saith our Lord) to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." (Luke xiii, 24). A double difficulty is found attending this work of self-trial: difficulty in bringing the heart to it; and difficultly in the right and successful management of it. Who finds it not hard to persuade his heart to such a work as this? Nature declines it, flesh and blood relish it not: It is one of the great severities in religion: It is no easy thing to bring a man and his own heart together.

It is in this case as in the study of Geography; we are more inquisitive to know, and delighted when we discover the rarities of foreign countries, and strange things in the remote parts of the world, than those of our own native country. I fear there be many professors of religion that can spend day after day in hearing, and love to be disputing fruitless controversies, that never spend one day in searching what influence all those sermons they have heard have had upon their hearts, or in rightly stating and determining that great controversy, in whose right and possession their souls are, and which way they shall go as soon

as death hath divided them from those mortal bodies; yea, I doubt, many sinful hours are spent in prying into, reporting, and censuring the failings of others, and not one hour faithfully employed in judging their own hearts before the Lord: Oh! men had rather be about any work than this; there is no pleasure in it to the flesh.

And yet how difficult soever it be to bring our hearts to the work, it is certainly much more difficult to manage it successfully, and bring the great question of our sincerity to a clear result and issue. O how many upright hearts have sat close to this work many a year, and lifted up many a cry to heaven, and shed many secret undissembled tears about it; and yet still are in the dark, and their minds greatly perplexed, and filled with fear about it! What would they not do? What would they not suffer? What pleasant enjoyment would they not gladly part with, to arrive at the desire of their souls, the full assurance of their sincerity? It was the saying of a pious woman, I have borne, said she, seven children, and they have cost me as dear as ever children cost a mother, yet would I be content to endure all that sorrow over again, to be assured of the love of God to my soul.

Motive 2. Secondly, And as the work is full of difficulty, so the discovery of your sincerity will be full of sweetness and joy unspeakable: It will never repent you that you have prayed and mourned, that you have trembled and feared, that you have searched and tried: Nay, it will never repent you, that God hath tried you by thousands of sharp afflictions and deep sufferings, if, after all, your sincerity may be fully cleared up to the satisfaction of your souls; for in the same day your sincerity shall be cleared, your title to Christ will be made as clear to your souls as your sincerity is; you may then go to the promises boldly, and take your own Christ into the arms of your faith, and say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his!" Yea, you may be confident, it shall be well with you in the judgment of the great day, for "God will not cast away the upright man," (Job viii, 20). If the word clear you now, it cannot condemn you then.

O what an ease it is to the soul, when the fears and doubts that hang about it are gone! When a man sees what he is, and what he hath in Christ and the promises, and what he hath to do; even to spend the time betwixt this and heaven, in admiring the grace of God that hath delivered him from the ruining mistakes and miscarriages by which so great a part of the professing world are lost to all eternity.

Motive 3. Thirdly, The deep concernment of your souls in this matter to be tried, should awaken you to the utmost diligence

about it. The trials of men for their life, at human bars, is but a trifle to this: It is our eternal happiness that stands or falls with your sincerity.

It is said in the trial of opinions, that if a man superstruct hay or stubble upon the foundations, he shall suffer loss; yet he himself may be saved (I Cor. iii, 12). But if hypocrisy be in the foundation, there is no such relief, there is no possibility of salvation in that case.

Ah, reader, thou must be cast for ever according to the integrity or hypocrisy of thy heart with God. Summon in them all the powers of thy soul: bring thy thoughts as close as it is possible to bring them to this matter: If there be any subject of consideration able to drink up the spirits of man, here it is: Never was time put to an higher improvement; never were thoughts spent upon a more important business than this is: Happy is the man that rescues the years, months, days, yea, the very moments of his life from other employments to consecrate them unto this solemn, awful, and most important business!

Motive 4. Fourthly, How evidential will it be of your sincerity, when you are willing to come to the trial of your own hearts?

Suppose your doubts and fears should in some degree remain with you; yet in this you may take some comfort, that if hypocrisy be in your heart, it is not there by consent: You are not both to rise and come to trial, because, like Rachel you sit upon your idols: Certainly it is a good sign thy heart is right when it is filled with so much fear lest it should be false. You know all the disciples said, "Master, is it I?" before Judas who was the traitor, spake a word. "Last of all (saith the text) Judas said, Is it I?" Our willingness to be tried is a good sign that the desire of our soul is to be right with God.

Motive 5. Fifthly, Conclude it to be your great advantage to be thoroughly tried, whatever you be found to be in the trial: If you be found sincere, you are richly rewarded for all your pains and labour: Never did that man repent of digging and toiling, that after all, hit upon the rich vein that he digged for: What is a vein of gold to a vein of sincerity!

If upon search you find the contrary, a false, hypocritical, unsound heart, yet in that very sad discovery you meet with the greatest advantage that ever you had in your lives for salvation. This discovery is your great advantage: For now your vain confidence being overturned, and your ungrounded hopes destroyed; you lie open to the stroke of a deep and effectual conviction of your sin and misery, which is the introductive mercy to all other mercies to your souls; and surely till you come to that, to give up

your false hopes, and quit your vain pretensions, there is no hope of you. Christ told the Pharisees (Math. xxi, 31) Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before you: Publicans were the worst sort of men, and harlots the worst sort of women, and yet they stood in a fairer way for heaven than the hypocritical Pharisees, because conviction had easier access to their consciences: They had not those defences and pleas of duty and strictness to ward off the word that the self-cozening Pharisees had.

I may say of your vain and groundless hopes, as Christ, in another sense, said to the officers that came to seize him in the garden, *If you seek me, let these go their way*. So it is here, if you expect Christ and salvation by him, let your vain confidences go their way; away with your masks and vizards, if ever you expect to see Christ. O it is your happiness to have all these things stript off, and your nakedness and poverty discovered, that you may be rich, as the text speaks.

Motive 6. Sixthly, Consider how near the day of death and judgment approach you. O these are searching days wherein you cannot be hid: Will your consciences, think you, be put off in a dying day as easily as they are now? No, you know they will not.

I have heard of a great man that consumed not only the greatest part of the day, but a very considerable part of the night also in prayer, to the great weakening of his body; and being asked by a relation why he did so, and prayed to favour himself, he returned this answer, *O I must die, I must die*; plainly intimating that so great is the concernment of dying in a clear assured condition, that it is richly worth the expense of all our time and strength to secure it.

You know also that *after death the judgment* (Heb. ix, 27), you are hastening to the judgment of the great and terrible God. Death will put you into his balance to be weighed exactly; and what gives the soul a louder call to search itself with all diligence, whilst it stands at the door of eternity, and its turn is not yet come to go before that awful tribunal: O that these considerations might have place upon our hearts!

THE BLESSINGS OF COMMEMORATING THE DEATH OF CHRIST

By Rev. Alex. Gunn, Watten, Caithness, preached 1809

Of all divine institutions none is so peculiarly adapted to promote improvement in spiritual graces and comforts as the commemoration of the death of Christ at His table.

What, then, is the great desire of every real servant of God in this house? Is it not to have your hearts more inflamed with the love of God, and more devoted to His fear? Is not sin your greatest burden, and its remaining influence your greatest grief? Now, where can you have a more reasonable hope of getting your gracious dispositions strengthened, or your sins mortified, than at a Communion Table? Is it not expressly designed for your spiritual nourishment and growth in grace? What can more strengthen your faith in a dying Saviour than being allowed to look upon the signs of his broken body and His blood poured out? What can speak greater peace to the conscience than your being allowed and invited to receive Him explicitly: "This is my body broken for you"? What can more happily serve to kindle and inflame your love to God than the immediate contemplation of His infinite love? When can you take such a hateful view of sin as at the Lord's Table, when you see it in the Saviour's sufferings? How can you give such a deadly wound to your strongest lusts as by nailing and fixing them to the Redeemer's Cross? What motive of future obedience equal to bearing about in your bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus? See what the apostle says (2 Cor. v., 14)—"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead"; (Gal. ii, 20)—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." What remedy can you find for your own weakness like the all sufficiency of Christ? "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Is it not well known, and do not believers at His Table—sensible of their own weakness and confident of their Saviour's power—get their feet upon the neck of their enemies and say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." They have here a complete remedy for their cases as well as their sins. As at the Lord's Table you lay hold of the covenant of grace, so there, if anywhere, you may see that it is "ordered in all things and sure." Your food and raiment, and all necessary provision, are contained in it, and Christ's body is the pledge. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" How gracious the promise, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things." "O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that

fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given to him, his water shall be sure." Deliverance from suffering is contained in it. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, "but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Strength and grace to suffer with patience are contained in it. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." The sanctified use and improvement of suffering is contained in it. "And we know all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The path of a Christian is sometimes thorny and difficult, and many of the weak and feeble of Christ's flock are ready to sink and become heartless under a frowning Providence. But is not the Lord's Table a place of refuge? And is it not a matter of experience that they have found consolation there? Whatever their complaints have been—whether of sickness, or poverty, or loss of relations, or the slanders of their enemies—they have adored the sovereign will of God in them all. It was not without a view to his trials that the Psalmist, in the forty-third Psalm, desires to go unto the altar of God—unto God, his exceeding joy. And in the following verse he expresses himself, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

I shall now conclude by desiring you to use the language of the Psalmist in going unto God, who says in the third verse of this Psalm, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." In order to raise and elevate your minds, to fix and engage your unsettled hearts, apply to God, who hath the hearts of all men in His hand, that He would dispose you for His service, that He would shed abroad His love in your hearts, and make you joyful in His house of prayer. And my earnest prayer to God for you is that He would at this term convert every whole-hearted and self-righteous sinner in this assembly, pull off the mask of hypocrites, and show them their own likeness; that He would make it a joyful Communion to many of you, and a profitable Communion to all.—Amen.

THE CHIEF DESIGN OF MAN'S CREATION

(Extracted from Paterson on the Shorter Catechism)

Q.—What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. We are here taught:—

1. That the chief design of man's creation in reference to God, was to glorify Him. I Cor. x, 31.—“Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

2. That the chief design of man's creation in reference to himself was the enjoyment of God for ever. Ps. lxxiii:25, 26.—“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee—God is my portion forever.”

Explanation.

Observation 1.—The chief end of man's creation, in reference to God was to glorify Him.

The glory of God is commonly distinguished into His essential and His declarative glory.

1. God's essential glory is what He is absolutely in Himself. “I am that I am.” (Exod. iii, 14). It is that glory which He has in Himself and which He will not give to another. This glory is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable; and, consequently, it can neither be increased nor diminished (Job xxxv, 7; Ps. xvi, 2).

2. God's declarative glory in making known His glory to, by, and in, the creatures which He hath made.

The irrational creatures, both animate and inanimate, glorify God passively, by affording matter of praise to God their Maker. (Ps. xix, 1). But we, His rational creatures, ought to glorify Him actively—by setting our hearts wholly upon Him—by making use of all things in subordination to His glory, and only as means more perfectly to show forth His praise—by being willing to part with everything dear to us, rather than not maintain and declare His glory—and by employing for this purpose all the powers and faculties which He has conferred upon us (I Cor. vi, 20); Matt. v, 16)—by obeying His commandments—and by acknowledging all His perfections.

God is to be glorified in all things (I Cor. x, 31; I Pet. iv, ii). We are to glorify Him in all actions, whether natural, as eating and drinking, etc.; or civil, as in the common affairs of life; or moral and religious, in the duties which we owe to God. “There is not a grain of real goodness in the most spacious actions which are performed without a reference to the glory of God. This the world cannot understand; but it will appear highly reasonable to those who take their ideas of God from the Scriptures, and who have felt the necessity and found the benefits of redemption.”

We ought to make the glory of God our chief end in all our actions (1) Because it was God's chief end in our creation, preservation and redemption. (2) Because God hath made us capable of glorifying Him. (3) Gratitude should excite us to make this our chief end. (Ps. c, 3; Prov. xvi, 4; Ps. lxvi, 8 and 9; I Cor. vi, 19, 20; Ps. ciii, 1-5).

We may here observe that no man can glorify God acceptably, until he believes in Jesus Christ; for without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb. xi, 6). Nor can we of ourselves glorify God, for we of ourselves we can do nothing good (John xv, 5). But seeing God hath promised the grace of His spirit we should not weary in well doing.

Observation 2.—The chief end of man's good, in reference to himself, was the enjoyment of God for ever.

To enjoy God is to acquiesce or rest in God as the chief good, with complacency and delight; or it is to feel unspeakably happy in His presence (Ps. xvi, 7).

Believers enjoy God in this world as well as in the world to come. (Gen. v, 24; I John i, 3; I Cor. i, 9). But there is a very great difference between the enjoyment of God here and the enjoyment of Him hereafter. In this world, the enjoyment of God is mediate; that is, ordinances intervene: but in the world to come it will be immediate; ordinances will be unknown—means shall be done away. Here, the enjoyment is only begun; there, it will be completed. Here it is only partial; there it will be full. (I Cor. xiii, 12; Ps. xvi, 11).

The enjoyment of God in this world consists in union with God in Christ through faith in Him. And from this flows communion with Him in this world.

The external means by which we are to seek after this enjoyment, and in which we hold communion with God, are, the institutions of His appointment, public, private, and secret; such as prayer, meditation, the reading, and preaching and hearing of the Word and the sacraments. The enjoyment of God here is a pledge of the full enjoyment of Him hereafter in Glory, when believers shall be admitted into His glorious presence, where they shall have a full sense of His love, and fully and eternally acquiesce and rest with perfect and inconceivable delight and joy. (I Cor. xiii, 12; Ps. xvi, 11).

We ought chiefly to desire and seek the enjoyment of God forever, because He is the chief good, and in the enjoyment of Him consists man's chief happiness; and, likewise, because God is but imperfectly and inconstantly enjoyed here, and we cannot be perfectly happy until we eternally enjoy Him in Heaven. (Ps. iv: 6, 7; I Cor. xiii: 9, 10; Ps. xvi, 11).

It may be observed that in the world to come believers will have communion not only with God in Christ, but also with angels, and with their brethren of mankind redeemed from among nations.

Observation 3.—The glorifying of God, and the enjoyment of Him, are inseparably connected.

The glorifying and the enjoyment of God are here connected as one chief end, because God hath inseparably connected them; and no one can truly design and seek the one, without, at the same time, designing the other. And we may here remark, that the glorifying of God is here set before the enjoyment of Him forever, to show that the former is the means by which the latter is obtained; that holiness on earth must precede happiness in Heaven; and that none shall enjoy God for ever who have no desire to glorify Him in this world. (Heb. xii, 14; Matt. v, 8).

Inferences.

From this subject we learn—(1) That there is a great cause for lamentation that God and His glory are so seldom the subject of our meditation. (2) The necessity of examining ourselves, whether we have ever viewed the glory of God as our chief end? whether it is our desire to do what He hath commanded, to abstain from what He hath forbidden? (3) That we ought to be convinced that of ourselves we cannot glorify God, and that therefore, that prayer for the spirit of God is absolutely necessary, to enable us to glorify Him in our bodies and in our spirits which are His. (4) That the soul of man is immortal; for, seeing that a desire for happiness is natural to it, and that nothing can satisfy its desire or constitute its chief good but God, it is evident we must inscribe immortality on this better part of man. (5) The goodly heritage of the people of God beyond the grave. (6) The necessity of holiness. (7) That the believer ought not to be discouraged on account of the difficulties with which he may meet on the way to Heaven seeing that they are but of short duration—that they are but light afflictions. (Rom. viii, 18). Lastly, that it ought to be our aim while we are in this world in the strength of Divine grace to glorify God in all things that we may enjoy Him forever in the world to come.

NOTES FROM A SERMON

By the late Rev. D. J. Matheson

“ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

—John, Chap. 14, verse 18.

There are some here to-day, and they know what a terrible ordeal it is to part with such as they truly love. Death, who is

no respecter of persons, comes into the home, and takes from time to Eternity a dearly loved husband—a dearly loved wife—a parent—a brother, or a sister.

Parting with any such is more trying than one can adequately express.

Seriously minded children will sometimes be pondering what a dismal dark world this would be to them, if they had not their parents to love them, to care for them and to provide for them. Like Peter, the Lord's disciple, who said he would lay down his life for his Lord and Master's sake, are some who have had such love for their parents, as to shudder at the thought of parting with them, and hoped they would be taken away before their parents.

However strong the bond of love which may exist between parents and children and members of the same family in this world, there is even a stronger bond than that. What is that stronger bond? It is the love which exists between Christ and His own chosen ones.

It is recorded of the late Rev. Alexander Finlayson, whose labours were very much owned by the Lord in the parish of Lochs, Lewis, and elsewhere, that both his sons, at the same time, were accidentally drowned not very far from the Manse. On the day of the funeral, one of his parishioners called to see him in order to give him all the consolation and sympathy that he could, but the worthy servant of Christ had greater consolation than any mere man could impart to him. From his own words this was very apparent. He replied after this manner, "Though I should live yet for many a year in the world, and though I should have two sons to part with every fortnight of these years, willingly would I give them away, in order to have as much of the Presence and fellowship of my Lord and Saviour, as I enjoyed during the last few days."

In the preceding chapter we find that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is announcing to His beloved disciples that He has to go away to leave the world as to His bodily presence. "Little children: Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you."

Naturally the disciples would be sorely grieved to learn that their Lord and Saviour was about to depart from them—sorrow filled their hearts.

In this fourteenth chapter of John, which abounds with strong consolation and sweet comforts, He exhorts them not to be troubled because of what was just intimated to them. His going

away would prove to be to their Eternal advantage. He says "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." At the eighteenth verse we find Him saying "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

In seeking then to divide this precious Truth, let us observe first of all—The people to whom these words were addressed.

Secondly, Let us observe: The need they had of consolation and comfort.

Thirdly, The assurance He gives them that they shall receive comfort. "I will come to you."

First, then, the people here addressed. Though these words were primarily spoken to the disciples yet they are words which are intended also for all the Lord's people right through the generations to the end of time. Our first remark is, that they are a poor and afflicted people. It is written "I shall leave in the midst of thee a poor and afflicted people and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

This was true of the disciples in a twofold sense. They were poor in circumstances. They did not possess the riches of the world, but on the contrary, were more or less dependent, humanly speaking, upon their own efforts in pursuing a daily calling in order that soul and body might be kept together. We are told that they were fishermen. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world; yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

We do not say that it is only such as are poor in circumstances who are the only followers of Christ. We cannot set limits to His power. His power is infinite. He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth. But apart from this poverty they were poor in another sense. They were poor in spirit. They were sinners, and they were taught the utter insufficiency of trusting in any works of their own in order to be saved. Their hope was in the Lord. They had committed their ways to Him, no matter what difficulties, trials and perplexities they might have in connection therewith. They had many enemies, and were more or less friendless. The world was always the enemy of the Lord and His people. Not only do the children of God have persecution from outward foes, but they also have persecution from inward foes. Though there is not so

much persecution endured by believers now from the world, as in former times, yet they have much of inward persecution. Their spiritual foes are so many and too strong for them, and they need one stronger than themselves to shield and protect them. We believe that it is due to the lukewarmness which characterises Christians to-day, which makes them so free from worldly persecution. It is to be lamented, and it is a sign of God's judgment that it is in our day rather difficult at times to distinguish the believer from the unbeliever—the upright from the hypocrite. Were we more faithful to our own souls and to the souls of our fellow sinners—were we showing more love to the Saviour than we do, we would have more enemies. The world would hate us, as it hated the Saviour.

It is not at all to be wondered at though the disciples would feel sad at heart in view of their Lord's departure. While He was with them they felt strong—their enemies could not overcome them. While He was with them they would not lack for anything. They had proved this—for did they not leave all and follow Him. "The lions young may hungry be and they may lack their food but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good."

They now had much need of comfort.

The word "comfortless" here is translated in the Greek and also in the Gaelic language "orphans." This is very expressive, for it showed the relationship which exists between God and His people. Jesus is here addressing His disciples as His children. He says in effect, that He would show them the kindness of a parent and though He was going away He would provide for their future welfare. Though He would be absent from them, the relationship which existed between them would not terminate. Though He was to die, yet He would live again. Though absent in body, He would be present with them by His Spirit. Though He was to go to heaven, yet He would return to them.

How often in the world do the Lord's people feel as if they were orphans. We have remarked on a former occasion that no one has so much cause for joy as the believer, yet, on the other hand no one has so much cause for sorrow. There are times when he finds himself shut out from the Presence of the Lord. He finds himself like a dead man, forgotten. The Lord hides His face and this troubles him. At times he is down in the depths because of the very strong footing unbelief gets on his soul. Wave after wave dashes in upon him, and he is afraid he will be entirely swamped in this sea of doubts and fears. Again, the temptations of Satan are strong. Satan seems to have a special grudge to all who have been brought out of his kingdom. If he could manage

it, they would not have one moment's real peace. He would give them enough false peace—false ease and security, but not that peace which passes all understanding. Some believers may have temptations which others do not have. I heard of one who had the temptation that he was sure to be lost, because he never heard of anyone being saved that had the same name as himself. Satan knows us so well that he can, as it were, place his finger on the very cord which will respond to his vile suggestions. There is an evil principle in us all, upon which the tempter can work, but there is no such evil principle in Christ. As He says Himself "The prince of this world cometh but hath nothing in me." The believer needs comfort when the devil brings temptation, and is trying to sift him as wheat.

Furthermore, the believer needs comfort and consolation when trials meet him in the world. The Apostle Paul got a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him. This was given him lest, as he confesses himself, he should be exalted above measure, on account of the visions and revelations which he had had. Though he prayed earnestly for the removal of the thorn it was not the Lord's will to remove it, yet the Apostle was not left without true comfort. He got the assurance that God's grace would be given, and would be sufficient for him. "My grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

This leads us now to say a word or two in the last place of the assurance the Lord Jesus gives here, that He will administer comfort to His own redeemed ones. "I will come to you." This implies in it, we think, that no true comfort can be had in this world apart from Christ Himself.

The disciples, we believe, had not fully learned the doctrine that the Messiah must suffer and die. He was to come to them after His resurrection, to strengthen their hope, which, as a result of His absence would be well nigh dead. As we have it in Peter's Epistle, "Who hath begotten us to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." He did manifest Himself to them after He rose triumphantly from the grave and this manifestation comforted them, strengthened their hope, and increased and established their faith. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way and opened to us the Scripture." But they were to be consoled in that the Comforter, the Holy Spirit was to come to them. "And I will pray the Father and he will give you another Comforter that he may abide with you for ever." The other Comforter was to be given in His absence to perform the offices towards them which He would have done if He was personally with them, and from this we learn in

fact, what is the office of the Holy Spirit. It is to give to all Christians the instruction and consolation which would be given by the personal Presence of Christ. "I will come to you."

He will come to them to bring them home from this world of sin and sorrow, that they may be forever with Himself. "That where I am there ye may be also." Death then, is the Lord's messenger to all the redeemed. It is Christ coming for them to present them blameless and spotless before His Father. But lastly, He will come to them at the Great Day of Judgment and before an assembled universe they will be openly acknowledged and owned of Him as His own chosen, for whom He suffered, died, rose and ascended to His Father, and interceded for them.

"At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity."

They shall have no more trials. Sin will never more worry them, they shall be for ever outside the reach of Satan's temptations.

How willing then ought we to endure trials and sorrows here, if they should bring forth such salutary results.

GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE

Exposition of *The Confession of Faith*, by

Rev. Dr. Robert Shaw

God's Eternal Decree.

God made choice of, and predestinated, a certain and definite number of individuals to everlasting life . . . He perfectly knows how many, and who in particular, His elect are. Hence their names are said to be enrolled in a book, called the Book of Life, "Before the foundation of the world."—Ephesians 1, verse 4.

In making this choice God acted from His own sovereign will, and was not influenced by any foresight of their faith or other qualifications. According to Arminians, God's decree respecting the salvation of men is founded upon their foreseen faith and good work. Thus, "the decree of God, although prior in time, is posterior in order to the actions of men, and is dependent upon the determination of their will." But to this opinion, so derogatory to the supreme dominion and absolute authority of God, the doctrine of Scripture is directly opposed.

By Grace.

Election is ascribed to grace, to the exclusion of works. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of

works; otherwise grace is no more grace . . . " (Romans 11, verses 5, 6). That election is founded on the good pleasure of God, and not on anything in its objects, is clearly stated in verse 16 of Romans, chapter 9, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy:" and also in verse 18, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will," etc.

For Whom Did Christ Die?

Christ died exclusively for the elect, and purchased redemption for them alone; in other words, that Christ made atonement only for the elect, and that in no sense did He die for the rest of the race. The Saviour Himself declares, "I lay down My life for the sheep," and He affirms that the sheep for whom He laid down His life are the definite number chosen by God, and given to Him in the eternal covenant, and to whom He will eventually give eternal life. (John 10, verses 15, 28, 29). If this does not affirm the doctrine of particular redemption, or of a limited atonement, we know not what language could express that doctrine more explicitly. It is diametrically opposed to the system of the Arminians, who hold that Jesus Christ, by His death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general.

How Unreasonable is the Teaching of a Universal Atonement?

The Arminian doctrine that Christ died for all men leads to many absurd consequences, such as—that Christ shed His blood for many in vain, since all are not saved; that He laid down His life in absolute uncertainty whether any of the human race would be ventually saved . . . To affirm any of these things would be blasphemous in the highest degree; and, therefore, that doctrine which involves such consequences must be unscriptural.

Our Nature Completely Corrupt.

Arminians do not admit that their nature is wholly vitiated, or that they have entirely lost their power to do good. In opposition to such tenets our Confession teaches that a corrupt nature is conveyed to all the posterity of Adam; and that by this original corruption "we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." The universal corruption of mankind is amply confirmed by the Scriptures—"The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Genesis 8, v. 21). "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." (Psalm 58, v. 3); also John 3, v. 6; Psalm 51, v. 5; Romans 8, v. 7; with many other places in Scripture.

Free Will.

The liberty of a moral agent consists in the power of acting according to his choice; and those actions are free which are performed without any external compulsion or restraint, in consequence of the determinations of his own mind . . .

The Arminians, in words, ascribe the conversion of the sinner to the grace of God; yet they ultimately resolve it into the free-will of man.

In opposition to this and various forms of error, our Confession asserts that man, in his natural corrupt state, "has lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation," and that "a natural man is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." This may be confirmed—

(1) By the representations given in Scripture of the natural condition of mankind sinners. They are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins"; to be not only blind, but "darkness" itself; to be "the servants of sin"; to be "enemies of God," who are not, and cannot be subject to His law.—Ephesians 2, verse 1; 5, verse 8; Romans 6, verse 17; Colossians 1, verse 21; Romans 8, verse 7.

(2) The Scripture contains explicit declarations of man's inability to exercise faith in Christ, or to do anything spiritually good.—John 6, verse 44; 15, verse 5.

(3) God claims the conversion of sinners as His own work, which He promises to accomplish.—Ezekiel 11, verses 19, 20; 36, verses 26, 27; Jeremiah 31, verse 33.

(4) The conversion of sinners is uniformly ascribed to the efficacy of divine grace.—Acts 16, verse 14; 1 Thessalonians 1, verse 5.

(5) The conversion of the soul is described in Scripture by such figurative terms as imply that it is a divine work. It is called a creation: Ephesians 2, verse 10; a resurrection: John 5, verse 21; a new birth: John 1, verse 13.

(6) If the sinner could convert himself then he would have something of which he might boast—something which he had not received.—1 Corinthians 1, verses 29, 30; 4, verse 7.

(7) The increase of Christians in faith and holiness is spoken of as the work of God; which must more strongly imply that the first beginnings of it is to be ascribed to Him.—Philippians 1, verse 6; 2, verse 13; Hebrews 13, verses 20, 21. Yet man's incapacity of willing or doing that which is spiritually good being a moral inability, is not inconsistent with his responsibility.

The Gospel Call.

There is an external call of the Gospel, whereby all who hear it are called to the fellowship of Christ, and to receive a full salvation in Him, without money and without price.—Isaiah 55, verse 1. This call is not confined to the elect, nor restricted to those who are sensible of their sins and feel their need of a Saviour, or who possess some good qualifications to distinguish them from others; but it is addressed to mankind sinners as such, without distinction, and without exception. All who come under the general denomination of *men*, whatever be their character and state, have this call directed to them: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man."—Proverbs 8, verse 4. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," sinners of every nation, of every rank and condition.—Isaiah 45, verse 22.

—Extracts from: "An Exposition of the Confession of Faith,"
by Robert Shaw.

A VISIT TO HOLLAND

During the past three or four years an increasing interest has been taken by friends in Holland in the Mboma section of our mission work in Southern Rhodesia. The large contributions given by these friends in the past, as indicated in the Accounts, form an ample testimony to the depth of their interest and the reality of their desire for the welfare of the Mission there.

It has been felt recently that these efforts should be co-ordinated in the formation of a Society, rather than being continued by private individuals. Accordingly, a Society has now been formed in Holland which is called "The Netherlands Society for the Support of the Spiritual and Medical Work at Mboma Mission Station in Southern Rhodesia which is under the auspices of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland." The purpose of the Society is stated to be, "The moral and the material support of the spiritual and medical work of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland at Mboma Mission Station under Rev. P. Mzamo and J. D. van Woerden and their successors." The Secretary/Treasurer of the Society is Mr A. Doctor who is well known to our people in various congregations throughout the Church.

It was decided to hold a meeting of this Society on Saturday, 18th July, 1964, at Utrecht, and I was asked, as Clerk to the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee, to give an address to this meeting. On arrival in Holland, I stayed with Mr Doctor and, on the day of the meeting, proceeded from his home in Delft, where I experienced great kindness, to Utrecht. On arrival at the station in Utrecht I was interested to hear the Public Transport

loud speaker intimate for the benefit of interested parties, "Bus No. — for Mbuma Mission Meeting" or "Tram No. — for Mbuma Mission Meeting." It showed that the meeting had been well organised when public intimation was being made of the proper transport to take in order to get to the meeting! A hall had been taken to seat 2000 but, on our arrival, we found this hall completely filled. On another adjacent hall being taken, it quickly filled up with another 1000 people. As no other halls were available and the people continued to pour out of buses, it was estimated that about 500 were turned away. The total number of people who had gathered for this meeting was, therefore, in the region of 3500.

The large gathering was in itself very impressive, and the fact that so many came clothed in the national costume added colour to the picturesque scene. I was told that one could tell the various districts from which people came by knowing the distinctive costume worn in that district. As most of the people who came from the same district sat together in the hall, the different costumes representing different districts stood out before the eye of the observer in a most pleasant way.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and was opened by the President, Mr A. de Redelijkheid, with the singing of Ps. 90: 1, 2: reading of Acts 15: and prayer. The President thereafter gave a short address to the meeting outlining its purposes and the desire to support the work of the Mission of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in view of its Scriptural principles. On the completion of this address and the singing of Ps. 77: 13, 14, an address was given by one of the ministers present on Matthew 28: 18-20. This address was on the Mission command of the King of the Church three aspects:—(a) Mission and its power, v. 18; (b) Mission and its instruction, v. 19; and (c) Mission and its precious promise, v. 20.

I was then asked to address the meeting, my remarks being translated into Dutch by Mr Doctor. The main points of this address consisted in endeavouring to show that our Mission work had the authority of the Holy Spirit. This was based upon the event which took place in the church at Antioch when "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabus and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This setting apart of these two servants of the Lord was to carry the Word of God to the Gentiles, and thus formed the first Foreign Mission expedition. It is interesting to note in this connection that they were sent to Cyprus. As Barnabus was a Cypriot, he was sent to his native island to begin this work. Similarly, the late Rev. J. B. Radasi when set apart for similar work went to

labour among his own people. A further feature of Mission work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit is to be seen in Romans 15:20, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: but, as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see and they that have not heard shall understand." Mission work involves the carrying of the Word of God to places where Christ has not been named and it is interesting in this connection to note that when Mr Radasi went to his own people, he chose Ingwenya because it was a place where Christ had never been preached before.

A Foreign Mission is related to the Home Church as the branch is to the tree. If the tree be good, there is every prospect that the branch will be good also. It was, therefore, thought desirable that some explanation should be given of the Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland. A brief summary was given of the position of our Church, laying emphasis on the facts of having the Scripture as our supreme standard, the Westminster Confession, with its Calvinistic doctrine, as our subordinate standard, the singing of Psalms to the exclusion of hymns and instrumental music, and the practice of Church discipline according to the Word of God. I was able to assure the meeting that, from my own observations, these principles were also carried out on the Mission. The concluding part of the address dealt with the connection between medical work and the gospel as exemplified in the miracles of the Redeemer in healing the sick, giving the blind their sight etc.

In his reply which was translated into English by Mr Doctor, the President expressed his pleasure at hearing of the principles of the Free Presbyterian Church and stated that he agreed with every one of them! He also made it clear that they in Holland very much welcomed the opportunity of contributing to the work of spreading the Word of God among the heathen, and that they were particularly glad to do this in connection with Scotland, from which country they had received so many sermons which they had felt to be of benefit to themselves when translated into Dutch.

Mr Jan. van Woerden then gave a brief history of the Mission. After a pause for lunch, another address was given by one of the ministers present on the subject of the curse upon Ham in Gen. 9:25. Thereafter, a further address was given by yet another minister on Joel 2:23, and a final address by another minister on Ps. 9:20 and Gal. 2:15. The President then closed the meeting about 4 p.m. conveying to Mr and Mrs Van Woerden and myself the blessing of Ps. 134:3. "The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."

The collections taken at this meeting amounted to the extraordinary sum of more than £2800. The Committee of the Society decided to purchase a Mobile Clinic for use in connection with the hospital work at Mbumba. The Foreign Mission Committee here at home had already ordered this vehicle and we are indebted to our Dutch friends for meeting the cost of £1500. The Committee of the Society also agreed that they would publish the Shorter Catechism in Sindebele when the translation has been completed and revised. I understand the Catechism has been translated by Mr Mzamo and is being revised by our staff out there. The estimated cost is in the region of £1000. The Society wish to be allowed to carry out definite projects of this nature which can be easily reported to its members.

One could not but be impressed with the very warm interest taken by these Dutch friends in our Mission, expressed in the large attendance at the meeting and the liberality of the financial support. It is indeed wonderful that the Lord should have opened the hearts of His people in Holland to support our Mission, and it should be a great encouragement to ourselves that His hand is to be seen in this way. While we desire to thank them, our chief desire should be to praise Him. May He be pleased to visit us in Holland, Scotland, and Rhodesia with the dew from heaven so that Christ would see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied in the raising up of a seed to serve Him. "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." (Ps. 68:31)—D. MacLean.

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel

Air a leantuin bhò t.d. 184)

Am 7. 'S e'n t-seachdabh àm a tha gairm air son tuilleadh agus dìchioll cumanta gu bhì gleidheadh a chridhe, 'n uair a gheibh sinn goirteachadh agus mì-mhodh bhò dhaoine. Tha sgriostachd agus truailidheachd an duine 'n a staid thuiteamach dhe leithid dé ghné, agus gu'm bheil aon a tighinn gu bhì 'n a mhadadh-allaidh agus 'n a *tiger* do dh'aon eile: tha iad, mar a tha'm fàidh a deanamh gearain, "mar iasgaibh na fairge, mar na nithean snàigeach aig nach eil aon fhear-riaghlaidh os an ceann." Hab. i: 14, agus mar a tha daoine aingidh an-ìochdmhor agus geur-leanmhuinneach do aon a cheile, mar sin tha iad a co-aontachadh cuideachd dolaidh agus cron do shluagh Dhé, mar a tha'm fàidh ceudna a gearain, rann 13, "tha an t-aingidh a slugadh suas an duine as ionraice na e fein." Nis 'n uair a tha sinn mar so air ar cràdh agus cron air a dheanamh dhuinn, tha e gle dhuilich an oridh a chumail bhò ghluasadan dioghaltais:

gu toirt air gu macanta agus gu ciùin a chùis fhagail ann an làmhnan an Tì a bheir breith chothromach; agus gun cleachdadh a thoirt do aignuidhean air bith eile ach truas dhoibh-san a tha cur dragh oirrne. Gu cinnteach tha an spiorad a tha annain a togaint gu dioghaltas, ach cha'n fheum e bhi mar sin. Tha còmhnaidhean taghta agaibh anns an t-soisgeul gu bhi cumail sìos bhur cridheachan bho leithid sin de ghluasadan peacach an aghaidh bhur naimhdean, agus gu bhi deanamh milis bhur spioradan a tha air an deanamh searbh. 'S e'n t-seachdamh cuis, uime sin, so:

Cuis 7. An dòigh anns am faod an Crìosduidh a chridhe a ghleidheadh bho ghluasadan dioghaltais ri aghaidh na càldachdan agus na sàrachaidhean is motha bho dhaoine.

Tha'n soisgeul, da-rìreadh, a ceadachadh saorsa gu bhi dearbhadh ar neo-chiontas, agus a nochdadh ar còraichean, ach cha'n ann gu bhi toirt fuasgladh da ar truailidheachdan, agus a dol a stigh ann an còraichean Dhé. 'N uair, uime sin, a gheibh thu do chridhe a lasadh le gluasadan dioghaltais, gu h-obann co-chuir na bacdaidhean a leanas.

1. Sparr air do chridhe na toirmeasgaidhean geur gu dioghaltas a tha ann an lagh Dhé. Cuimhnich gur e meas toirmeisgte, a dh'aindeoin cho tlachdmhor agus cho milis 's a tha e dha ar càil thruaillidh, a tha'n so. O, a deir nàdur, tha dioghaltas milis; O, a deir Dia, ach bithidh, uime sin, a thoraidhean searbh. Cia cho soilleir 's a tha Dia a toirmeasg a pheacaidh so a tha toileachadh na feola, "Na abair, Mar a rinn e orm, mar sin ni mi air: iocaidh mi do'n duine a reir oibre." Gnath. xxiv: 29. "Na abair, Iocaidh mi olc air son uile: feith air an Tighearna agus saoraidh e thù." Gnath. xx: 22. "Na iocaibh olc air son uile do dhuine sam bith. Ullaichibh nithean ciatach am fianuis nan uile dhaoine." Rom. xii: 17. "Na deanamh dioghaltas air 'ur son fein, ach thugaibh àite do'n fheirg: oir tha e sgriobhta, Is leamsa dioghaltas; iocaidh mi, tha an Tighearna ag ràdh." rann 19. Ni-headh, cha'n e so uile; ach, "Ma bhios do nàmhaid acrach, thoir aran dhà r'a itheadh; agus ma bhios e iotmhor, thoir uisge dhà r'a òl." Gnath. xxv: 21. Tha'm focal, "Thoir biodh dhà," mar a tha luchd-mìneachaidh a toirt fa'n ear, thoir biadh dhà gu suilbhear, agus gu coibhneil, mar a tha eoin a deanamh do'n àlach. 'S e caraid mòr do shith agus do shàmhaichair sluaigh a tha anns na Sgriobhturan, nithean nach urrain gu bràth a bhi air an gleidheadh mar a bi dioghaltas air a chur thar na rìgh-chathrach. B'abhast e bhi air a thoirt air adhart mar argumaid leis na Crìosduidhean, gu bhi dearbhadh gu'n robh an creidimh os ceann nàduir agus fìor-ghlan, gu'n

robh e toirmeasg dioghaltais, nì a tha cho milis do nàdur; agus gu cinnteach is e mìle bochdainn a th'ann gu'm biodh an argumaid sin air a càll. Uime sin, ma ta, cuiribh fiamh air bhur cridheachan le ùghdarras Dhé anns na Sgrìobhturan sin, agus 'n uair a their reusan feolmhor, Tha mo nàmhaid a toiltein a bhi air fhuathachadh, freagraidh a choguis, Ach am bheil Dia toilteanach air eas-ùmhhlachd? Mar so agus mar so rinn e, agus mar sin rinn e eucoir ormsa; ach ciod a rinn Dia gu'n deanain-sa eucoir Air? Ma's a dàna leis a bhi ladurna agus gu'm briseadh e'n t-sìth, am bi mise cho aingidh agus gu'm bris mi an àithne? Mar eil eagal air eucoir a dheanamh ormsa, nach bi eagal ormsa eucoir a dheanamh air Dia? O cumadh eagal roimh bhagraidhean Dhé air ais a leithid sin de ghluasadan peacach.

2. Cuiribh fodh chomhair bhur sùilean na h-eiseimpleirean is soilleire air macantas agus maitheanas, a chùm agus gu'n tuiteadh bhur n-anamaibh ann an gaol orra. 'S e so an rathad gu bhi gearradh as tograidhean cumanta sin na feola air son dioghaltais: mar a tha so, "Cha'n fhuilingeadh duine air bith a leithid de thàmailte." Seadh, dh'fhuiling a leithid so a neach uibhir, agus nì bu mhiosa. "Bithidh mi air mo mheas a'm ghealtair, a'm amadan, ma leigeas mi so seachad." Ciod is fiach sin, cho fad agus a leanas mi eiseimpleirean na'n daoine a bu ghlic agus a bu naoimh; cha robh neach riamh a dh'fhuiling uibhir a thàmailtean cho mòr ri Criosd, agus cha robh neach riamh ann a dh'fhuiling cho sìochail agus cho làn de mhaitheanas. "Shàruicheadh e, agus rinneadh ainneart air, gidheadh cha d'fhosgail e a bheul; thugadh e mar uan a chum a chasgraidh, agus mar chaora a bhios ballbh an làthair a luchd-lomairt, mar sin cha d'fhosgail e a bheul." Isaiah liii: 7. Tha'n eiseimpleir so bho ar Tighearna air a cur fodh'r comhair leis an Abstol Peadar a chùm agus gu'n leanadh-mid i, "Oir is ann a dh'ionnsuidh so a ghairmeadh sibh, do bhrìgh gu'n d'fhuiling Criosd mar an ceudna air 'ur son, a fàgail eiseimpleir agaibh, chùm gu'n leanadh sibh a cheuman; neach nach d'rinn peacadh, nì mo a thuaradh cealg 'n a bheul: neach, an uair a chàineadh e, nach do chàin a ris; an uair a dh'fhuiling e, nach do bhagair; ach a dh'earb e fein ris-san a bheir breith cheart." I. Peadar ii: 21-23. Tha bhi de spiorad macanta agus làn maitheanais, coltach ri Criosd, coltach ri Dia; "A chùm gu'm bi sibh 'n 'ur cloinn aig 'ur n-Athair a tha air neamh: oir tha esan a tabhairt air a ghrein fein eirigh air na droch dhaoine, agus air na deagh dhaoine, agus a cur uisge air na fireanaibh agus air na neo-fhireanaibh." Mata v: 45. Cia cho mòr, mar an ceudna, agus a ghabh Spiorad Chrìosd còmhnuidh air na h-abstoil Aige. Cha robh riamh air

an talamh a leithid de dhaoine a dh'fhuiling a leithid de gheur-leanmhuinn, na a ghiulain an geur-leanmhuinn ni b'fhearr." Air fulang anacainnt dhuinn, tha sinn a beannachadh: an uair a gheur-leanar sinn tha sinn ga fhulang: air faigheal toibheum dhuinn, tha sinn a' guidhe: rinneadh sinn mar shalchar an t-saoghail, mar anabas nan uile nithean gus an là 'n diugh." I. Cor. iv: 12-13. Ged a bu duine a bh'ann an *Calvin* aig an robh spiorad beothail, gidheadh ruig e air a leithid de'n spiorad maitheanais so a bha cho coltach ri Crìosd, agus, 'n uair a chleachd *Luther* cainnt mhl-thaitneach dha thaobh, cha d'thubhairt an duine còir an còr ach so, "Ged a theireadh e diabhol rium, gidheadh aidichidh mi gur e th'annsan ach seirbhiseach urramach do Iosa Crìosd."

Chuala mi e bitheanta air aithris a thaobh Maighsteir *Dod* diadhaidh air bhi do neach fodh'n a chuthach a thaobh a theagasg dlùth agus rannsachail, rinn e aimhreit ris agus bhuail e 's an aghaidh e, agus chuir e as a dhà dhe'n a fìaclan: chuir seirbhiseach macanta Chrìosd a mach na fìaclan agus an fhuil 'n a bhois agus thubhairt e ris, "Faic, chuir thu mach a dhà dhe'm fìaclan, agus sin gun aobhar dligheach: ach air chumha gu'n deanain maith dha t-anam, bheirinn cead dhuit a chuid eile dhiubh a thilgeadh a mach." Ann an so tha oirdheirceas spiorad a Chrìosduidh, os ceann gach nì air an do r' thàinig fineachan moralta. Ged a bha iad oirdheirc ann an iomadh nì eile, gidheadh cha b'urraim iad gu bràth ruigheachd air an spiorad maitheanais so. 'S e ceud dhreuchd ceartais, thubhairt *Tully*, gun neach air bith a ghoirteachadh, mur eil e'n toiseach air a bhrosnachadh le càll a bhi air a dheanamh air; air a so tha *Lactantius* ag ràdh, "Ciod e na briathran briagha a mhill am fear-labhairt so leis na briathran deireannach ud a ràdh." Deanamh spàirn, uime sin, air son an oirdheirceas spioraid so, nì is e dearbh oirdheirceas Chrìosduidhean. Dean nì sònraicht àraidh nach urrain feadhan eile a dheanamh, agus an sin bithidh fianuis agad 'n an coguisibh. 'N uair a rinn Maois a' nì nach b'urraim na druidhean a dheanamh bha iad air an co-eigneachadh gu bhi'g aideachadh meur Dhé anns a ghnothuch sin.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Modern Mass Hooliganism

Gangs of young lads and girls called "mods" and "rockers" and who take an evil relish in attacking one another, caused panic and havoc in South of England sea-side towns in May last. Another invasion of these gangs took place at Hastings in August

over the Bank holiday weekend. The chief magistrate of Hastings stated that they came deliberately to make trouble and create an appalling atmosphere of tension and apprehension in the town during their visit. Their attacks on one another and wilful damage done was "a deliberate, cultivated form of modern wickedness." With this statement we fully agree. And we also agree with the magistrate when he said: "There is no reason for this deep-seated hatred between 'mods' and 'rockers.' It is an excuse for excitement, thieving and violence." There is certainly no obvious reason for these wicked outbreaks of gang violence on the part of these young people. Whatever their home environment may be and their outlook as young people without any religious influence, it seems that these factors are not to be given undue weight in the search for the cause of this up-to-date hooliganism. The wickedness of the human heart and the influence of Satan in this modern age must be brought into the matter. Of course, we do agree that the abandonment of the Word of God and its influence and discipline in most of the homes in Britain has left the youth to be a prey to "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." We whole-heartedly enter a word of praise for the Police. It was reported: "Were it not for the fact that the police were suitably organised to resist it would have been a dangerous and unmanageable situation."

Conflict in Different Parts of the World

We have once and again referred in these Notes to conflict and strife in varied parts of the world. This sad state of affairs still obtains and will do so as long as men and nations are without the powerful influences of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace. The island of Cyprus is still like a "running sore," the enmity between Greeks and Turks on the island revealing itself again and again. Even the presence of United Nations troops does not seem to have effected any real good. The trouble is deep-seated in the hearts of men. The African Congo is also stricken with strife among the Congolese themselves. At the time of writing rebels were said to be advancing into Stanleyville, the third largest city in the Congo. The U.S.A. is meeting with the difficult conduct of some sections of the Negro population in relation to Civil Rights. Racial violence has broken out here and there; and here again man's hand against his fellow-man is seen. There is also the extreme anti-negro attitude of some white Americans which cannot be by the standards of the Word of God and the mind of Christ, in any measure condoned. There is nothing to be lost, but everything to be gained by a Scriptural

and Gospel attitude to those of another colour of skin. What all such need, black and white, is the Spirit of Christ; without which we are none of His.

Trinitarian Bible Society's Annual Report

The annual Report of the Trinitarian Bible Society was submitted by the Secretary to its 133rd Annual Meeting last May. A copy came to hand some time ago. During the year there had been another great increase in the number of copies of the Holy Scriptures, especially complete Bibles and New Testaments, distributed in many lands: Bibles 79,514; New Testaments 67,444; and also Portions, Scripture Leaflets and Text Cards. The income of the Society was also considerably higher than the previous year; but there was also greatly increased expenditure. Income £49,169; Expenditure £58,894. The need for new premises is engaging the attention of the Society continually and £4,818 has already been donated by friends for this essential purpose. And we would ask our readers to note the matter of the new premises. The Society has the responsibility of supplying copies of God's Word for distribution in more than seventy countries throughout the world. The Society acknowledges the devoted co-operation of the many voluntary "fellow-helpers to the Truth" in the Auxiliaries in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and overseas. Friends in Free Presbyterian Congregations throughout Scotland were pleased to have visits from Rev. Terence Brown, the Secretary, during the summer months.

Malta Constitution

During last summer, after much consultation, a new constitution was provided for Malta to which our Government was a party. It appears from statements made by members of both Houses of Parliament and other parties interested in this matter, that the Roman Catholic Church in Malta has been left "free" to act as formerly against any members of that Church who might vote in an election for Mr Mintoff and his Labour party. We are not here writing politically, but with regard to the utter lack of democracy in the government of the R.C. Church. It seems that that Church can still use its power to prevent their people from voting for a party of which it disapproves. As one writer remarked: "To declare it, in the Confessional, a mortal sin to vote for the Malta Labour Party is a very effectual spiritual sanction. Mr Mintoff did not get his way, by the above being declared a 'corrupt practice,' punishable by law." The British Government, while giving millions of the British taxpayers' money to assist Malta, should see to it, that all the people of that island have untrammelled

freedom to vote as we do in Britain. And there is also some disquiet as to the possibility of R.C. discrimination against non-Roman Catholics in the matter of marriage under the new Constitution. It seems that to-day, it takes a man like Mintoff, a discredited Roman Catholic and a politician, to expose the oppressive tactics of the Roman Church. The false charity abroad has blinded the minds and closed the mouths of professed Protestant leaders, so that they are "dumb dogs, which cannot bark."

British Humanists and School Worship

The English Churchman, for August 7th, reports as follows:—"The British Humanist Association meeting at Nottingham expressed an aim 'to create local situations in which it is possible for parents acting together to do something about having their children excused from attendance at the act of worship.' A resolution was passed to that effect and included a clause to the effect that 'religious indoctrination should be condemned.' " As far as we know, under any relevant Education Act, parents are at liberty to direct that their children at school be excused from any religious worship or instruction. But these active atheists would have religion banned altogether from schools. What determined and miserable people they are! "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." But a day of reckoning is still to come.

Theatre Plays Attacked.

Some plays presented to the public must indeed be bad and deplorable from the moral point of view when those interested in the life of the theatre speak out against them. Mr Peter Cadbury, chief of the Keith Prowse Theatre Ticket Company, recently attacked "... the current trend toward plays that are unsuitable and unacceptable to a large part of the public." He said, "We would welcome a stricter control to discourage profanity. . . The tendency to rely on the use of expressions or situations that reflect the lowest forms of human life can do the theatre only harm." He criticised critics for praising plays which disgusted many of the public. So here we have the free expression of opinion by a man interested in the theatre as a form of entertainment. Things must be corrupt and degrading in this form of entertainment to-day, when Mr Cadbury speaks thus. The moral standards prescribed by the Word of God and the ten commandments are just not recognised in certain quarters to-day. But sin in every form will bring the curse to the impenitent, however sweet it may be to men and women now.

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, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaully; 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, Thurso, Vatten; fifth, Stornoway. *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.

London Communion Services

The services will be as follows (D.V.):—Thursday, 3rd December, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Friday, 4th December, 11 a.m., (Prayer Meeting), 3.30 p.m., (Gaelic) and 6.30 p.m., (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 5th December, 2.15 p.m. (Gaelic). 3.30 p.m., (English) and 6.30 p.m., (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 6th December, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday, 7th December, 7 p.m. The weekday services will be held in the Bridewell Hall, London City Mission, Eccleston Place, S.W.1, and the Sabbath services in St. Michael's Hall (opposite Victoria Coach Station), Eccleston Place. Rev. J. Colquhoun, Glendale, and Rev. F. Macdonald, North Tolsta, are expected to assist at the Communion (D.V.).

Teachers For Ingwenya

Both Miss MacLennan and Miss Graham are due for leave at the end of this year. There is, therefore, an urgent need for teachers for the School at Ingwenya and the Committee will be very pleased to hear of any qualified teachers who have a desire to serve the Church in this work. Any such should get in touch immediately with the Clerk of this Committee at 13 Kingsborough Gardens, Glasgow W.2.—(Rev.) Donald MacLean, Clerk, Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee.

The Death of Pastor J. H. Gosden, Maidstone

We, and other friends in our Church, heard with regret of the death of Pastor J. H. Gosden, of *The Gospel Standard*, Strict Baptist denomination. He passed away on the Lord's Day, 21st

June, 1964, after a brief but trying illness. He was Pastor of the Maidstone congregation for over forty years and was Editor of *The Gospel Standard* for many years. Mr S. F. Paul, of Brighton, referring to Mr Gosden, has written: " . . . the people at Maidstone over which he has been the faithful Pastor for over forty years, the readers of this magazine (*The Gospel Standard*), and the people of God and the lovers of truth generally, have reason to mourn over the sad event which has overtaken us . . . " We sympathise with those who feel the loss of this servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Sustentation Fund.—K. Gillies, Raasay, £1; Sister P. MacLeod, Edinburgh, £1 for Stoer Sustentation Fund; Psalm 122, v. 7, £5; Misses J. and K. MacKinnon, Tarbert, £2; last two per Mr J. Grant.

Home Mission Fund.—A Friend, "Unto them that do Him fear, God's mercy never ends," £1; Friend, Raasay, £2; K. Gillies, Raasay, £1; Misses J. and K. MacKinnon, Tarbert, £1, per Mr J. Grant.

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College and Library Fund.—Friend, Raasay, £1.

Mission to the Jews Fund.—Friend, Raasay, £1; Wellwisher, Ullapool, £1 per Mr Grant.

Home of Rest Fund.—Home of Rest Visitor, £1; "Interested," Lochcarron, £5; Friend, Raasay, £2; Psalm 122, v. 7, £5; Mr A. J. Watts, Luton, £2 2/-; Gairloch F.P. from Home, 10/-; Friend, Applecross, £1, last four per Mr Grant.

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