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GOD'S SON TO HAVE THE PRE-EMINENCE

Paul deals with outstanding truths in respect of the glory of God's dear Son, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. Among these, the Apostle asserts that He was the Creator of all things: "For by Him were all things created . . . all things were created by Him and for Him" (v. 16). And also that God's Son is He "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (v. 14). And again that "He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (v. 18). The Lord Jesus has indeed the pre-eminence—the first place—as to His personal glory as Creator, Redeemer and Head of the Church and also in many other respects which His Church and people recognise in faith and humbly.

As the head of the body, the Church, He has been given all power in heaven and in earth, to rule and reign for the fulfilling of the divine and gracious purposes of God in connection with the conversion and salvation of His Covenant people and unto the subjection of all His and His people's enemies. As the alone, divine head of the Church, He is the One, in whom dwelleth all divine and spiritual blessings required by His people; and from the Son of God thus they derive and receive the truth, the grace, the wisdom, the strength and the life they need continually as members in His body. And therefore the Lord Jesus Christ has the first place as head of the body, the Church. But He is to have the pre-eminence in all things; and this of necessity includes things wherein His people are particularly concerned and regarding which they are to be exercised in giving their Redeemer and Head the pre-eminence.

Believers are to give Christ Jesus the pre-eminence in their hearts. It is declared in the Word of God that Christ dwells in their hearts by faith. By faith they have been enabled to receive into their hearts, the Redeemer, as revealed to them through the Truth and by the Person and power of the Holy Spirit. The

flesh and sin are no longer to have the dominion in them and over them, as they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. They are to seek to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ by desiring and feeding upon the sincere milk of the Word and also by pleading much at the throne of grace for the Spirit of Truth to exalt the Redeemer increasingly in their heart's, and spiritual experience. Their desire must be to follow in the spiritual footsteps of Asaph, and be enabled to say: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee" (Ps. lxxiii: 25).

In the Christian's home, the Lord Jesus is to be given the pre-eminence. His Name is to be constantly honoured and referred to with the deepest reverence that there be no dubiety as to the place He should hold in the home of the Christian. As to temporal benefits enjoyed, the Lord Jesus is to be acknowledged as He through whom, and for whose sake, all such mercies are received from God, the Father of Mercies and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Daily expressions of thanksgiving must surely characterise the home of the Christian, bringing in the name and worthiness of the Saviour. And how careful the Christian should be that his home and private life be regulated and influenced by the Word and mind of Christ with regard to all to whom he bears relationship and responsibility. Then the worship of God cannot be engaged in acceptably but as it is offered through the Person and mediation of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven. And thus at the daily family worship conducted in the Christian's home, the Christian endeavours humbly to give Christ His place. What is clearly contrary to the Word and commandments of Christ, in word or deed, cannot be condoned in the home of the Christian, who is concerned that Christ will not be dishonoured in any way. Vast numbers of homes have closed the door against the Lord of glory. But the Christian with all his imperfections, desires and prays that Christ will have the pre-eminence in his home.

And in relation to the Sabbath and the Sanctuary, the Lord Jesus is to be honoured, the Christian Sabbath being a memorial of His resurrection, and the Sanctuary, the place where His honour dwelleth. The Sabbath is trampled underfoot by the ungodly, and the Sanctuary is forsaken by all but a remnant in the Nation. But they who submit graciously to Christ as their Lord, recognise Him as Lord also of the Sabbath. They endeavour to sanctify the Lord's Day, "... by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in

the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy " (Shorter Catechism: Q. 60). And one of the greatest interests in the whole life of the believer is to join in fellowship with others in the divine worship engaged in in the House of God. Herein Christ, in all His fullness, is exhibited in the Word of God and the preaching of the gospel and from time to time in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ in these ordinances is given the pre-eminence and this is what satisfies and comforts the hearts of needy believers; and under the blessing of the Holy Spirit they are led to rejoice in Him as their Prophet, Priest and King and to worship and adore Him in the tabernacles of His grace.

And again, with respect to the exercising of Church government and discipline, the Lord Jesus Christ must have the pre-eminence. Let us here quote from the Claim, Declaration and Protest (1842) of the Disruption Fathers of 1843, as follows:— " Yet ' the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers distinct from the civil magistrate ' (Ch. xxx, sec. 1, Confession of Faith); which government is ministerial, not lordly, and to be exercised in consonance with the laws of Christ, and with the liberties of his people; And whereas, according to the said Confession, and to the other standards of the Church, and agreeable to the Word of God, this government of the Church, thus appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, in the hand of Church officers, . . . and flowing directly from the Head of the Church to the office-bearers thereof . . . comprehends, as the objects of it, the preaching of the Word, administration of the sacraments, correction of manners, the admission of the office-bearers of the Church to their offices, their suspension and deprivation therefrom, the infliction and removal of Church censures, and, generally, the whole ' power of the keys,' which by the said Confession, is declared, in conformity with Scripture, to have been ' committed ' (Ch. xxx, sec. 2) to Church officers . . ." To the above statements and assertions as to Church government being derived from Christ as the Head of the Church, we as a Church give our unqualified assent. And as to Church Discipline it ". . . is held to be of great use and necessity in our ecclesiastical system. It is regarded as belonging to that government which Christ has instituted in the visible order of His kingdom . . ." (Moncrieff, p. 102). And thus Christ's mind expressed in His Word, is to be regarded in the exercising of Church discipline, before the views and feelings of men who may resent and disagree with the exercising of discipline in the realm of the Church. But Church

Courts are to give the first place to the mind of Christ, having in view the glory of God, the purity of the Church, and the spiritual good of offenders; whatever the consequences may be. Much grace, faithfulness and impartiality are required by office-bearers in the exercising of discipline, if Christ is to be thereby honoured.

Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity would fain see Him given the honour and place which He is entitled to in the Houses of Parliament and the government of this professed Christian Nation. But as "the Prince of the kings of the earth," He has been greatly ignored by our rulers for many years now. But the Lord Jesus Christ continues to reign as His Throne is established for ever. His people have reason to rejoice greatly in this; but His enemies and despisers have reason indeed to tremble.

During this New Year, may it please God, by an outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon us as a Nation, to increase and enliven the faith and love of His people toward Christ, their Saviour and Head; and that many, who now despise and reject the Lord of glory, will be brought to mourn over their grievous sin and to believe in and adore Him.

A CONSIDERATION OF PARENTAL DUTIES

By Edward Payson

(Continued from page 237)

The Consequences of Parental Unfaithfulness.

"For I have told him, that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever" (I Sam. iii: 13, 14). Samuel was directed to begin his ministry by denouncing God's judgments against a sin which, it seems, was but too common then, as it is now; the sin of neglecting the moral and religious education of children. It was this sin which drew down the most awful threatenings upon the house of Eli. His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. We may be ready to think this a small and pardonable offence; but God thought otherwise, and He made Eli know that He did so in a most awful manner.

Consider the sin here mentioned. It is not said that Eli set them a bad example. It is evident, on the contrary, that his example was good. Nor is he accused of neglecting to admonish

them; for we are told that he reproved them in a solemn and affectionate manner, and warned them of the danger of continuing to pursue vicious courses. In this respect he was much less culpable than many parents at the present day; for not a few set before their children an example positively bad; and still more entirely neglect to admonish and reprove them. But though Eli admonished, he did not restrain his children. He did not employ the authority with which he was clothed, as a parent, to prevent them from indulging their depraved inclinations. This is the only sin of which he is accused; and yet this was sufficient to bring guilt and misery upon himself, and entail ruin upon his posterity.

Of the same sin those parents are now guilty, who suffer their children to indulge, without restraint, those sinful propensities to which childhood and youth are but too subject; and which, when indulged, render them vile in the sight of God. Among the practices which thus render children vile, are a quarrelsome, malicious disposition, disregard to truth, excessive indulgence of their appetites, neglect of the Bible, profanation of the Sabbath, profane language, wilful disobedience, and idleness which naturally leads to everything bad. From all these practices it is in the power of parents to restrain their children in a very considerable degree, if they steadily and perseveringly employ the proper means; and those who neglect to do this are guilty of the sin mentioned in the text. Nor will a few occasional reproofs and admonitions, given to children, free parents from the guilt of partaking in their sins. No, they must be restrained; restrained with a mild and prudent, but firm and steady hand; restrained early, while they may be formed to habits of submission, obedience and diligence; and the reins of government must never, for a moment, be slackened, much less given up into their hands, as is too often the case.

My friends, the terrible punishments denounced against this sin sufficiently show that it is exceedingly displeasing in the sight of God. Eli's sons were given up to a hard heart and reprobate mind. They could not now be brought to repentance; and, of course, no sacrifice or offering could purge away their sins. It is still the same, and there can be no room to doubt, that there are thousands now in the regions of despair, and thousands more on their way to join them, who will forever curse their parents, as the authors of their misery. Let us then inquire the reasons why this sin is so provoking to God, as it evidently is. Why is it so? To this we answer, it is so,

(1) Because it proceeds from very wicked and hateful principles. Actions take their character in the sight of God principally from

the motives and dispositions in which they originate. Now there is scarcely any sin which proceeds from worse principles than this. . . . In religious parents, this sin almost invariably proceeds from indolence and selfishness. They love their own ease too well to employ that constant care and exertion, which are necessary to restrain their children, and educate them as they ought. They cannot bear to correct them, or put them to pain; not because they love their children, but because they love themselves, and are unwilling to endure the pain of inflicting punishment, and of seeing their children suffer; though they cannot but be sensible, that their happiness requires it. There is also much unbelief, much contempt of God, and much positive disobedience in this sin. Parents are as expressly and as frequently commanded to restrain, to correct, and instruct their children, as to perform any other duty whatever. Great promises are made to the performance of this duty; awful threatenings are denounced against the neglect of it. Yet all these motives prove ineffectual. The commands are disobeyed, the promises and threatenings are disbelieved and disregarded, and thus parents honour their children more than God, and seek their own ease rather than His pleasure, as Eli is said to have done. Now these are some of the worst principles of our depraved nature; and therefore we need not wonder that a sin, which proceeds from such sources, is exceedingly displeasing to God.

(2) This sin is exceedingly displeasing to God, because, so far as it prevails, it entirely frustrates His design in establishing the family state. We are taught, that He at first formed one man and one woman, and united them in marriage, that He might seek a Godly seed. But this important design is entirely frustrated by those parents who neglect the moral and religious education of their children; and therefore God cannot but be greatly displeased with a sin which renders His benevolent measures for our happiness unavailing.

(3) God is greatly displeased with this sin on account of the good which it prevents, and the infinite evil which it produces. He has taught us, that children properly educated will be good and happy, both here and hereafter. He has also taught us that children, whose education is neglected, will probably be temporally and eternally miserable. At least, it will not be owing to their parents, if they are not. He also compels us to learn from observation and experience, that innumerable evils and miseries do evidently result from this sin; that the happiness of families is destroyed; that the peace of society is disturbed; that the prosperity of nations is subverted, and that immortal souls are ruined

by its effects. Now the anger of God against any sin, is in proportion to the evils and the misery which it tends to produce. But it is evident that no sin tends to produce more evils, or greater misery than this. It is the fruitful parent of thousands of other sins, and entails ruin upon our descendants to the third and fourth generation (Exod. xxxiv: 37). We often speak of acting for our posterity, of providing for their happiness; but in no way can we promote their happiness so effectually, as by abstaining from sin; and no way can we do more to destroy it, than by continuing in sin. A measure of iniquity nearly full is a terrible inheritance to bequeath to posterity! Yet such an inheritance we shall certainly transmit to them, unless a more general reformation, than there seems any reason to expect, should prevent. May God have mercy upon our posterity, for I fear we shall have none!

If there are any children or youth now present, whose parents do not restrain them, and who make themselves vile by indulging in sinful practices, they may learn from this subject, what will be their fate, unless repentance prevent. Children and youth, I am now speaking to you. You are deeply interested in this subject. Remember the character and the fate of Eli's sons. They made themselves vile, and God slew them. Remember that a quarrelsome temper, disobedience to parents, idleness, neglect of the Sabbath, and the Bible, profane and indecent language, and falsehood, render you vile in the sight of God, and are the high road to poverty and contempt in this world, and everlasting wretchedness in the next. Remember too that, if your parents do not forbid, and punish you for these sins, that will not excuse you in the sight of God. Eli did not restrain his sons, and yet God destroyed them. But if any of you, who have religious parents, pursue such courses in defiance of their admonitions, your doom will be still worse. There is no more certain forerunner of ruin in this world and the next, than habitual disregard to the counsels and warnings of such parents. We are told that Eli's sons hearkened not to their father, because the Lord would slay them; and if any children present refuse to obey their parents, it gives reason to fear that God intends, in like manner, to destroy them.

The reward of parental faithfulness.

Part of the reward which God bestows on those who educate their children for Him, is the happiness which they enjoy, when they see their labours crowned with success. This happiness will usually, if not always, be enjoyed by those who seek with proper earnestness and perseverance the blessing of God to render their

exertions effectual. I am warranted to make this assertion by the authority of Scripture. We are there expressly assured, that if we train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old, he will not depart from it. In addition to this, God's language to every believing parent, to every child of Abraham is, I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee. These passages are abundantly sufficient to warrant a belief, that God will save, at least, some of the seed of every believer, who, like Abraham, teaches and commands his children and his household after him.

. . . We dare challenge any person to produce a single instance, in which all the offspring of believing parents who educate their children for God, in the manner above described, died without giving evidence of hopeful piety. We know, indeed, that many children of parents undoubtedly pious, far from imitating their example, have been notoriously wicked; but we know also that many parents, really pious, do not educate their children, by any means as they ought. We know also that all the means and endeavours which parents can use, will avail nothing, without the sovereign grace of God; but we likewise know that God usually works by means, and converts those children whose parents labour and pray most earnestly for their conversion. The labours of ministers for their people are no more effectual without the grace of God, than those of parents for their children; yet St. Paul assures Timothy, that if he took heed to himself and to his doctrine, and continued in them, he should in so doing, both save himself, and them that heard him. Why then may we not with equal reason conclude, that if parents take heed to themselves, to their conduct, and the doctrines of Christ, and continue in them, they shall save, not only themselves, but their children?

My friends, what a reward is this! What music can be more sweet to a parent's ear, than the accents of a beloved child exulting in hope of the glory of God, and gratefully declaring that to the prayers, labours and pious example of his parents, he is indebted, under God, for all his present happiness and future hopes. How must it alleviate the pangs of separation, when death arrives, to know that we leave our children under the care of an infinitely good, wise, and powerful being, who will do for them all that they need to have done, and watch over them with more than parental tenderness. And hereafter, when we meet them in the abodes of the blessed, when we see them praising God, for giving them such parents, and hear Him greet us with, Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord—what will be our feelings? How inconceivable our happiness! How great the reward of educating children for God!

THE DUTY OF GIVING AWAY A STATED PROPORTION OF OUR INCOME

(Extracts from an address by William Arthur, M.A., delivered about the year 1850 in Belfast, with the Bishop of Down in the chair, and reprinted in full in the Free Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. IX)

(Continued from page 233)

Objections Met

"In urging upon us to give away a tenth, you are reviving the Levitical law, and that is abolished." Indeed, the difference between those who hold that it stands and those who hold that it is abolished lies perhaps more in word than reality. Those who hold that it stands would hardly contend that the latter is in force; for that was, that the tenth should be given to the tribe of Levi, which, to the letter, we cannot fulfil. And those who hold that it is abolished surely do not mean that its spirit is abolished. The spirit of that law is, *"Of Thine own have we given unto Thee."* This is not abolished, and blessed be God, never will be! And surely you do not mean that this spirit, a spirit so right and good, in passing from Judaism to Christianity, forsook a more sensitive body for one grosser and heavier than earth! We need not pause to show that quite independently of the Levitical tenth, the other requirements of the Mosaic law demand more than a second tenth; and that the patriarchs gave their tenth before ever Levi was.

"But if you teach men ought to give a tenth they will give that and be content, though they ought to be giving much more." This is an objection of real gravity. Doubtless did we succeed in producing generally in the Churches the state of feeling that all were bound to give at least a tenth, many would think themselves generous in giving that, when perhaps a third would be only their just proportion. But how do matters stand at present? Multitudes of sincere Christians are royally content though they give nothing like a tenth, and could we succeed in bringing up the Church generally to that proportion (though far below what we hold to be due of many), the state of things then would present a wonderful improvement on that existing now.

But I question whether adopting the principle of proportion would tend to make content with the *minimum* proportion after they were abundantly prospered. So far as my knowledge of its practical working goes my impression is the reverse. It is my pleasure to know many men who, at the outset of life, or early in life, adopted Jacob's resolution to give a tenth. These have all been prosperous men. I do not know one of them but shows

that the effect of his early adopting the principle of a tenth has been to prepare him for a higher proportion when years of plenty set in.

It is not probable, that year after year, one will carefully set apart a fixed proportion for the service of his God without becoming habituated to feel that he is neither author nor owner of any fraction of property, but merely steward; and that He at whose feet he lays the first-fruits is the Lord, the Giver of all. Such stated setting apart is a practical keeping of the precept, "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." And whoever thus begins life by keeping a law of proportion is the most likely of all men to advance his proportion as the Benefactor augments his blessing.

Practical Attention to the Duty

"By practical attention to" it, I mean that everyone here, without exception, especially the young—for you whose hairs are white had need of thinking of much more than a tenth—that all the young, in solemn gratitude to their God, and under a humble sense that He is owner and they are stewards, should now, here and irrevocably resolve, that by the help of divine grace, henceforth, to the day when money ceases to be treasure, "OF ALL THAT THOU SHALT GIVE ME I WILL SURELY GIVE THE TENTH TO THEE."

This resolve once come to, it only remains that at stated times the consecrated portion of what the Lord gives you be set apart for His service; and that it be cheerfully given away. Those stated times may be either weekly, quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly, according as you can ascertain your income. There are points of detail of the utmost importance, which anyone who is really resolved will soon adjust for himself. But my point is to obtain the firm resolution of steady and habitual liberality for all that remains of life. Doing this, it will soon be seen that they who acknowledge Providence bloom in its sunshine, and that seldom indeed is one of their number struck with a blight.

I plead for the Lord's sake, *that His claims may be vindicated*. I have already said that many who are willing to look upon Him as God of the world to come feel as if this world's property was not so directly His and under His hand. For the Creator's glory, and the creature's rest, it is needful that all be taught that the gold and silver, the harvest's yield, flocks, herds, and fisheries, are all His property; that whatsoever man has in his hand is there only in trust and stewardship, not created nor yet retained by His power; that a Hand unseen can at any moment empty his hand, and a Mind unseen blight the fruit of a life's prudence by

the mistake of a day. Go, then, and assert the Lord's claims; go and teach man's stewardship, not in word, but in deed. Steadily devote the first-fruits of all wherewith you may be entrusted to holy uses. Let your daily actions say in your neighbour's ears, "Freely ye have received, freely give!"

I plead for the Lord's sake, *that His due praise may be rendered.* In speaking of the effect of Christian liberality, St. Paul tells us that it does not stop at those who are benefited, but passes on in a certain sense, to the Lord Himself—"abounds by many thanksgivings to God."

I PLEAD FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, *that you may prosper.* The habit of statedly giving first-fruits of all you receive, tends to prosperity, by the double means of a natural means and a Divine blessing. As a natural means it works by promoting order and economy. One reason why many tradesmen fail is that they do not, in due time and with sufficient frequency, ascertain precisely where they are. He who is *determined* that all his increase shall pay its first-fruits to the glory of his Saviour must ascertain what that increase is. Again: one reason why many persons of fixed income are miserably before their means, is because they have never carefully apportioned to each branch of their expenditure its due share of their income. Were one portion held sacred, on which no claim whatever should touch, an efficient check would be set up against random living.

The habits of order and economy thus acquired would work together with the blessing which is assured to him who honours the Lord with the first-fruits of all his increase. That a man living steadily up to this principle will prosper I have no manner of doubt. The very night before I left London, I asked a valued friend of mine who had adopted the principle of giving away a tenth in early life, and whom the prospering hand of God had raised from humble beginnings to a position of great and valuable influence, if he ever knew a case in which a man had set out on that principle, and *persevered in it* and then failed in life. He answered, "Not one."

Worldly men are often led to doubt whether a blessing does attend the labour of a pious man; for they see men who profess religion suddenly brought down. But they must ask whether these men have been faithful to their religion. It often happens that one who begins life well, and is liberal while he has little, yields to that fatal tendency, which is strong in all, to love money in proportion as it increases. As they become richer in hand they become poorer in heart. As they acquire more they give less. These men were false to their religion, and it is fitting that a blight should overtake them—indeed that blight may be

their salvation. But he who steadfastly sets apart for the Lord the first portion of all his gains, checks his love of money on the threshold; and by increasing the proportion as his gains increase, he checks the terrible bent to a progressive love of it; so that it is safe for himself and good for the Church, that he should prosper. But how can he prosper who gives a tenth of little, but, when Providence make it much, thinks his tenth too much to give? Even to that depths of baseness can our poor nature go. Such men, not only in substance, but in very form, "rob God," and may be met by Him with that stark and frightful charge. And if it may be said of other wrongful modes of getting wealth, surely it may of this: "As a partridge sitteth on eggs and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

I plead for your own sake, *that you may escape the curse of a carnal mind*. It is possible for a man so to drown his spiritual powers in sordid passion that the soul within him ceases to have any action but for concerns of the market. Of its high faculties he cannot rob it; it is, and it will be a soul, with the inherent lights and forces of a soul. But all these he presses into the ignoble service of self-gathering. It still has its judgment, capable of deep and holy themes; but this is kept ever poring upon problems lying within the three columns—pounds, shillings and pence. It has its imagination; but this, instead of taking flights to a better country, only dwells on more gold, more houses, more land, more state. It has its fear; but this, forgetting all things really fearful, shudders at nothing except losses. And even its hope, though unquenchable, aspiring only after property, does not wing the soul for heaven, but earths it deeper in self. Thus the poor soul is totally shut out from its native air, and the whole man sinks into a machine—a most wonderful and elaborate machine, worked by spirit-power, for the use of scraping, scraping, scraping gold!

I plead for your own sake, *that you may increase in purity and heavenliness of mind*. It was our Redeemer who first showed the way to make money a means of inclining our affections towards the inheritance of the saints in light. He said, "Sell that ye have and give alms; provide yourself bags which wax not old" (is not this what you would covet? "*bags which wax not OLD?*"), "a treasure in the heavens, where no thief approacheth nor moth corrupteth." Now, mark the philosophy of this: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." So that by gradually laying up your treasure in heaven, your heart will gradually follow it there; and thus money, which some treat as

capable only of being a bond and a burden, may become to you a connecting wire with the Throne of retributions, and a stimulant to hope for "the resurrection of the just." A farmer who loves to see a full barn, and also to receive in market the price of his crops, yet forgoes the market and reduces the store in his barn, casts away his precious grain out of his hand, out of his sight, and leaves it buried, lost as to immediate return, trusting it wholly to the bosom of earth and the eye of Heaven. What effect does this portion of his treasure produce upon him? It turns his thoughts away from the barn, from the market—from the pride of the one and the gold of the other. It leads his eye often up to the heavens, and his thoughts forward to the coming harvest-day.

Go, then, and sow, not sparingly, but bountifully. Foregoing the proud store, foregoing the present recompense, cast your treasure out of your grasp, out of your sight, cast it with a broad hand and a glad heart; leave it there unseen, in the soil of eternity, and under the suns of heaven. Even here the fruit will be that, by degree, your mind will set itself more strongly on the joys that never wane; and when the harvest-day sets in, how many will be who would wish that they had sown as you!

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses with new wine" (Proverbs iii: 9, 10).

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (II Corinthians ix: 6).

A SERMON

Notes of a Sermon preached at Halkirk (Communion) on
Monday 13th November, 1961, by the Rev. A.
MacPherson, Dornoch.

Text:—"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee
that it may be displayed because of the truth."
Psalm 60. v. 4.

In this Psalm we see that David had no hesitation in attributing the hardships and troubles experienced by himself and his people at this time to the Lord's displeasure with them. "Oh God thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased." Still, the Psalm is not one long complaint. It is anything but that. However, it does have this background that things had not been going well with the nation nor with himself, and this was clearly due to their having displeased God. Yet, in mercy and in kindness, the Lord had been pleased to give them a token of His favour

in the victory referred to in the title of the psalm—"When Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt, twelve thousand." We do not know the battle to which this refers, but it is clear that under Joab's generalship, David's armies had gained a victory over their enemies, and this encouraged the Psalmist to write in verse 12—"Through God we shall do valiantly: for He it is that shall tread down our enemies." Now, we have reason to believe that the words of our text—"Thou hast given a banner" have a connection with the victory which Joab gained over the Edonites. However, as we may be enabled, let us consider three things which the text brings before us.

(1) The recipients of the banner. They are those who fear God. (2) The banner given. Let us examine the nature of this banner, both as viewed by David and Israel, and also as presented to our view today. (3) The use of the banner. It is to be displayed because of the truth.

Firstly, the recipients of the banner. They are those who fear God. The word "fear" has two principal meanings. One is to 'dread someone or something.' The other is to 'respect or revere.' The latter sense is the way in which believers regard their God, but fear in the sense of dread is the mainspring of all natural religion. All men are naturally religious and behind this religious instinct is a slavish fear or dread of God. A man may go out of his way to suppress this fear and the religion it occasions, but otherwise it will reveal itself. Everywhere, we see that people associate together for the purposes of religion — Hindus in India, Buddhists in China, Animists in Africa, etc. All feel the impulse to worship. What impels them? Simply the dread of God as a sin-punishing God. The natural conscience informs each that he is responsible to such a God, and it is the desire to propitiate Him that brings each to take part in some form of religion or other. Yet this natural dread is not the "fear of the Lord" inculcated by Scripture. There, we are told, that the "fear of the Lord is to hate evil"—Proverbs 8 v. 13. To fear God because He will punish sin is a very different thing from hating sin. The great regret of sinners is that God hates sin and punishes it. Could they possibly believe that God would regard sin lightly, they would never think of worshipping Him. What power the conscience has when it can thus bring men to worship God for very fear! Could they think that sin might go unpunished they would go after it to their heart's content. As it is, they cannot rid themselves of the instinctive knowledge that God is a sin-punishing God. Coming now to the second meaning of the word "fear," it is that respect that is found in a servant for a worthy master, or in a loving and

obedient child towards a worthy parent. This is the fear that the christian has of his God. It is the work of His Spirit in those who have been born again. It is the expression of filial love in such as are the children of God. It is the holy fruit of forgiveness of sins. This gracious disposition is clearly seen in the believer's dread of displeasing God and losing His favour. Perhaps he fears that by a careless word he has given offence to a fellow-believer. That is matter for sorrow, but he is even more concerned about acknowledging this sin to the Lord than to the person concerned. It may be considered inadvisable to bring it up again with the injured party; nevertheless it lies as a weight on the conscience until confessed to the Most High. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight." Psalm 51 v. 4. To Him they pray to forgive and over-rule the sin for good. The fear of the Lord also shows itself by delight in the divine excellencies. No part of a sermon is of less interest to the natural man than that in which the attributes of the Lord are displayed and extolled, while God's people delight in having the character of their God opened up to them out of His truth, and to obtain more knowledge of the blessed Object in which their confidence is placed. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee." Psalm 9 v. 10. The fearers of God are submissive to God's will and obedient to His commands, and their gracious exercise of soul is just what we had yesterday — "Behold thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint" — 2nd Samuel chap. 15 v. 15. Their interest is to discover His will and they seek grace to perform what He commands. They also desire sincerity in worship, and are troubled by their thoughts' tendency to stray and dwell upon matters unconnected with that worship. This holy fear also leads to gratitude, and, like the Psalmist, they enquire — "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me."

Let us consider, secondly, the banner given. "Thou hast given a banner." This is the same word which we meet in other places in Scripture translated "ensign" and "standard", and it has a military significance. It is that kind of banner that is used by fighting men, and which has not been dispensed with until this day. You may see such banners at the front and rear of army vehicles, having the appearance of a coloured flag painted on the bodywork. This flag or banner denotes the military unit to which the vehicle belongs. It serves many purposes but chiefly those of keeping all the vehicles of one unit together, and of enabling the troops to recognise their own vehicles. Such banners are more arbitrary signs and need have no special significance. So long as a

flag is different from any other it will do for its purpose of distinguishing one lot of vehicles from another.

So far from being a mere arbitrary sign, the banner of Scripture language is a *significant* symbol appointed to serve as a rallying point. Anything that God ever gave to Israel to be a banner always signified His own faithfulness and strength. The banner was a meaningful symbol and the people of God gathered to it with a common regard for what it represented, namely success in conflict. A banner of this kind was not necessarily a flag. The Roman eagle which was borne in front of Caesar's legions, was a metal device mounted on a pole. The brazen serpent which Moses was instructed to make and lift up for stricken Israelites to look at, was a banner such as we are referring to. It represented the faithfulness and power of Israel's God. Whosoever believed what God said to Moses, "When he beheld the serpent of brass he lived"—Numb. 21 v. 9. But the brazen serpent pointed in turn to another banner, as Isaiah declared—"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."—Isaiah chap. 11 v. 10. The Saviour confirmed the fulfilment of this when He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—John chap. 12 v. 32. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life."—John chap. 3 v. 14, 15. Christ Himself is the Banner, the divinely given symbol of God's faithfulness and power, the emblem of successful conflict in the most vital warfare that men have ever engaged in, the struggle against sin. "My mercy and my faithfulness, with Him yet still shall be: and in my name His horn and power men shall exalted see." Ps. 89 v. 24. Let us return for a moment to the actual banner spoken of in our text, the nature of which we have just tried to explain. What purpose does it serve? This! In the midst of the difficulties and dangers of that period in Israel's history, it brought them once again to fear and trust God. This often is God's way with the church. In times when it is in decline and exhibiting a measure of faithlessness, fruitlessness and apathy, God's method of bringing His people back to liveliness and usefulness, is to send them trouble which is what He had done to Israel at this time. This trouble brought them back to God and He was pleased to give them this particular banner, the very thing we have in the title of the psalm, namely a great victory over the Edomites. That victory was to serve as a banner in that it reassured them of the Lord's care for them still and revived their flagging souls. They may have been thinking that God had forgotten them but now

victory was given them, a reaffirmation on God's part of His faithfulness and power as their covenant God. The victory was His doing and thus once more He showed to them the meaning of His Name Jehovah-nissi—"The Lord my Banner." He is the dreadful, self-existing, eternal, unchanging God of Israel, their own God, who at the outset of their journey to the promised land, defeated Amalek. Only as Moses' hands were uplifted in supplication to God, did Israel prevail over Amalek and in memorial of that victory Moses built an altar and called it Jehovah-nissi. What Jehovah meant to them then was now again impressed upon them in David's day. This victory was given them by the Lord to be a banner to rally them once more to the trusting and serving of Him who is their true Banner.

Now, what is the meaning of the banner for us in New Testament times? It is of equal interest to the Church in our day and its significance is the same as it was to Israel. We have already shown that Christ is the ensign or banner to which the nations were to rally. The name Jesus, meaning—"Jehovah my Saviour" has the same import as "Jehovah my Banner," and His Gospel with Himself the way, the truth and the life at its very heart is a banner given to the Church until the end of the world. Remember the definition of a banner as a significant rallying point to which God's people gather and which will guarantee them success in conflict. We find it in Christ's final command to His disciples—"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." This claim is the rallying point for all the soldiers of the Cross, God's people in all ages. This is the guarantee of success in their warfare. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," etc. Here is the proof that He has sent us to fight, though not with carnal weapons. This is the function of the Church. Never forget or lay aside the fact that it is a militant agency. The banner is a military symbol. "And, lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world, Amen." That is the promise which assures of success. Our banner, then, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However dark the day, or few the people of God, this banner still waves above God's Cause as a guarantee of ultimate victory.

This banner is wonderful in its antiquity. In many an ancestral hall some of the most cherished exhibits are banners. A duke will proudly show the banner under which his forebears fought. In the Glasgow Art Galleries there is a banner which was once carried by the Covenanters, tattered and faded, about three hundred years old. It is touching to view it and recall the history attached to it. But the gospel banner is the oldest of all and the most wonderful. Its origin goes back to eternity. In eternity the scheme of redemption was divinely planned and everything made ready for the

execution of this wonderful method of saving sinners who would be presented at last a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This banner has waved over many a field of battle since the fall in Eden right down through the history of the Church, and in every case Christ's right hand and His holy arm have gotten Him the victory.

The banner of the gospel is wonderful also in the material from which it is made. Most banners are made from a strong cloth called bunting, and some are of silk, richly embroidered. But this is woven from end to end of divine truth exactly adapted to meet the needs of men in this world, truth that reaches to the very depths of men's souls, revealing to them their state as sinners before God and bringing them to the liberty of the gospel and to glory at last. There is nothing more necessary today than divine truth. When blessed by God it lays hold of mind and heart and conscience, whereas men's notions produce only confusion and achieve nothing effectual to salvation. We need to have divine truth proclaimed and understood and that will come to pass—"for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Heb. 2 v. 14.

Wonderful too, has been the influence exerted by this banner. Men have done noble deeds inspired by their banner inasmuch as it represented the cause for which they fought, but this banner has wrought deeds excelling in glory. Think what effect it has had on sleeping consciences! Man can talk until he is weary, reasoning, warning, coaxing, but he cannot awaken a sleeping conscience. Let the truth of the gospel speak with power, however, and that soul will have no rest until it finds it in Christ. This banner of saving truth has roused many consciences and pointed seeking souls to the place where all anxiety and fear will be dispelled. It has reclaimed wanderers departing from the truth, persons like the prodigal, arresting them and bringing them back to the footstool of Immanuel. It has renewed the most depraved hearts. What more wonderful than that deceitful and desperately wicked hearts should become temples of holiness and truth with the hope of going eventually to spend eternity happily in the presence of a holy God! The banner has comforted sorrowing spirits, bringing to them out of the darkness of trouble, greater joy than ever before experienced. Men do not tamper with such sorrow because with clumsy hands they might only hurt instead of heal. But the gospel is the sovereign cure for those sorrows and heartbreaks with which life abounds. "He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds." Ps. 147 v. 3.

The last of the banner's qualities that we would mention is its durability. We mentioned the old banner in the Kelvingrove

Museum. It is fragile now and very little would destroy it altogether. From time to time we read of regimental colours being laid by in memorial chapels. Their use is ended and they are now relics. Others become faded and worn and in time their very significance becomes lost and no one can tell what cause they once headed. In such manner will all earthly banners fade away but the banner of the gospel is essentially durable and shall last through all ages. Being divine truth it cannot wear or be altered, rent or destroyed by men, or even lose its significance. It shall show forth forever the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. "All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the gospel is preached unto you." — 1st Peter ch. 1 v. 24, 25.

It is an enduring banner.

Now, we have, thirdly, the use of the banner. It is to be displayed, "because of the truth." As we mentioned, others at last cease to be of use and are deposited in museums and similar resting places but this is for constant use, intended for the battle and the breeze. It is meant to head the Cause of the Lord of Hosts and to be displayed before the powers of earth and hell. Nothing will prevail against it. It is a glorious standard of which none need be ashamed. All who fear God are required to range themselves openly under this banner which proclaims the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; salvation by grace, all of grace. If we know something of that our place is under the banner. The banner is to be displayed as an emblem of ultimate victory. God will give success to His Word. Success must follow because the banner in essence is this—"Jehovah, my Saviour, my Banner." In my opinion that is a description of God that we would do well to have written on our minds and hearts, and the more we think of it, the more wonderful it will appear, and the more confidence we will get. The banner may be flown as over a fortress when the garrison is beleagured and those within make good their defences. They hoist the banner and stand there. (Ephes. 6 v. 13). In our day the Church is largely on the defensive. There behind the bulwarks and towers of Zion stand Christ's people with this banner waving above, but the day is coming when they will emerge from their fortress and this banner will fly in the van of the advancing armies of the Lord. In whatsoever circumstances the Church will be, the message given by the banner is the same. The Church is safe, it is invulnerable, invincible, and final victory is certain. Let us not be unduly perturbed nor disheartened even in days of threatening trouble such as those in which we live.

Our duty is to adhere to Christ as our Leader and Commander; to give Him all loyalty, trust and obedience; to study his Word and to mark in what special ways these are to be given Him. To-day there is great need for adhering to the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, our guide in doctrine, practice, discipline and Church government. The truths must be held because every defection means an inrush by the enemy to occupy ground given up. We are also to acknowledge that Christ is the Author of every past success the Church has had. He is the Captain of the host of the Lord and victories are achieved, not by might nor by power but by His Spirit. We have a duty also to trust Him in every coming conflict. As the Church's head and King, He says, —“And lo, I am with you *always*, even to the end of the world.” Lastly, we are to look to Him whose Gospel is our banner, for ultimate victory. Not only shall the many battles of this spiritual warfare be won by Christ, but the campaign will end victoriously too. In Psalm 22 the psalmist speaks of the humiliation and sufferings of the Redeemer but then rises to a note of complete victory. “For the kingdom is the Lord's and He is the governor among the nations.” Ps. 22 v. 28. He sees also the Church as complete in Him — “A seed shall serve Him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.” Christ shall reign forever as King in Zion; its architect, builder and defender, the author of final victory. “So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” Isaiah 59 v. 19. “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.”

HUMILITY

Humility cannot find three things on this side heaven: it cannot find fulness in the creature, nor sweetness in sin, nor life in an ordinance without Christ. An humble soul always finds three things on this side heaven: the soul to be empty, Christ to be full, and every mercy and duty to be sweet wherein God is enjoyed. Humility can weep over other men's weaknesses, and joy and rejoice over their graces. Humility will make a man quiet and content in the meanest condition, and it will preserve a man from envying other men's prosperous condition (I Thess. 1, v. 2, 3). Humility honours those who are strong in grace, and puts two hands under those that are weak in grace (Eph. 3, v. 8). Humility makes a man richer than other men, and it makes a man judge himself the poorest amongst men. Humility will see much good abroad, when it can see but little at home. Ah, Christian! though

faith be the champion of grace, and love the nurse of grace, yet humility is the beautifier of grace; it casts a general glory upon all the graces in the soul. Ah, did Christians more abound in humility, they would be less bitter, froward and sour, and they would be more gentle, meek, and sweet in their spirits and practices. Humility will make a man have high thoughts of others and low thoughts of a man's self; it will make a man see others rich, and himself poor; others strong, and himself weak; others wise, and himself foolish. Humility will make a man excellent at covering others' infirmities, and at recording their gracious services, and at delighting in their graces; it makes a man joy in every light that outshines his own, and every wind that blows others good. Humility is better at believing than it is at questioning other men's happiness. I judge, saith an humble soul, it is well with those Christians now, but it will be far better with them hereafter. They are now upon the borders of the new Jerusalem, and it will be but as a day before they slide into Jerusalem.

—THOMAS BROOKS.

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 248)

Anns an àite mu dheireadh. Cumadh a smuainteachadh air latha an Tighearna, a tha tarruig dlùth, bhur làmhnan air ais bho bhi dol air thoiseach Air le gnìomharan dioghaltais.

C'ar son a tha sibh cho ullamh? Nach eil an Tighearna am fagusg gu bhi deanamh dioghaltais air son a sheirbhisich uile air an d'rinneadh eucoir. "Uime sin a bhràithrean, bithibh foghaidneach gu teachd an Tighearna. Feuch, feithidh an treabhaiche ri toradh luachmhor na talmhuinn, agus fanaidh e gu foghaidneach ris, gus am faigh e an ceul uisge agus an t-uisge deireannach. Bithibh-se foghaidneach mar an ceudna; socraichibh 'ur oridheachan: oir tha teachd an Tighearna am fagus. Na deanamh gearain an aghaidh a cheile, a bhràithrean, chum nach dìtear sibh. Feuch, tha am Breitheamh 'n a sheasamh aig an dorus." Seumas v. 7-9. Tha'n earann so a toirt air adhart trì argumaidean an aghaidh dioghaltais: 1. Teachd an Tighearna am fagus. 2. Eiseimpleir foghaidean an treabhaiche. 3. An cunnart a tha sinn a tarruig oirne fein le bhi dol air thoiseach air breitheanas Dhé; "Is leam-sa dioghaltas," deir an Tighearna; Ni E ceartas gun chlaon-bhreith, agus ni's cothromaiche na ni thusa: iadsan a tha creidsinn gu'm bheil Dia aca a chum an cur ceart, cha dean iad a leithid de dh'eucoir orra fein, agus gu'n

dean iad dioghaltas air an son fein air son na'n eucoirean a nithear orra.

Cur an aghaidh. 1. Ach cha'n eil feoil agus fuil comasach air a bhi giulain a leithid sin de eucoirean.

Freagairt. Ma tha thù rùnachadh a bhi cur do chomhairle ri feoil agus fuil 'n a leithid sin de chùisean, agus nach dean thù barrachd agus a cheadaicheas iad sin dhuit a dheanamh, na gabh ort a bhi diadhaidh: feumaidh Criosduidhean a bhi deanamh nithibh iongantach agus bhos ceann nàduir.

Cur an aghaidh. 2. Ach ma chuireas mi suas le leithid sin de dh'eucoirean, bithidh mi air mo mheas 'n am amadan, agus saltraidh na h-uile neach orm.

Freagairt. 1. Faodaidh tù a bhi air do mheas mar sin a' measg amadain, ach measaidh Dia agus deagh dhaoine dhuit e mar ghliocas, agus oirdheirceas do spioraid. 2. Is e spiorad suarach da rìreadh a shaltras air Criosduidh macanta agus a tha toirt maitheanas: agus mar sin foghlumaibh bhur cridheachaidh a chumail bho dhioghaltas fodh gach uile bhrosnachadh.

Am 8. 'S e'n ath àm anns am bheil sinn ann an cunnart ar cridheachan a chall, 'n uair a tha sinn a coinneachadh ri cruinn-cheusaidh agus ri brosnachaidhean. An sin tha fearg pheacach buailteach air a bhi'g atharrachadh ar cridheachan. Is e teachd-gearr iomadh duine maith gu'm bheil e de spiorad bras agus teth, 'n uair a tha e air a bhrosnachadh, ged nach dàna leo fearg a thionndadh gu gamhlas; oir bhitheadh sin 'n a chomharadh air aingidheadh: gidheadh tha iad glé bhuailteach do fheirg obann, nì a thà 'n a chomharadh air laigse. Tha *Beza* ann am beatha *Chalvin* a toirt air adhart gu'n robh e de spiorad dian agus bras; agus tha esan a sgrìobh beatha an duine mhòir sin *Cameron* ag ràdh, "Gu'n robh fhearg gu luath air a dùsgadh an aghaid a chairdean a bu dluithe dhà agus air am b'eolaich e, ach an sin chuireadh e sìos i gu luath agus dh'aidicheadh e a laigse." Mo thruaighe! 'N uair a thig brosnachaidhean agus deuchainnean air ar foghaidean, cha'n eil fios againn ciod e'n spiorad dhe'm bheil sinn. 'S e so, uime sin an ochdaibh cùis.

Cùis 8. Cia mar a dh'fhaodas an cridhe a bhi air a ghleidheadh macanta agus foghaideanach fodh bhrosnachaidhean mòr agus fodh chruinn-cheusaidh.

Tha trì soirsachan corruich ann, corruich nàdurra, corruich naomh, agus corruich pheacach. 1. Corruich nàdurra, nì nach nì eile ach gluasad spiorad teth an aghaidh nì a tha oilbheumach; agus cha pheacadh so ann fein, 's e th'ann ach mì-shonas, nì's motha na peacadh nàduir, mar a tha *Jerom* ag ràdh ris. Tha *Plutarch* ag ràdh gur e reusan am fear-iomairt, gur e'n t-anam an carbad, agus gur e'n dà each a tha ga tharruig 'n a uile

ghluasadan na miannaibh an-tograch agus teth; am feadh 's a tha iad so gu ceart air an iomairt le reusan, tha iad, cha'n e mhàin laghail, ach glé fheumail do'n anam. Cha'n eil Dia a ciallachadh gu'm bitheadh-mid gu'n tùr agus neo-mhothachail, ged a tha E air son gu'm bitheadh-mid macanta agus foghaideanach. Ann an Ephes. iv: 26, tha E ceadachadh a ghluasad nàdurra, ach a toirmeasg an nì anabarach a tha 'n a pheacadh. 2. Fearg naomh, nì a tha'n a lasair fhior-ghlan, air a beothachadh le sradag neamhaidh de ghràdh do Dhia, nì a thà, mar a tha neach ag ràdh, 'n a bhiodaig a tha gràdh a tarruig ann an connsachadh Dhé. Mar sin tha e thaobh Lot ann an aghaidh sluagh Shoduim, agus a thaobh Mhaois an aghaidh 'n an Israeleach iodhal-aodhrach. 'N uair a bha *Zuinglius* air a dhìteadh le *Servetus* air son cho geur 's a bha e, b'i a fhreagairt, "Ann an cùisean eile bithidh mì seimh, ach cha bhi mì mar sin ann an aobhar Chrìosd." A nì ris am bheil an saoghal ag ràdh, ann an so, stuamachd agus ciuineas, tha iad ann an cùntas Dhé 'n am baoghaltachd agus 'n an gealtachd; cha'n e aon diubh so a tha mì nis a cur impidh oirbh bhur cridheachan a ghleidheadh 'n an aghaidh. Ach, 3. Thà gluasad peacach ann, agus is e so a'nì a tha ga'r cur ann an cunnart. Nis, tha fearg a tighinn gu bhi peacach 'n uair a tha i aon chuid gu'n aobhar, Mata v. 22, na bhos ceann riaghailt; agus sin a dh'aon chuid a thaobh tomhais na thaobh ùine, a dol bhos ceann luach an aobhair a dhùisg i, bitheadh e air dol seachad na a fantuinn; gidheadh is e peacadh a th'ann, agus tha e'n a aobhar ioraslachaidh an làthair Dhé. Nis, is e so na meadhonan gu bhi gleidheadh a chridhe bh'uaith fodh bhrosnachaidhean.

1. Faigheabh smuaintean iosal agus iorsal dhà bhur taobh fein, agus ann an sin bithidh agaibh spioradan macanta, agus giùlain sìtheil a thaobh muinntir eile.

Is e'n duine iorsal a ghnàth an duine foghaideanach. Tha uamhar a ghnàth aig freumh feirge; bithidh spiorad àrd 'n a spiorad danarra; cha luidh aotromain air an lionadh le gaoith dlùth da cheile, ach toll iad, agus faodaidh tù mìle dhiubh a chur ann an seomar beag. "O uamhar a mhàin thig connsachadh: ach aig na daoinibh a ghabhas deagh chomhairle tha gliocas." Gnath. xiii: 10. 'N uair a tha sinn ga'r meas fein bhos ceann nì a bu chòir dhuinn, an sin tha sinn a smuainteachadh gu'm bheil sinn air deiligeadh ruinn gu neo-airidh le muinntir eile, agus broснаichidh sin sinn; agus ann an so, ma ta, thugaibh fa'n ear aon bheannachd mhòr a bhi eolach air bhur cridheachan fein, cadhon a bhi deanamh macanta agus a ciuineachadh bhur spioradan. A Chrìosduidh, shaoilinn-sa gu'm b'aithne dhuit uibhir mu do thimchioll fein, agus gu'm bitheadh e eucomasach gu'n

cuireadh neach eile thù ni b'isle, na gu'm bitheadh aca smuaintean ni b'isle mu d' thimchioll na bhitheadh agad-sa mu d' thimchioll fein. Tha cuid ag eadar-theangachadh na h-earann sin, Habacuc ii: 5, mar so, "Is e'n duine uaibhreach a theid air seacharan le fion;" agus tha misgeirean, mar a tha fios agaibh, aimhreiteach. O faighibh an tuilleadh ioraslachd, agus bheir sin dha ar 'n ionnsuidh an tuilleadh sìth.

2. Bithibh tric a millseachadh bhur spioradan ann an co-chomunn ri Dia, a chum nach bi iad gu furasda air an deanamh searbh le fearg a thaobh dhaoine.

Cha d'thug coguis air a ciuineachadh riamh a mach caithe-beatha neo-chiuin: tha sìth Dhé a riaghladh anns a chridhe mar fhear-riaghlaidh a cur stad air strithean; oir tha'n uibhir air a chiallachadh le Colos. iii: 15. Tha fearg agus strith calg-dhireach an aghaidh fonn agus nàdur oridhe spioradail, do-bhrìgh gu'm bheil iad neo-chumta ris an tlachd agus an toileachadh a th'aig an spiorad chiuin sin leis am bu toil broilleach ciuin agus sìtheil. O, deir an t-anam a tha beathachadh air co-chomunn milis an Spioraid, an glac sradagan a bhrosnachaidh mo thruaillidheachd, agus an tog iad a leithid de cheo 'n am anam agus a chuireas campar air a Chomhfhurtair agus a dh'fhuadaicheas air falbh bh'uam E. Tha so 'n a ni cho eufachdach ann an aghaidh truailidheachd agus nach mòr nach dàna leam, ann an Crìosduidh a tha de nàdur aithghearr, fad-fhulangas a dheanamh 'n a chomharadh air co-chomunn ri Dia. Am faic thu leithid sin de Chrìosduidh samhach agus ciuin fodh bhrosnachaidhean, tha e glé oholtach gur ann a tha anam a beathachadh air a leithid de mhillseachd ann an Dia agus a tha duilich fhàgail; air an taobh eile, am faic thu Crìosduidh tuasaideach agus ri strì, cha'n eil gach ni gu maith a stigh; tha a spiorad mar chnàimh a tha mach as alt, nach urrain gluasad gun phian agus trioblaid.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The B.B.C. Rejects Criticism

The British Broadcasting Corporation's Report for 1963-64, was published last November and in it, Television plays which have been rightly criticised by people who have the moral welfare of the nation at heart, are supported. The Report says: "Criticism will not make the B.B.C. abandon its policy of presenting established plays by established playwrights about the problems of sex and violence in human relations, which have been the very stuff of drama since it was first written." These are defiant words and appear to proceed from a dictatorial spirit, with a sense of power

and liberty to ignore religious and moral objections to most undesirable entertainment on television. And the writers, whose undesirable work is bought and paid for by the B.B.C., are defended and encouraged in the Report, as follows:—"Nor will it change the B.B.C.'s belief that serious writers of to-day must be allowed to say freely what they feel about the society in which they live." Serious, weighty objections by people and organisations of religious standing are surely entitled also to influence and weigh with the B.B.C. Are modern writers the only people, in this connection, who are to be considered? They are to be allowed to say freely what they feel about society. If what these writers feel about society was according to the divine light of Holy Scripture and in support of the moral law and the honour of God—would the B.B.C. buy and produce their works? And after all the B.B.C. is not a private concern: taxpayers money is involved and quite a number of these detest the policy of the B.B.C. which they seem determined to carry out.

Lack of Conviction in the Church of Scotland

The Rev. Joseph Shillinglaw, Church of Scotland Minister, St. Stephen's Church, Perth, celebrated his 91st birthday in 1964. He is believed to be the oldest active Church of Scotland Minister. He, with all his experience had this to say in an interview with Neville Garden of "The Daily Express": "The problem with the Church of Scotland today is that there is often a lack of conviction in what it is doing. It is trying to take the easy way out, the line of least resistance, instead of preaching the Gospel's message. Nowadays too many ministers are afraid to come right out and say anything of importance. They are afraid they offend anyone in the congregation . . . it is harming the Church badly." We know the above to be only too true. Of course men who have no spiritual, saving experience of the truth and the Gospel, cannot have anything vital to say to their fellow-sinners. Thousands are being deceived with that which is no gospel.

Vatican Council Revolt

One reputable Scottish paper used the term "revolt" in its account of the debate at the close of the Vatican Council on religious liberty. It was reported that an open revolt, led by American bishops, broke out on Thursday, 19th November, 1964, when orders were announced blocking votes on an eagerly-awaited declaration on religious liberty. A protest petition was rejected by the Pope. The declaration involved was said to answer requests that the Church of Rome should once and for all remove any grounds for accusations that it worries about religious liberty only when it finds itself in a minority. The fact is that Rome has

always had the effrontery to demand religious liberty, as in Britain, where she is in a minority. But no real liberty for Protestants in Spain! No wonder American bishops, with their modern American R.C. congregations, possessing the modern American outlook, are worried about the Vatican attitude from the dark ages, which will not allow that Protestants should be permitted full liberty to carry on their religious activities, where and when Rome has the power to restrict and suppress such. It appears that the unity claimed for the Church of Rome, does not exist. And it never did, as there have been factions within its borders down through the centuries. At one time there were rival Popes.

Confession Suggestion for Glasgow Cathedral

The assistant minister of the Church of Scotland, Glasgow Cathedral, recently suggested that the Church of Scotland should make provision for Confession. If we are not mistaken, the Confession in view is to be after the Romish pattern. The senior minister, Rev. Dr. Neville Davidson thinks that the belief of younger ministers in the need of Confession might arise from "the knowledge they have gained of psychology." What utter nonsense in the light of the Holy Scriptures! If these men would preach law and gospel to their fellow-sinners in Glasgow Cathedral and elsewhere, and if the Holy Spirit would bless this to precious souls, then there would be real confession of sins to God, through the divine High Priest, Jesus Christ, and a seeking the forgiveness of God through the merits of Christ's blood. But these men do not seem to have the least notion of true gospel doctrine and experience. Thus they are looking for something new to introduce to a backsliding Presbyterian Church; and they are looking backwards to what the Reformation delivered Scotland from centuries ago, and the people are indifferent: may the Lord soon awaken Scotland.

CHURCH NOTES

Communion

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, Lochinver; fourth, Kinlochbervie; fifth, London and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Breasclete, Portnalong, Fort-William and Stoer; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaulay; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Achmore, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth,

Thurso, Vatten; fifth, Stornoway. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool, Breas-cleate; 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.

The New Year

The unchangeableness of the divine Saviour of Sinners and Head of the Church, is one of the great and comforting truths of the Gospel to the Lord's people in the midst of all their experiences and as they look to future days, not knowing what may befall them. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," is He to whom they can turn in every time of need. May our believing readers be helped to derive encouragement from this precious truth at the outset of the year, 1965. May they and we be abundantly favoured with a large measure of the Spirit of prayer for those in our congregations at Home, in Canada, U.S.A., New Zealand, Australia and Rhodesia, who are without Christ and without hope in the World; that during this year 1965, the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work may be seen in precious souls seeking Christ Jesus in the means of grace and true believers being added to the Church everywhere. And 1965 will be another year of difficulty for our Congregations without Pastors. May such be enabled to wait prayerfully and patiently upon the Lord in the public means of grace which they have. And for any of our readers in distress and affliction, we trust the strong consolations which are in Christ Jesus may be made real and precious. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." (Ps. 90: 12).

An Explanation

In October, 1964, issue of *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* an article appeared on "Creed and Practice of the Church in Scotland." In it there was quoted the following Notice from *The Oban Times* of 2nd July, 1964, viz.: "A Thanksgiving Service will be held on Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m., which will be conducted by Rev. Donald MacKenzie, Oban Free High Church, assisted by Rev. D. MacNeill, Oban Baptist Church. Items of praise will be rendered by the Choir of Christ's Church, Dunollie, and addresses will be given by Sir William Duthie, and Rev. Robin D. Buchanan-Smith, Christ's Church, Dunollie." Observations were made on the basis of this public Notice. But Rev. Donald MacKenzie, Oban Free High Church, has written us stating that he was not present at the service mentioned in the aforesaid Notice in *The Oban Times*. Therefore observations made do not apply to him.

Ordination and Induction of Rev. Fraser Tallach, M.A.

The Northern Presbytery met in the Inverness Church in an adjourned meeting on the evening of Tuesday, 17th November, 1964, to carry out the Ordination and Induction of Mr Fraser Tallach, M.A., at the request of the Dominions & Colonial Committee in view of the early departure of Mr Tallach for Canada, to labour among our Canadian congregations, particularly at Winnipeg. At an earlier meeting arrangements were made for the service, and the Moderator, Rev. Alex. MacPherson, Dornoch, presided when the evening meeting opened at 7.30 in the Inverness Church, a large gathering of the people attending.

The Edict, duly signed and witnessed was returned, and the Moderator called upon Rev. R. R. Sinclair, to preach the Ordination and Induction sermon. Mr Sinclair chose as his text the words following the great commission, given by Christ to his disciples in Mark xvi, v. 20: "And they went forth everywhere, and preached, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following. Amen," dwelling particularly in his address upon the character of the servants thus sent forth; the chief work they were called to engage in; and the encouragement and divine assistance they were warranted in expecting to make their work a success.

The sermon being over, the clerk moved that Revs. D. Campbell, Edinburgh, A. MacKay, Tarbert, Harris and A. Murray, Applecross, who were present be associated with the Presbytery which was approved by the court. He then proceeded to give a brief narrative of the steps leading up to the evening's service, and the Moderator then called upon Mr Tallach to stand when the usual questions were put to him and were satisfactorily answered. Thereafter, Mr Tallach signed the Formula. Mr Tallach then kneeled and the Moderator with imposition of hands in which he was joined by the ministerial members present, ordained him with solemn prayer to the office of the ministry, and in the name of the Presbytery and by authority of the Great Head of the Church inducted him to labour among our congregations in Canada. The right hand of fellowship was then given to Mr Tallach by the members present, and the Moderator addressed Mr Tallach on the duties of the ministerial office.

The clerk was then called upon by the Moderator to speak and in doing so referred to the conditions likely to face Mr Tallach in Winnipeg, and the encouragements he might nevertheless find in labouring among friendly and hospitable people of our congregation. Rev. D. Campbell, as Convener of the Dominions & Colonial Committee, then spoke thanking the Presbytery for

carrying out the service of Ordination and Induction. Revs. A. MacKay and A. Murray also associated themselves with the remarks made, spoke of the pleasure it gave them to be present, and expressed the hope that Mr Tallach, who in opening his ministry among our Canadian people would be welcomed by our families, who still recall the visit of the late Rev. J. A. Tallach, who spent the first 2 years of his ministry in Winnipeg, and they hoped that Mr Tallach would be blessed in his labours in Canada. The Moderator concluded the service with singing some verses of Psalm lxxviii, the intimation of next meeting of Presbytery and the benediction.

Rev. Fraser Tallach left by plane from Prestwick on the afternoon of Friday, 27th November and we are glad to learn of his safe arrival and that he conducted the services on the Sabbath in the new church at Winnipeg. The Lord abundantly bless his services among our people and may our Canadian Cause be strengthened and prosper as a result.

A. F. M., Pres. Clerk.

Fifty Years in the Ministry

The month of August, 1964, saw the completion of 50 years' continuous service in the ministry of the Gospel by the worthy and esteemed pastor of our Dingwall congregation, the Rev. D. A. MacFarlane, M.A. The Northern Presbytery at its meeting at Inverness on Tuesday, 17th November, 1964, decided to recognise the occasion by placing on record a Tribute which the Presbytery adopted. Mr MacFarlane expressed himself as deeply touched by the Tribute and wished that no publicity be given to it. But this was left to the discretion of the Presbytery.—A.F.M., Clerk.

TRIBUTE

"In August of this present year the senior ministerial member of this Court, Rev. Don. A. MacFarlane, the beloved minister of our Dingwall congregation, completed the long period of 50 years' unbroken service in the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church. This remarkable occasion, the Presbytery feel, should not be allowed to pass without being marked by some acknowledgment of the Lord's goodness to the Church in sparing His servant throughout this long period of his ministry, and also of the valuable services he was able during these years to give the Church. In particular, the Presbytery feel that it falls to them to make some fitting mention of Mr MacFarlane's ministry in the Church, especially as, apart from some 8 years spent in the South as minister of our Oban congregation, for the whole of his ministerial life, devoted to the Cause of the Redeemer, he was a member of the Northern Presbytery.

"Ordained and inducted to the large and widely scattered congregation, which in those days embraced Creich, Lairg, Rogart and Dornoch, by the Northern Presbytery in August, 1914, Mr MacFarlane laboured in this exacting and difficult field till his removal to Oban in June 1922. He returned to the North in May 1930, to succeed his name-sake of revered memory, the Late Rev. D. MacFarlane, the founding father of the Free Presbyterian Church, as minister of the Dingwall congregation, and to rejoin his former brethren of the Northern Presbytery. Mr MacFarlane has continued to the present day to uphold the banner of the Gospel which the Great Head of the Church has entrusted to those who fear Him, it being the work in which his soul most delights, to proclaim the whole counsel of God, as defined in the body of doctrines of the great Reformation document, the Westminster Confession of Faith.

"The Court takes this opportunity of extending to our beloved brother minister our sincere good wishes that he may be long spared to the Church on earth, and that he be granted strength and grace to continue to discharge the duties of his office with the same loving fidelity, zeal and humility which have accompanied his ministry for so long among us. His walk and conversation have exemplified the doctrines of the Redeemer he preached; 'Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity'—1 Tim. iv, v. 12; his pulpit services have been a well of consolation to the grieved and afflicted in spirit; and his sage and weighty counsels have made him an invaluable member of this court. We greatly regret that impaired health has of late years greatly curtailed his activities outside and to some extent inside his own congregation as well. The Lord be his strength in time of trouble, and supply his every need out of His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

New Church Library

Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow, reports that the New Library has now reached the stage of having the walls and roof complete. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting a contractor to undertake the project at a price thought to be reasonable. At one time it appeared as though the whole idea would need to be abandoned because of high cost. By a most remarkable turn of providence, in which the hand of the Lord was clearly seen, a contractor came forward to undertake most of the work. According to the present calculations, the cost of the Library will be in the region of £3,250. The sum contributed at the present date is about £1,300 leaving an outstanding balance of £1,950. We hope that interested friends will do their utmost to support the building of a Library in which the Church books can be stored and be available

for distribution and where the classes in the General Arts Course run by the Church can be held. Contributions should be sent to the General Treasurer, Mr W. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow W.2. and marked "Library Fund."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

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

Sustentation Fund.—M. & Hugh D. MacKay, Fiscary, £3; Mrs Macleod, Brora, £3; Mr T. MacDonald, Eston, Canada, 150 dollars.

Home Mission Fund.—M. & Hugh D. MacKay, Fiscary, £3; Mr T. MacDonald, Eston, Canada, 150 dollars; Anon, Glasgow collection plate, £2.

Foreign Mission Fund.—Ontario Friends, £5; M.S.K.D., £3; Mantlepiece Mission Box, £1; Mrs MacLeod, Brora, £2; Mr T. MacDonald, Eston, Canada, 200 dollars; Ontario Friends, £5 for Mbumba Hospital.

College and Library Fund.—A Friend, Edinburgh, per T. M., £5; Door Collection at Farr, Bettyhill, £2.

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China Mission Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

Dominions and Colonial Missions Fund.—M.S.K.D., £3.

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Welfare of Youth Fund.—Ontario Friends, £2; Two Inverness Friends, £2; Mrs C. McL., Hillsdale, £6; Miss M. S., Glasgow, £1; Mr W. J. McK., Clashmore, 2/6; Miss C. McL., Glasgow, 7/6; Interested, £4; Uig Congregation, £10; Mr T. McD., Eston, £3; Lochbroom Congregation, £5.

On Behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society.—Ontario Friends, £12; Miss R. McL., Northton, 5/4; the following congregations: Raasay, £20; Shieldaig, £13; the following Harvest Thanksgiving Day collections: Daviot, £15 16s 6d; Lairg, £14 1/-; Stratherrick, £11 11s 3d.

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