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HUMAN DEPRAVITY

All mankind by the sin and Fall of our first parents became depraved, morally corrupt and wholly sinful in nature. *The Confession of Faith*, Chapter vi, Sections III and IV, states the matter thus: "They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." And, "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." The Confession here and throughout is of course based on the teaching of Holy Scripture.

Many parts of the Word refer specifically to the fact of human depravity. In the book of Jeremiah, Chapter 17: v. 9, the Lord declares: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Then the Lord Jesus Christ during his ministry taught as follows: "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark vii: verses 20-23). What a comprehensive and awful list of evil things which the Saviour here gives in thus asserting and exposing the fact of human depravity. His testimony is truth and will stand, and has of course been verified down through the ages of man's history down to the present time. Where is "the spark of the divine" in the heart of the natural man of which Christian teachers have spoken? Further, if we read the Apostle Paul's doctrine of man in the 3rd chapter of Romans, we will get an exposition there of aspects of human depravity, viz., "There is none that seeketh after God . . . their throat is an open sepulchre . . . There is no fear of God before their eyes." Man is utterly ruined

morally and spiritually according to the witness of God in His unerring Word.

Man has demonstrated and proved that he is corrupt and wholly sinful from the days of Cain who slew his brother Abel. For their inordinate wickedness and violence the Old World was swept from the earth by God by means of the Flood: and likewise the people of Sodom were destroyed by brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. Roman pagans did not like to retain God in their knowledge and were given over to vile affections; and Jews stoned to death the saintly servant of Jesus Christ, Stephen, because he applied the truth of their sins to their consciences. And so we could multiply from the pages of Holy Scripture, many instances wherein men revealed the natural wickedness of their hearts. And in these present times men are proving by the promulgation of their perverted views and ungodly conduct, the truth of Christ's testimony quoted above. Blasphemy, murder, robbery, sexual immorality, etc., are rife and widespread in our own nation.

Yet some endeavour to enter a plea of mental instability or insanity in certain cases of wicked and criminal acts, where in point of fact there is none: the said conduct being downright, wilful wickedness proceeding from the corrupt nature of man. This erroneous and lenient view of those guilty of certain outstanding acts of wickedness is expressed by persons who are either not conversant with the teaching of the Bible, or at anyrate, repudiate its teaching on the doctrine of sin and man's total depravity.

Now, however circumspect some unconverted men may be in their outward life and conduct by reason of environment, the influence of education, or a superficial interest in religion; the fact is that the carnal mind in such is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. There is inherent in the nature of such the capability to commit any sin, if divine restraint be removed.

The fact and truth of man's total depravity have been generally eliminated from the theological teaching of many professed Christian Churches and pulpits. This is our view for various reasons. The rejection of this solemn truth involves modernistic religious teachers in, for example, a rejection also of the clear, Scriptural doctrine regarding the absolute necessity of the "new birth" by the Holy Spirit, in order that a sinner may enter into the kingdom of God. And the gospel required for men who are not (in their opinion) as depraved and sinful as the Word of God asserts, is another gospel, distinct from the gospel which holds

forth the Son of God and the infinite merit of His sacrificial death and shed blood, as God's remedy for ruined and guilty men. This Christ dishonouring gospel, which is no gospel, addresses all classes of sinners as the children of God, and calls upon them to rise to commendable moral and social standards and to have some vague ideas of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Albeit men are incapable of justifying themselves before God and are dark and corrupt in their hearts and are left completely unaffected in their nature by a spurious gospel.

It is a definite evidence of human depravity that the doctrines of the Word of God and full gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are despised and abandoned by the most in our land. The divinely appointed means whereby God, by His Holy Spirit, converts and saves sinners, are counted as nothing. Herein is discernible the power of spiritual darkness and opposition to the truth arising from the depravity of the human heart.

The word of the truth of the gospel of Christ, with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, is what can save the chiefest of sinners, in the grace of God, from the power and guilt of sin and bring them into the liberty of the sons of God. "And if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians v: v. 17).

DAYS OF DARKNESS

Sermon preached by the late Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron,
on 30th August, 1803.*

THAT POPISH, PAGAN, AND MAHOMETAN DELUSION SHALL UNIVERSALLY
PREVAIL FOR SOME TIME PREVIOUS TO THE MILLENNIUM.

*Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the
people.—Isaiah lx: 2.*

God Almighty shall always have a Church to serve Him while the world remains; but the Church, as to her outward appearance, has been often like the moon—sometimes increasing and sometimes decreasing. For some little time before the change the face of the moon cannot be seen. It has been thus with the Church formerly, and it is probable it will be so for a little time before her most glorious appearance upon earth. I shall give my reasons for this opinion, and then answer any objections that may be formed against it.

* The two sermons by Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie herewith published were sent in by a friend.—Editor.

1. As to Pagans and Mahometans, they must remain naturally in the state they are in, and proceed from bad to worse, till the time appointed for their conversion appears. That time is not yet come; there must be such a spirit of grace and supplication in the Church, that would find missionaries to convert them, as shall convince them that God is with them of a truth. The superstition, idolatry, and immorality of many who call themselves Christians is an invincible bar in the way of such an event, so that any attempt to convert them would only bind them faster in their chains of error and delusion than ever; the darkness shall only increase more and more.

2. As to Popery, there is no appearance of a reformation among its adherents; all the trials and afflictions that idolaters meet with send them only to their idols. Instead of forsaking the gods of silver and gold, brass and stone, when the chastening hand of God is upon them, we hear only of a multitude of processions and masses, of so many prayers to saints and angels, and such trumpery as would excite the laughter of infidels and the pity of pious Christians. Though their errors and delusions have been exposed ten thousand times, we may adopt the words of the prophet concerning them, "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." It is no wonder though Popery should spread far and wide; they have a pompous parade of worship, to bewitch and captivate the eyes of the vulgar. The honours and riches with which their higher clergy are endowed are a bait to men of birth, of learning, and of eclat. And though they must see, when they open their eyes on the Word of God, that their religion is a system of lies and falsehood, it is no greater wonder to see them support such a false religion than it is to see in every country where Old and New Testaments are to be found men of learning, of power, and parts, steal, murder, commit adultery, though they see these sins forbidden in the Word of God. Popery is calculated to make the common people perfectly superstitious, and to make the learned people mere infidels. To prove this we have only to cast our eyes upon France, and if these infidels will not embrace the pure and genuine precepts of Christianity, they shall return to their own religion again, or establish a new kind of Paganism. That Popery shall greatly prevail before the Millennium appears from this—that it is said a certain great enemy who would appear against the Church would build his palace in the glorious high mountain between the seas. This cannot apply to Antiochus Epiphanus; it must apply to the great persecutor, of whom he was only a type. Mount Zion has been always called the holy mountain; and if it be said by some that by the glorious high mountain is meant the Church, it may be asked what place has been built in the holy

mountain, between the seas. Perhaps it will be said the Vatican. We acknowledge that the Vatican is the mount of 'His Holiness,' and a good Catholic will acknowledge that it is accordingly the holy mountain. Even some of the followers of the beast are of opinion that, after the destruction of Rome, the Pope shall dwell at Jerusalem; and as mankind are often very ready to go from one false opinion to another, what should hinder many of the Mahometans to transfer their veneration from the false prophet to the beast, or from one false prophet to another? A train of circumstances may make the transition very easy, and instead of going a pilgrimage to Medina or Mecca, they will be encouraged to come to Jerusalem, not from a spirit of devotion, but the spirit of superstition. A good Christian may have a holy curiosity to see the Holy Sepulchre, but we may believe that the beast will convert it to one of the worst of purposes—that of promoting idolatry. It may be to him, while he has possession of it, a source of great riches; and if he allows and commands his followers to worship their little crucifixes, and what they call the images of Christ, is it not still more likely they will worship the spot where the sacred body lay? During the few years that he shall have possession of the Holy City, the grossest idolatry will prevail. The most spiritual Christians, and the most remote from idolatry, would have a veneration for the place where the Saviour of the world was laid; and oh! how will the Pope rejoice to have such a rich mine to fill his coffers! And whereas the poor have the blessings of the Gospel freely offered to them, on the contrary, the richest will have here the best chance of pardon and acceptance. Miracles, without doubt, will be multiplied, and cures performed without number, at this holy place. A dissipated rich man, by paying a round sum, will have permission to kiss the stone that was at the door of the sepulchre, and to kneel at the place. He will then obtain the remission of his sins, and a Papal indulgence to commit as many more as he shall pay for; and if he be a very great man, he may obtain a piece of the stone to carry home with him as a relic. They will very likely have an enclosure about the sepulchre, and the earth in this sacred enclosure will be made to work miracles; and as thousands will make a demand for a bit of the stone, miracles will be alleged to make the stone last; and instead of discouraging a superstitious and idolatrous attachment to what cannot profit their souls, this spiritual adultery shall be promoted by all the arts and ingenuity of priestcraft. Instead of worshipping the Saviour himself, they shall worship the place where he was buried. By this time the Pope shall seem in a great measure to forget his old patron, the Apostle Peter; idolatry shall be so gross, and the darkness so

thick, that Papists themselves shall but seldom pray to the Queen of Heaven; they shall worship towards the Holy Sepulchre. Prints and paintings of the Holy Sepulchre will be sent into all quarters of his dominions.

The veneration that was once paid to Rome shall now be paid to Jerusalem. All the relics of the saints shall be carried by a miracle to the Holy City. The destruction of Rome shall, perhaps, be imputed to their want of zeal in persecuting heretics, or to some other cause, which the time will suggest to the Pope. As all the saints and angels will go to Jerusalem, with the Head of the Church, some holy virgins will see visions, intimating to the faithful that they must now transfer their veneration from Rome to Jerusalem. The Pope will easily discern what spirit of idolatry the bulk of his followers like best, and he will avail himself of this; and it is more than probable that a new kind of idolatry not yet thought of, and not discovered till then, will be the religion of the Pope. The darkness shall be more than Egyptian darkness—a darkness that may be felt. The Pope never reigned with such triumph as he shall then reign. He shall be the Head of the Greek and Latin Churches. Perhaps the Grand Signior shall conquer Persia, and the Pope may assist him in so doing; and to reward his services, the Emperor of Russia may cause his clergy to submit to the Pope as Head of the Universal Church. But it may be asked—Will this darkness overspread even the Protestant Churches? I fear it will, in a great measure. My reason follows: If the spirit of Popery and the doctrines of Popery will pervade the Protestant Churches, may it not be said that the darkness will overspread them, whether they retain the name or not? What is the spirit of Popery? Persecution, intolerance, and tyranny. And are Protestants free of this spirit? They are not. Even good men themselves have not so much zeal in appearing against the sins and corruptions of the times as they ought. If they had, they would see that Protestants can persecute as well as Papists. Let a man in England or Scotland preach against the corruptions of the times, and see if he can escape persecution. The Saviour preached against the sins of all ranks, and what was the consequence? They impeached him for treason, in that He called himself Christ or King. The prophet Nathan said to his sovereign: “Thou art the man.” In a word, let a man tell plain truth and he will meet with rough persecution even from a smooth, plain Protestant. The Popish Church rules over the conscience: but was ever the Head of their communion guilty of greater tyranny than forcing people to submit to a man whom they cannot in conscience hear? He is settled, perhaps, with a party of soldiers at his ordination or admission, and perhaps not a soul

of his parish waits in church; and he very solemnly takes the charge of the souls of the people whom he knows will never hear him; and though the people complain, they get no redress. If they complain that they cannot get good to their souls, their arguments are laughed at, and they are looked on as a set of enthusiasts, who ought to be crushed. The consequence is clear. Is this, or suchlike tyranny, in any Protestant Church? Let us mention some of the Popish doctrines and practices, viz., idolatry, justification by works, free will, etc. 1. The idolatry: this practice and darkness we are pretty clear of. We have another kind of darkness—many Protestants worship nothing. Whether is he the more respectable character, who bows to the image of Christ or one of the saints, or the pretended Protestant, who rises in the morning, passes the whole day, and goes to bed at night without discovering the least symptom of worship to any supreme being? It is even alleged of several clergymen in Protestant Churches that they have no prayer, no worship in their families; and it is clear that such men would not worship God on the Sabbath but for the sake of a bit of bread.

Bad as idolatry is, men cannot deny but it is better than to be without worship of any kind. The idolater is in darkness. The man who worships no being is in gross darkness. The clergyman who does not worship in his family is but mocking God in the pulpit; he worships he knows not what; he is in midnight darkness; may God awaken him in mercy. And if the clergyman does not worship in his family, is it not probable that a great number of his parishioners will follow his example? He may be a social, good-hearted, honest fellow, and a good countryman, and his people will be unwilling to believe that he shall be condemned though he does not pray in his family, or show them a good example. They love him because he accommodates himself to their humours, and does not frighten them with wild doctrines that might put people out of their wits. He has a sweet salve for their consciences, by telling them they have as good a claim for Heaven as your hypocrites who can pray; and yet their neighbours and he believe, for their part, that all your pretenders to religion are of a fanatic spirit, but cannot deny that some of these enthusiasts are honest men. The plague is in them. They are so censorious, so bigoted in their opinions, that they do not believe any will go to Heaven but themselves. He makes them, therefore, the butt of his ridicule, laughs at their absurdity, and looks upon them as men who have their heads turned with a religious frenzy. When such a man is the spiritual guide of souls, what can be expected but that he will lead his people to perdition with himself?

If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch; and if there are already numbers of such characters in the Church, I fear they will increase. A succession of such men, for a number of years, will introduce the darkness of Deism, and the darkness of Deism will pave the way for the darkness of Popery; and the ruling powers would establish a new religion, and threaten the clergy that would rebel with the loss of their stipend. They would find men of such low principles very pliable. And as no religion is so much calculated for tyranny in Church and State as Popery, it is probable the attempt will be made, and that the clergy will yield; but as it would be dangerous to make the attempt till a spirit of lukewarmness, moderation, and indifference shall universally prevail in Protestant countries, the time is yet at some distance. When it arrives, the most of the clergy will turn their coats. The few that will not will be turned out of their livings; and thus the Protestant religion be without a legal establishment. The persecution, however, shall be short. The resurrection of the witnesses shall be the dawn of the morning previous to the sunrising Millennium. Another Popish doctrine is justification by works. We know what is the doctrine contained in the Protestant Confession of Faith: but what is the doctrine preached in many Protestant pulpits, and what are the doctrines given in several modern compositions of Protestants? The very reverse. They laugh down such a foundation for Christianity, as a heathen would have done before the Gospel appeared, with this difference, that some slight compliments are paid to the Saviour. Instead of preaching salvation by Christ, and the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, we are taught to be good neighbours, good servants, good members of Society. There is not a word of our need of Christ, our misery and corruption by nature. Instead of this we hear the joyful doctrines of free will, virtue—virtue is the great word: that is the Diana of the Ephesians. They do not believe we are born without some virtue. This virtue must be the work of a man's own right hand, for many Protestant divines laugh at the doctrine of the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul. In this, however, they do not imitate their heathen masters, for they acknowledge that this must come from Heaven. Regeneration, spiritual poverty, and being indebted to our Lord Jesus Christ for everything, they do not believe or understand; and doctrine that is lamentably worse than any of the doctrines of Popery is tolerated in the Protestant Church: and it is to be feared that the Protestant Churches will be greatly eclipsed, for, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." My reasons for this opinion I shall briefly mention:—1st, God is just. We are sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right. Our

short-sighted reason may suggest such a thought as this. Why doth not the Providence of God send the Gospel to the poor benighted heathen? Why did he permit the delusions of Mahometanism and Popery to overspread the greater part of the earth? But God is just and good in permitting Pagans, Papists, and Mahometans to be tainted with their delusions, in consequence of the sins of their forefathers, who made a bad use of the light while they had it. God Almighty permits a wicked couple to have a numerous family, and to train up their children in sentiments and practices that will endanger their salvation, and yet God is holy and good: and as the Protestant makes a bad use of the Gospel, there is cause to fear that their posterity, for several years, will sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Again, this shall be for the glory of God. It is a Scriptural doctrine that all things will terminate in His Glory, though we do not know how. It may satisfy us that it will be so. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. To me it appears probable that there was never such darkness upon the face of the earth as there will be a few years before the dawn of the Millennium, from the resurrection of the witnesses. But before it appears the darkness will be thick, and the persecution severe. The faith of the Church will be at a low ebb. They will adopt the language of the Psalmist, "Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be angry evermore? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Doth His promise fail for evermore?"

Lastly. This is His usual method with His Church. Let us consult Scripture and experience and we will find that this is the case. A little before the plot of Haman was defeated, the Church was in extreme danger. A little before Jacob was made happy, he is brought to say, "All these things are against me." A little before the dawn is the darkest time of the night. The dawn of the Millennium will be the resurrection of the witnesses. A little before this the darkness will be very thick—the Protestant religion will be persecuted, and their interest very low. It is likely that many of them will receive the glorious crown of martyrdom during the three-and-a-half prophetic days. Popery will reign triumphant. They will then rejoice and send presents to one another. They are happy that the men who galled their consciences and exposed their errors are removed out of the way. The courage and constancy of the martyrs will animate the rest of the Protestants to suffer the utmost effects of the rage of the Popish party. God will wonderfully secure their persons, and hide them from their rage. The beast, however, and his adherents are still uneasy; and, in order to make sure work, they enter into a plot. Very like themselves, they are suspicious, and not without

cause, that all their new converts are not severe. The Pope and Cardinals, to promote the cause of the Church, engage a number of the most zealous Catholics in all his dominions, and bind them with an oath of secrecy, to cut off in one night all the new Protestant converts; and with this view they are to engage men they can depend on, in every corner, and these are to be prepared for the bloody field. The miserable victims are to be invited to partake of the universal joy. No sooner do they get them within their power than a cruel carnage ensues. They spare neither friend nor brother. This is the cause of God and of the Holy Mother Church; and therefore they think they do good service. They imagine it will be an easy matter for them to manage the few fugitives that are hiding themselves in caves and mountains. As for those half converts and others who did not turn, being protected by the favour and interest of great friends, they are all cut to pieces. The bloody butchers spare no age nor sex, friend nor foe. All the Papal dominions are filled with woe and lamentation. The people of God are wonderfully protected by Him; they look as believing their temporal salvation to be nigh. They agree privately to appoint a night for watching, fasting, and prayer. The night they appoint for wrestling with their God is the night the bloody Papists appoint for their cruel work. There will be a remarkable downpouring of the Spirit, and they are made to believe that God will work wonders for them, and they are not disappointed. He doth so unknown to them; and next day they hear of the murder of their unhappy brethren. They see, however, the hand of God in their safety. The Papists think they have fixed Popery on an immortal basis. Instead of this they shall find to their cost that they have given it a most terrible blow. The bloody deed disgusts all the Powers of Europe. They are shocked at the bloody spirit of Popery. Even Catholics of humanity shudder at the deed. They cause the bloodhounds who killed their friends and relatives to say that the people they murdered were Papists. In consequence of this there is an edict in favour of Protestants to profess their own religion without molestation. The Gospel is preached with success, and the Church looks forward for better days. The resurrection of the witnesses is the morning of the Millennium, and a prelude of that wonderful and glorious era. But it may be objected that there is a great degree of knowledge in the world—that there is a spirit of liberty extending among all ranks—that, therefore, such events are improbable: besides, we have the Gospel in Protestant Churches preached in its purity, and it is hoped the candlestick will never be entirely removed. But the darkness may overspread and be very thick, notwithstanding, in many places. The Romans were

a learned people at the time when the Gospel was first preached to them, for it appeared soon after the Augustan age: but we know that in a few centuries the most fertile provinces were overrun with numbers of barbarians, who spread havoc and ignorance wherever they appeared. What people were ever fonder of liberty than the Romans? Yet they were first enslaved by their Emperors, then by the hands of Goths and Vandals, and last of all, by the infallible Head of their Church. The barbarians enslaved their bodies, and the Pope enslaved their minds.

As to our having the Gospel in purity among us, can we pretend to have it in greater purity than it was preached at Rome? It is acknowledged that we have the Gospel preached, and the ordinances administered, in great purity among us. But we must say that the Gospel was preached with greater purity to the Romans than it is to us. They had the personal presence of the Apostles, and they had this additional advantage over us, they had the faith of the Gospel confirmed by miracles. They had ocular demonstration, which bore down all opposition. Notwithstanding of all this, the Roman Church, in process of time became a corrupt and idolatrous Church. If they fell, so may we; "let us not be high-minded, but fear." Contempt of the Gospel, and immorality, provoked God to bring in barbarous nations among them, to punish them for their sins. Ignorance overspread the Empire, and this ignorance became the mother of Popish delusion. Our sins, in like manner, may bring similar punishment. We have lukewarmness in religion, and we know the express threatenings that are levelled at that particular sin. The Protestant Church is doubly infected with this sin. If God did not spare other Churches, what ground have we to expect that He will spare us? There is cause to fear that our contempt of the Gospel, our lukewarmness in religion, and the immorality of many false Protestants, will bring all but total darkness upon our posterity. From what has been said of the Pope's religion, some may be apt to suspect that we exclude all of that communion from salvation. It is answered, that if God reserved to Himself seven thousand souls in the Kingdom of Israel, may He not reserve many thousands in the Church of Rome from the contagion of idolatry. Many might escape the plague if it visited the city or metropolis; but a man would advise his friend to leave it, because he believed it would be dangerous to stay. The words of Scripture to the people of that Church are, "Come out of her, that ye be not partakers of her plagues"—a proof that he has some in that idolatrous Church.

DAYS OF LIGHT

Sermon preached by the late Rev. Lachlan Mackenzie, Lochcarron,
in August, 1803.

*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river
unto the ends of the earth.*—Psalm lxxii: 8.

*Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the Ships of Tarshish first
to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them,
unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel,
because he hath glorified thee.*—Isaiah lx: 9.

It is piously believed by Christians of all denominations that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The providence of God, however, has laid many and almost insurmountable difficulties between the promise and the event: one of them is the delay in accomplishing the promise; and the natural slowness of the human heart to believe makes us ready to stagger at the promise through unbelief. Many good men have supposed that the glorious things which were told of the latter days apply only to a future state of happiness: but then, when they examine them attentively, they find that they cannot be meant of Heaven; thus, for instance, they believe that such a promise as this, "for brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver," as meant of the glorious state of the Church, signifies only spiritual things. But if Solomon made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as the stones, what should hinder us to understand them in the literal meaning? Others again suppose, as the time is at such a distance, that they have no connection with it; that it is much better for them to secure their own happiness than to be meditating upon the happiness of others. But a Christian ought to consider the rendering of such reasonings; for are we not bound to pray for the success of the Gospel, and that the dominions of the Mediator's Kingdom may be enlarged? Have we not promises to that effect, and is it not our duty to plead and believe them? If we are members of the Church, we are to plead for the accomplishment of these general promises: and if these general promises fail, what ground have we to believe that the particular promises we plead respecting ourselves will ever be performed? No Christian should say that he has no connection with the future state of the Church upon earth and the future success of the Gospel. Will any Christian be willing to lose the half of his own prayers, or will he be willing to think that all the prayers of the Church, from the commencement of Christianity, should fall to the ground? No man will say that these prayers have been answered. The Jews, Mahometans, and Pagans remain still in a state of unbelief. We pray for their

conversion; and if any man who does so says that he has no connection with their conversion, why does he pray for such an event? Nay more, when a person prays and believes, it is natural for him to look after his prayers. We do not pray to a dead God, but to the living God of Israel. The long delay is the cause of such unbelief. But let us remember that the Church was 4000 years praying for the appearance of the Messiah. We have not been praying the half of that time for the conversion of the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles. If these events were to take place within the space of six or seven years, we would begin earnestly and joyfully to pray, and no man would say he has no connection with them; and yet many who are on the earth will not live till then. Let us consider, however, that a thousand years with the Lord are but as one day. One of the promises we are bound to believe is, "that the Saviour will rule from sea to sea, and from river to river, to the ends of the earth." We need not spend time in proving that this Psalm in its utmost meaning cannot be applied to Solomon, as our Lord was the lineal heir of David and Solomon. It is natural to speak of Judea as the centre of his dominions, for the law shall go forth of Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and it was said to him, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth." And as the heavenly Jerusalem is the place of the general assembly and Church of the first born, we believe, likewise, that Jerusalem in Judea shall in the latter days be an emblem of Heaven. It shall be a Heaven upon earth, "shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God." That these words and other promises to this purpose apply to the Jews when converted to Christianity is clear from this, that they cannot apply to the Gentile Church but in a spiritual way; but when applied to them, the promises answer in a spiritual and temporal point of view. The next chapter obviously points to the Jews, and gives us an account of the great event that precedes their re-establishment in their own land. Their prayer from the 15th verse plainly proves that it is meant of the Jewish Church after their conversion; and if the many promises in the prophecies of Isaiah do not peculiarly belong to the Jews, I do not see how they can be explained. That they belong to the Church is true: but that they have not their full accomplishment till Jews and Gentiles unite, and the Church be complete, is equally true; and when this happens, "Christ will be as a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel." We cannot say that this is yet accomplished. When it will the Jewish Church will be peculiarly glorious, "and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister

unto thee"; "Thy gates shall be open continually, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their Kings may be brought." Jerusalem, for her local situation, is peculiarly fitted to be the mistress of the new world. It shall be the virgin of Messiah. The Gentile Church shall willingly yield her the superiority: and in order to facilitate the intercourse between the Churches, may we not suppose a communication between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, in order to make a passage shorter for deputies from the remotest parts of Asia to the general assembly of the Universal Church met in Jerusalem? We know that such a scheme has been in contemplation, merely for the purpose of commerce. The advantages of such a communication are obvious. In these days of universal fervour, the jealousy of a single Power would not hinder other Powers from executing a scheme so universally beneficial.

When we consider the great improvements mankind have made in mechanics, we need not doubt but such a scheme will be practicable, however difficult; and as it will be useful in a spiritual and temporal point of view, it is likely the Kingdom of the Messiah shall extend from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, and by the Red Sea to the ocean, to facilitate the intercourse between the Jewish and the Gentile Church, both in a spiritual and commercial point of view. The Jews are always great traders, but they shall then convert their gain to the promoting the interests of religion and holiness. About 400 years ago who would believe that the Forth and Clyde would be joined together, or that a New World would be discovered? The secular powers shall not then have any separate interest from the interests of religion: as the Gospel is a religion of universal goodwill, they shall join in every undertaking that shall promote such an end. Theirs shall not be little national interests and national prejudices; universal love shall banish all such notions. The spirit of the Church shall be the spirit of the State, and they shall blend their interests to promote the triumphal and spiritual interests of mankind—they shall not have a variety of opinions in religious matters; being carried down by a long and pleasant stream-tide of evangelical truth, they shall join in one opinion. Trade and agriculture shall flourish—they shall have no restraint upon the one, or embargo upon the other. Opinions which in our day would appear fanciful shall then be the opinion of the times. Though they will not have their goods in common, they shall have a common interest. Nations and individuals shall then be influenced by the glory of God, and the temporal as well as the spiritual good of the whole Church. In regard to trade, the question will not then be, what shall be for the interest of such a particular kingdom or country, but what

shall be for the good of mankind in general? The landlords shall not oppress tenants, nor will one neighbour overreach or covet what belongs to another. To form an idea of the reign of the Messiah from sea to sea, let us suppose that all the Kings and great men will be ruled by the spirit of David and Jehosaphat, all the landlords by the spirit of the centurion, and the merchants and traders by the spirit of Matthew after his conversion; and if we suppose the great body of the common people to be actuated by the spirit that was in the primitive Christians, we form a true notion of the Millennium, and we may expect this from the Spirit of God and the power of His grace. He is as able to convert kingdoms and nations as to convert individuals, and He will do so when His own time comes. He shall rule from sea to sea; His hereditary Kingdom of Judah and Israel shall be the centre of His dominions, and to Him shall the gathering of the people be." The Church of Judah shall be so eminent for holiness, and there will be such a downpouring of the Spirit upon them, that the fame of it shall spread far and near; and as the Queen of Sheba came from the utmost corners of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, it is likely that Christians from all parts of the earth shall go to their solemnities, and get such refreshment to their souls as they will not forget all their days. The Spirit shall seal them to the day of redemption, and they shall return to their own country rejoicing, and they shall confess that God was there in truth; and though all nations cannot go up literally to keep the feast of tabernacles, they may live in communion with them truly. "The Isles shall wait upon me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the holy one of Israel, because he hath glorified thee." The Gentiles, in a spiritual sense, as well as the Jews, from all corners, may be reckoned her sons, as they shall acknowledge Jerusalem to be the mother of all Churches. And as Jerusalem shall be eminently holy, beyond the most holy Church on earth, it shall be visited by all the nations upon earth; the gates of it shall not be shut day nor night. The nations shall see in the light of it, and bring glory and honour to it. "Instead of brass there shall be gold, and for iron silver." "The Kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall bring presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. All Kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall fear him." And how shall they fear him but by submitting to his religion and yielding to his spiritual government? As all nations upon earth shall be actuated by one spirit and one religion and one common interest, we may naturally suppose that they will have one place as the centre of union. Scripture points out

Jerusalem as such a place, as she will be a type of Heaven. We may believe that here the General Assembly of all the Church will meet, and we may believe that all will contribute to make this way by sea and land as easy as possible: therefore, that the Mediterranean and the Red Sea shall be joined for this purpose. He shall likewise "rule from the river to the ends of the earth." The Euphrates shall not be the utmost boundary of his dominions, but he shall have the utmost parts of the earth for his possessions, and though the Jews shall be his people in a most peculiar manner, the Gentiles shall get a large, free, and full offer of his grace—"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And when all these glorious events take place the earth may rejoice, for the Lord God Almighty shall reign. God alone shall be exalted in that day. The reign of grace shall continue without interruption for a thousand years, and hosannahs and hallelujahs resound from Pole to Pole.

NOTE.—These two sermons are in a prophetical strain. It may win respect to the unfulfilled predictions contained in them to note that one thing foretold by the Minister of Lochcarron has come to pass, viz., the making of the Suez Canal.—1st January, 1898.

THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST *

By John Owen

But of all the effects of the divine excellencies, the constitution of the person of Christ as the foundation of the new creation, as "the Mystery of Godliness," was the most ineffable and glorious. I speak not of His divine person absolutely; for His distinct personality and subsistence was by an internal and eternal act of the Divine Being in the person of the Father, or eternal generation—which is essential unto the divine essence—whereby nothing anew was outwardly wrought or did exist. He was not, He is not, in that sense, the effect of the divine wisdom and power of God, but the essential wisdom and power of God Himself. But we speak of Him only as incarnate, as He assumed our nature into personal subsistence with Himself. His conception in the womb of the Virgin, as unto the integrity of human nature, was a miraculous operation of the divine power. But the prevention of that nature from any subsistence of its own—by its assumption into personal union with the Son of God, in the first instance of its conception—is that which is above all miracles, nor can be designed by that name. A mystery it is, so far above the order of all creating or providential operations, that it wholly transcends the sphere of them

* From a treatise on the Person of Christ by Dr. Owen.

that are most miraculous. Herein did God glorify in a way of infinite wisdom, grace, and condescension. The depths of the mystery hereof are open only unto Him whose understanding is infinite, which no created understanding can comprehend. All other things were produced and effected by an outward examination of power from God. He said, "Let there be light, and there was light." But this assumption of our nature into hypostatical union with the Son of God, this constitution of one and the same individual person in two natures so infinitely distinct as those of God and man — whereby the Eternal was made in time, the Infinite became finite, the Immortal mortal, yet continuing eternal, infinite, immortal—is that singular expression of divine wisdom, goodness and power, wherein God will be admired and glorified unto all eternity. Herein was that change introduced into the whole first creation, whereby the blessed Angels were exalted, Satan and his works ruined, mankind recovered from a dismal apostasy, all things made new, all things in heaven and earth reconciled and gathered into one Head, and a revenue of eternal glory raised unto God, incomparably above what the first constitution of all things in the order of nature could yield unto Him.

In the expression of this mystery, the Scripture doth sometimes draw the veil over it, as that which we cannot look into. So, in His conception of the Virgin, with respect unto this union which accompanied it, it was told her, that "the power of the Highest should overshadow her": Luke i:35. A work it was of the power of the Most High, but hid from the eyes of men in the nature of it; and, therefore, that holy thing which had no subsistence of its own, which should be born of her, should "be called the Son of God," becoming one person with Him. Sometimes it expresseth the greatness of the mystery, and leaves it as an object of our admiration, 1 Tim.iii:16: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." A mystery it is, and that of those dimensions as no creature can comprehend. Sometimes it putteth things together, as that the distance of the two natures shall illustrate the glory of the one person, John i,14: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." But what Word was this? That which was in the beginning, which was with God, which was God, by whom all things were made, and without whom was not any thing made that was made; who was light and life. This Word was made flesh, not by any change of His own nature or essence, not by a transubstantiation of the divine nature into the human, not by ceasing to be what He was, but by becoming what He was not, in taking our nature to His own, to be His own, whereby He dwelt among us. This glorious

Word, which is God, and described by His eternity and omnipotency in works of creation and providence, "was made flesh," — which expresseth the lowest state and condition of human nature. Without controversy, great is this mystery of godliness! And in that state wherein He visibly appeared as so made flesh, those who had eyes given them from above, saw "His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. What heart can conceive, what tongue can express the least part of the glory of this grace? So also is it proposed unto us, Is. ix, 6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." He is called, in the first place, Wonderful. And that deservedly: Prov. xxx.4. That the mighty God should be a child born, and the everlasting Father a son given unto us, may well entitle Him unto the name of Wonderful.

Some amongst us say, that if there were no other way for the redemption and salvation of the church, but this only of the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, there was no wisdom in the contrivance of it. Vain man indeed would be wise, but is like the wild ass's colt. Was there no wisdom in the contrivance of that which, when it is effected, leaves nothing but admiration unto the utmost of all created wisdom? Who hath known the mind of the Lord in this thing, or who hath been His Counsellor in this work, wherein the mighty God became a child born to us, a son given unto us? Let all vain imaginations cease: there is nothing left unto the sons of men, but either to reject the divine person of Christ — as many do unto their own destruction — or humbly to adore the mystery of infinite wisdom and grace therein. And it will require a condescending charity, to judge that those do really believe the incarnation of the Son of God, who live not in the admiration of it, as the most adorable effect of divine wisdom.

SAYINGS OF JOHN BUNYAN

Of Repentance and Coming to Christ

The end of affliction is the discovery of sin, and of that to bring us to a Saviour. Let us therefore with the prodigal, return unto Him, and we shall find ease and rest.

A repenting penitent, though formerly as bad as the worst of men, may, by grace, become as good as the best.

To be truly sensible of sin is to sorrow for displeasing of God; to be afflicted that He is displeased by us more than that He is displeased with us.

Your intentions to repentance, and the neglect of that soul-saving duty, will rise up in judgment against you.

Repentance carries with it a divine rhetoric, and persuades Christ to forgive multitudes of sins committed against Him.

Say not with thyself, To-morrow I will repent; for it is thy duty to do it daily.

The gospel of grace and salvation is above all doctrines the most dangerous, if it be received in word only by graceless men — if it be not attended with a sensible need of a Saviour, and bring them to Him. For such men as have only the notion of it, are of all men most miserable — for by reason of their knowing more than heathens, this only shall be their final portion, that they shall have greater stripes.

Of Prayer

Before you enter into prayer, ask thy soul these questions — To what end, O my soul, art thou retired into this place? Art thou not come to discourse the Lord in prayer? Is He present; will He hear thee? Is He merciful; will He help thee? Is thy business slight; is it not concerning the welfare of thy soul? What words wilt thou use to move Him to compassion?

To make thy preparation complete, consider that thou art but dust and ashes, and He the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that clothes Himself with light as with a garment; that thou art a vile sinner, He a holy God; That thou art but a poor crawling worm, He the omnipotent Creator.

In all your prayers forget not to thank the Lord for His mercies.

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without a heart. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. The spirit of prayer is more precious than treasures of gold and silver. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, sacrifice to God and a scourge for Satan.

BACKSLIDINGS HEALED

By Ralph Erskine

There is no national reformation can take place, till there be a personal reformation: if personal returning to the Lord were general and universal, then there would be a national returning. Therefore, if you would wish to see a national reviving, let every person put in for a share of gathering power and grace, saying, "Turn me and I shall be turned; draw me and I shall run": and, under the conduct of drawing power, let us say, "Behold we come to Thee, for thou art the Lord our God." Hath your personal backsliding, man, woman, been great and grievous?

Hath this been your disease all your days, a backsliding heart, a backsliding nature, a backsliding practice, a bentness to backsliding in thought, word, and action? Is that your disease, that you are a backsliding heifer, a backsliding devil, that, it may be, thinks the disease is desperate and incurable? O let me assure you, that there is a Healer come here to-day, that says, "I will heal your backslidings"; and He will not say the thing that He cannot do. And while His mercy is saying, "I will heal your backslidings," let your heart be saying, Lord, I will come to Thee for that healing, for that is my disease, and there is none in the world needs it so much as I: the church and the nation need to have their backslidings healed; but I am the particular person that needs it most of all: heal me, and I shall be healed; behold, I come to Thee for that end. Is your heart saying so? Then welcome be all comers; welcome, welcome, welcome! "Him that comes, I will in no wise cast out"; nay, He will in no wise cast up your former backslidings, but heal you, without upbraiding you; for He gives liberally, and upbraids not. "I will heal your backslidings": it is spoken without limitation, either of former or future backslidings; and therefore the fear of backsliding again, needs not discourage you from coming to Him; your former backslidings will not cast you out; and though you backslide again He will not cast you off. He may visit your iniquity with the rod, but His loving kindness will He not take away: no, He will in no wise cast out.

RESOLUTION RE DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION BILL

The Southern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Glasgow on Tuesday, the 15th day of December, 1964, resolved to protest against the Death Penalty Abolition Bill as encouraging to criminals, discouraging to the police in the detection of crime, and contrary to the Scriptural principles outlined in the *Resolution re Capital Punishment* adopted by the Synod of this Church in May, 1962, which is added to this Protest.

It is the earnest desire and prayer of the Presbytery that this Bill will never become law in this nation.

Resolution re Capital Punishment

The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, convened at Glasgow this 23rd day of May, 1962, note with disfavour the impression given by various religious bodies, such as the Convocations of Canterbury and York and the British Council of Churches, that Capital Punishment is Unchristian.

The Synod would point out that this misconception generally arises from a failure to distinguish between those principles laid

down in the Bible governing Christian conduct between man and man as neighbours, and these principles which refer to the administration of law and justice through properly constituted courts. The question is further confused by discussions with regard to the use of Capital Punishment as a deterrent and also the need for the reformation of the criminal. It is quite true that both these matters require careful attention. But the raising of them in the context of Capital Punishment only serves to cloud the real issue, which is the laying down of the proper punishment for the crime of murder.

The Synod would further remind all concerned that the clear Scriptural teaching with regard to sin is that it must be punished. This arises from the fact that God is just and that the claims of His law and justice must be satisfied. Unless this principle is emphasised in a clear way, the lawbreaker can have no respect for the law or the Lawgiver. It is quite true that God's punishment of sin may and does serve to deter men from continuing in a course of evil. It is further true that the threat of being visited with condign punishment may cause men to reform their ways. But these two latter issues do not affect the fundamental Scriptural principle that sin must be punished in accordance with law and justice.

The authority of the civil magistrate to rule and to exercise his power in the punishment of evil-doing and in the protection of those who do good arises from the authority of God. "The powers that be are ordained of God." It is further a Biblical principle that the power of the sword clearly involves the taking away of life in the exercise of justice, should the crime deserve that punishment. The Scriptural basis for this authority is to be found in the words of Genesis ix: verse 6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man." It will be remembered that this portion of truth was given to mankind in the time of Noah, when, after the destruction of that evil generation by the flood a new beginning was given, as it were, to the human race. It is plain beyond all doubt that this Scripture was given for the express purpose of governing the conduct of the human family with regard to the punishment of murder down to the end of time. An attempt is sometimes made to confuse the issue by saying that laws which were suitable for the theocratic government of Israel are no longer suitable for the present day. This argument proceeds on an ignorance of the Word of God, because Noah lived long before Moses.

It is exceeding important to notice that the reason given in the Scripture for the taking away of life for the crime of murder

is in the words, "For in the image of God made he man." This was true in Old Testament times; it is also true in New Testament times, that man is still a creature who was created in the image of God. Therefore the reason for punishing the murderer with death in New Testament times is exactly the same as the reason for punishing such a criminal in Old Testament times.

The New Testament is equally clear and emphatic on this particular matter. In Romans, Chapter 13, already referred to, we read with regard to the civil magistrate in verse 4, "For he is the minister of God to thee for good; if thou do that which is evil be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." We read again in I Peter, Chapter 2, verse 13, "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be unto the King as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them that do well." It is abundantly clear from these passages that the magistrate derives his authority from God to exercise the sword in the punishment of evil doing. Consequently, he ought to exercise that sword according to the Word of God, and, in connection with the punishment for murder, he should exercise the sword in the execution of the sentence of death.

The Apostle Paul, whose outstanding labours in advancing the cause of Christ in his day and generation have their renown throughout the Churches of Christ, said on one occasion, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat where I ought to be judged." This statement was made when he was before Festus, and he continues to state with regard to his position, "for if I be an offender and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die" (Acts xv, verse 11). From these words it is perfectly plain that Paul recognised the fact that the magistrate had the power to execute the death sentence if the crime was worthy of death. It is clear, therefore, from this expression of the Apostle's that he recognised the validity of the death sentence in New Testament times.

From the above instances, it is evident that the infliction of the death penalty on the murderer by the civil magistrate is a punishment which is based upon the divine revelation of God's mind in the Holy Scriptures. The matter is solemn, and dreadful, and serious, and the Government of this country should not be swayed to depart from Holy Writ on this particular matter, or any other matter, by those who have no clear understanding of

the scriptural principles involved. Other arguments, however plausible they may seem in themselves, can only bring forth evil fruits, the inevitable result of departing from the fountain of Divine Wisdom found in the Word of God. The Synod, therefore, appeal to the British Government to retain the death penalty for the crime of murder, as the abolition of Capital Punishment would be an insult to the Majesty of Heaven and the cause of bringing Divine displeasure upon our beloved land.

(Sgd.) MALCOLM MACSWEEN,
Clerk to the Southern Presbytery.

Free Presbyterian Manse,
Oban, Argyll.

LITERARY NOTICES

Sermons and Meditations : By the late Rev. James A. Tallach. A limited number of copies are still available of this edifying book. Obtainable from Mrs E. D. Tallach, 5 Caberfeidh Avenue, Dingwall: price 3/6, by post 4/-.

A Correction : The correct address of Rev. Murdoch Campbell, M.A., whose booklet, "Gleanings of a Highland Harvest," was noticed in a previous issue, is Free Church Manse, Resolis, Conon, Ross-shire; not "Corrour."

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 280)

Meadhon 3. Faighibh mothachaidhean freagarach air droch nàdar agus toraidhean fearg pheacach. "'S e cuthach aithghear a th'ann am feirg," tha aon ag ràdh; "'S e fiabhras an anama a th'ann am feirg," a deir aon eile; "'Se dorachachadh reusain a th'innte," a deir an treas aon.

Tha a toraidhean mar an ceudna ro-dhuilich.

(1) Tha i "cur doilgheas air Spiorad Dhé," Ephes. iv: 30, ga fhogradh bho'n a bhroileach anns am bheil i fodh'n chuthach. Is e Dia sìthe a tha'nn an Dia; thà làthaireachd agus comhfhurtachdan Dhé a mhàin air a sealbhachadh ann an sàmhchuir. 'S e nì sònraichte a thà neach ag ràdh mu'n earrann a chaidh ainmeachadh, "Cha'n eil Dia 's an àbhaist a beannachadh le sìth coguis a mheud agus nach eil a deanamh coguis de shith."

(2) Tha fearg a toirt cothrom do'n diabhol, Ephes. iv: 26, 27. Is e spiorad feargach agus mì-thoilichte a th'anns an t-Satan, agus cha'n fhaigh e fois air bith ach ann an oridheachan mì-fhoiseil; tha e beo mar an *salamander*, ann an teinntibh

connsachaidh. Gluaisidh se e fein 'n uair a tha na spioradan air an gluasad; aig amaibh lionaidh e'n cridhe le smuaintibh dioghaltais, aig amaibh, na bilean, agus fadaidh e'n teanga le cainnt mhi-naomh; eadhon Maois, a bha cho macanta, labhair e gu cabhagach le bhilean. (3) Cuiridh fearg an spiorad a mach a fonn air son dleasdanas; air an aobhar sin tha'n t-Abstol a comhairleachadh fhir agus mhnathan bho chleachdaidhean buaireasach, agus bho chonnsachaidhean, a chum agus na bi maille air a chur air an ùrnuighean, I. Peadar iii: 7. Feumaidh gach gnìomh aoraidh a bhi freagarach do'n chuspair aoraidh; ach is e Dia, Dia na sìth, Dia a ghràidh. (4) Tha i toirt mì-chliu air a chreidimh Chrìosdail. Ciod e mar a chuireadh *Plato* agus *Pythagoras* nàire oirne, na'm biodh iad beo an diugh. Bha Crìosd mar uan a thaobh macantas, agus an tig e dà luchd-leanmhuinn a bhi mar leomhanaibh? O cumaibh bhur cridheachan ar neo caillidh sibh a dh'aon bheum, cha'n e mhàin bhur sìth fein, ach creideas diadhachd. (4) Thugaibh fa'n ear cia cho milis 's a tha e do Chrìosduidh buaidh fhaotainn air a thruaillidheachdan, agus a bhi giulain air falbh an creach.

"Is fearr an tì a tha mall a chum feirge na gaisgeach; agus an tì a riaghlas a spiorad fein na esan a ghlacas àrd-bhaile." Gnàth xvi: 32. Am bheil toileachadh air bith ann a' bhi toirt fosgladh do thruaillidheachd? Cia mòr is motha na sin ann a bhi ga claidh! 'N uair a thig thu ann am fonn ciuin, na air leabaidh bàis, gu bhi 'g amharc thairis air do bheatha, cia cho comhfhurtail 's a bhitheas e'n sin a bhi beachdachadh air na buaidhean a thuair thu, tre eagal Dhé, thairis air droch thograidhean do chridhe fein. B'e briathran iomraideach a bh'aig *Valentinian* an t-iompaire, 'n uair a thàinig e gu bhi bàsachadh: "Am measg mo bhuidhean uile cha'n eil ach aon a tha toirt comhfhurtachd dhomh;" agus air a bhi air fheorach dheth ciod e sin, fhreagair e, "Thug mi buaidh air mo nàmhaid a bu mhiosa, mo dhroch cridhe fein."

5. Cuiribh nàire oirbh fein le bhi cur fodh'r comhair fein na h-eiseimpleirean a b'iomraitich a bha comharaicht' air son a' macantas.

Bhos ceann na h-uile nì, coimeasaibh bhur spioradan ri Spiorad Chrìosd. "Foghlumaibh 'uam-sa," tha E 'g ràdh, "oir tha mise macanta agus iorasal." Mata xi: 29. Bha Crìosd macanta agus iorasal, ach tha mise uaibhreach agus feargach; b'e àrd-chliu Mhaois, "A nis bha'n duine Maois ro-chiuin, thar nan uile dhaoine bha air aghaidh na talmhuinn." Air. xii: 3, agus b'e sin an duine da'm b'aithne Dia aghaidh ri aghaidh. Bha e air a ràdh thaobh *Calvin* agus *Ursin* gu'n robh iad le cheile de nàdur bras, agus gidheadh dh'fhoghlum iad macantas Chrìosd air a

leithid de dhòigh agus nach labhradh iad focal, fodh na brosnachaidhean a bu mhotha, a bhitheadh a chùim mi-chliu diadhachd. 'N uair a leughas sinn na naigheachdan taitneach a tha air aithris a thaobh na dearbh fhineachan, aig nach robh rianh na cothroman a tha againne, a thaobh na *Pythagoreans*, cia b'e air bith na tuasaidean a bhitheadh aca 'n am measg fein feadh an latha, a chuireadh clos air gach ni le bhi cur na teachdaireachd so a dh' ionnsuidh a cheile, "Tha ghrian dlùth air dol fodha;" agus a thaobh *Plato* ris an fhoghlumaiche aige, "Ghabhainn ort mur bhitheadh gu'm bheil an fhearg orm:" 'n uair a leughas mi an caoibhneas agus an taiscalachd a nochd *Lycurgus* do fhear suarach a bhuail a mach aon de shùilean—tha nàire orm a bhi faicinn mar a tha na fineachan a toirt barrachd air na Criosduidhean, ann a bhi le'n argumaidean agus an àithneantaibh modhanail a ciuineachadh an spioradan, agus a toirt buaidh air an an-tograidhean. B'urrain solus fann nàduir *Seneca* a theagasg gu a ràdh, "Goirtichidh corruich duine ni's motha na'n oilbheum; oir tha leum shònraichte anns an oilbheum, ach cha'n eil fhios agam cia cho fad agus a ghiuleanas mo chorruich mi." Is nàire e gu'm bhitheadh na daoine so, a thainig cho fad air dheireadh oirne ann a' meadhonan agus ann an cothroman, cho fad air thoiseach oirne ann a' macantas agus ann a' foghaidean.

6. 'S an àite mu dheireadh. Seachnaibh gach uile aobharan brosnachaidh.

Esan nach cluinn an clag cha'n fheum e 'm bal a tharruig. "Pillidh freagradh min corruich; ach daisgidh briathra garg fearg." Gnàth. xv: 1. Na b'e mhàin gu'n dean thu ùrnuigh agus gu'n rùnaich thu 'n a aghaidh, ach thoir thu fein air falbh cho fad agus is urrain thu a mach a slighe a pheacaich 'n am b'urrain dhuit corruich a sheachnadh 'n a ceul eirigh, cha'n eil mòran eagail dhà d'thaobh a ris; oir cha'n eil e thaobh a pheacaidh so mar a thaobh peacaidhean eile; tha peacaidhean eile a fàs a dh'ionnsuidh an làn neart a lion beag 'us beag, is e'n ceud ghluasadan an fheadhan is laige ach tha'm peacadh so air a bhreith 'n a làn neart, tha e ni's làidire an toiseach; seas 'n a aghaidh an sin, agus tuitidh e romhad. Mar sin foghlumaibh bhur cridheachan a ghleidheadh 'n uair a dh'eireas brosnachaidhean.

Am 9. 'S e'n naoidheamh àm gu bhi cleachdadh an dìchioll is motha, àm a bhuairidh, anns am bheil Satan a cur seisde dlùth ri daingneach rioghail cridhe a Chriosduidh, agus gu bitheanta a gheibh e sàr chothrom air le cion faiceil: 's e th'ann a bhi gleidheadh a chridhe a nis, cha'n e mhàin tròcair ach dleasdanas. Is aineamh iad na Criosduidhean a tha cho mion eolach air a

bhì lorgachadh a mach na mearachdan, agus ann a bhì cur an aghaidh 'n an argumaidean a chleachdas Satan gu bhì ga'n tarruig a chùm peacaidh, gu bhì tighinn a mach gu sàbhailte bho'n a h-ionnsuidhean sin. "Deanamh faire agus ùrnuigh," deir an Tighearna, "chùm nach tuit sibh ann am bhuaireadh." Marc. xiv: 38. Thuair eadhon Daidhbbhidh cliuteach agus Solamh glic goirteachadh air son a' mì-chùram, aig a leithid so de dh'am. 'S e so, uime sin, an naoidheamh cùis.

Cuis 9. An dòigh anns an urrain Crìosduidh, 'n uair a tha e air a bhuaireadh gu peacadh, a chridhe a ghleidheadh bho bhì geilleadh do bhuaireadh.

Nis tha sia argumaidean sònraichte leis am bheil Satan gu seolta a faotainn a stigh a bhuaireadh; annta uile oidheirpichidh mì bhì toirt dhuit cuideachadh air son a bhì gleidheadh do chridhe.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Winter Sport on the Cairngorms

In the Cairngorms area and elsewhere in the central Highlands, snow again this Winter has drawn hundreds of young men and women to these parts to engage in Winter sports, and what a blot it is upon Scotland, that these activities are engaged in by many over weekends, including the Lord's Day. Death and exposure have come to some thus engaged. But it is clear that the Lord, in judgment, is permitting this disregard for His holy day. Men will give account of their sins to God ultimately, although they prosper at their will now.

After the Abolition of Hanging

Since the House of Commons agreed to support the Bill for the complete abolition of hanging as the penalty for murder, it is difficult to ignore the number of cases of murder and violence which have occurred in the London area and elsewhere in the country. Of course the recent outbreak of violence may have no relationship to what took place in the House of Commons. Nevertheless, with police officers being shot at and wounded in the exercise of their duty, revolvers and guns being used in Bank raids, and cases of young and old being murdered, it seems that an undesirable sentimentality has overtaken all political parties in the House of Commons. The Scriptures of Truth require the death penalty for the dastardly sin and crime of murder. The question is not whether the death penalty is a deterrent, but is it the requisite punishment to be administered to those who have no regard for human life?

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 and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Breasclete, Portnalong, Fort-William and Stoer; second, London; 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, 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.

Rev. Fraser Tallach, Canada

Rev. Fraser Tallach, M.A. flew to Winnipeg on Friday, 27th November, and expects D.V., to remain there for at least a year. In a letter from Mr Tallach we gathered that his flight was delayed by strong head-winds over the Atlantic, but the journey was tolerably comfortable and, although a few hours overdue, the plane landed safely at Winnipeg on the same day.

For the Lord's preservation of His servant we would be thankful. It is our earnest desire that Mr Tallach's services among our Canadian friends would be abundantly blessed in that sinners be saved and the Lord's people be refreshed.

Mr Tallach lives at 814 Arlington, Winnipeg, Manitoba. We give his address particularly for the benefit of interested friends in the U.S.A. and Canada, who may wish to contact him.

The new church at 514 Maryland Street, Winnipeg, was opened last August by Rev. Dr. MacDonald, Vancouver and since then the congregation has worshipped there. The new church, according to the reports we have had, is a compact, comfortable building. We take this opportunity of recording our deep appreciation of the congregation's diligence and determination to maintain the standards of the Free Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, "The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation."

Donald Campbell,
Convener, Dominion and Colonial Committee.

Retirement of Rev. Wm. Grant

At the meeting at Inverness on Tuesday, 17th November, of the Northern Presbytery, the Court regretfully recognised the fact of the resignation of Rev. Wm. Grant from the combined charge of Halkirk and Helmsdale and also from the oversight of the Thurso congregation. Although accepted at the previous meeting of Presbytery, the demission of the charge was to date from 13th October. It was a sad occasion in many respects.

Mr Grant has ended the long connection with the North lasting more than 38 years, since his induction to the charge of Halkirk and Helmsdale on 29th June 1926, and also his membership of the Northern Presbytery. In paying tribute to his personal qualities and his services to the Cause of Christ during his ministry, members spoke of Mr Grant's years of faithful service, his regular attendance at meetings of the Court, his consistent maintaining the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church, and the part he had taken in the Church's work, particularly on the committees on several of which he had served. Members felt that they were losing a friend and brother in the Lord. Mr Grant's ministry was exercised during the whole course of his labours in the one charge from which he had never removed. He had undertaken a period of service among our Canadian congregations, where he is still remembered with affection by our people, who still recall his visits to those many friends who had gone to Canada from his native parish of Dornoch. With great regret his resignation had been accepted, as the reasons for this painful decision were understandably strong.

The good wishes and prayers of his friends accompany our former colleague as he enters his retirement. He and his wife will be much missed by friends in the North; Mrs Grant being a true helpmeet to her husband. We pray that Mr Grant may be long spared to give what assistance lies in his power in proclaiming the glorious doctrines of the Gospel, and may his own soul be sustained and comforted by the strong consolations of the Spirit.

—A.F.M., Clerk, Northern Presbytery.

Greenock Manse Appeal

Having taken the necessary technical advice on the matter, the Greenock Deacons' Court, with the permission of the Southern Presbytery, decided to dispose of the Manse at 59 Campbell Street and to proceed to buy a new one. A satisfactory price was obtained for the old Manse and a new one has now been purchased at 43 Denholm Street, Greenock for the price of £3,800 leaving a debt on this Manse of £1,050. The sum previously collected to put the

old manse in a state of repair will be used to do all necessary work in connection with the new manse to put it into a suitable state of habitation for a minister.

The Greenock congregation, though small, has been very loyal to the Church and deserve the support of our people in their present circumstances. The Deacons' Court decided to issue this appeal for our people to support the *Greenock Manse Purchase Fund* by their contributions as the Lord may guide them. These contributions should be sent to the Congregational Treasurer, *Mr A. Cameron, 17 Clyde Road, Gourock*, who will gratefully acknowledge same in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*.

(Rev.) Donald MacLean, Interim-moderator.

Thomas MacRae, Clerk to the Deacons' Court.

The Southern Presbytery cordially endorse and commend this appeal.

Malcolm Macsween, Clerk to the Southern Presbytery.

Donald Campbell, Moderator.

The Death of Rev. John Martin, Staffin

The ministers and people of the Church received a grievous shock when they heard recently of the unexpected death of the Rev. John Martin, Pastor of our congregation in Staffin, Skye. Mr Martin attended a Conference in Inverness on the 23rd and 24th December, 1964, along with other ministers and elders of the Church. He left for home on Thursday the 24th December, and stayed that night with friends near Broadford. On the next day, he proceeded home in his car to Staffin. When some few miles from home, the weather being wintry, he had occasion to leave the car. When he returned to the driver's seat, he slumped over the wheel and passed away. This has indeed been "the wine of astonishment" to his widow, family circle and congregation and to his brethren and friends throughout the Church. Mr Martin's case may be seen in the Words of our Lord, in Matthew, Chapter 24: verses 44-46: "Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." The Western Presbytery (D.V.) at their next meeting will be drawing up a tribute to this gracious and humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. It only remains for us to note that this death is a solemn voice to our Church again, especially in the light of the need there is among us for ministers of the gospel. We extend our deep and sincere sympathy to Mrs Martin the widow, and her children, and

the other near relatives, commending them to the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We express our sympathy to the Staffin congregation in their loss also.

Rev. D. MacLean's Departure Abroad

Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow, left this country, by 'plane, on the 6th of January, for a visit to the Church's Mission in Southern Rhodesia, as instructed by last Synod. He will report on the work of the Mission. He intends, thereafter, the Lord willing, to proceed to New Zealand and Australia, on the 2nd of March, for a brief visit, returning for home on the 22nd of April. We trust these visits to our stations abroad will be attended with a blessing, and that Mr MacLean will be preserved in his travels.

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

Sustentation Fund.—Miss Cameron, Drimnin, £4; MacCaskills, Carbost More, £12; Mrs MacLennan, Hillsdale, £7; A. MacKenzie, Tullich, Strathcarron, £5; A. Campbell, Broallan, £1 10/-; Miss J. Munro, West End Farr. Bettyhill, £2; K. MacLean, Peterhead, £5; D. Mackenzie, Glenelg, £4; Miss S. MacLeod, Skelmorlie, £1 2s 6d; Mrs Mackellar, Tarbert, £5; K. Lamont, Desford, £5; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £14, last five per Mr J. G.

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Kinlochbervie Congregation.—Correction of entry in December magazine: Miss B. Smith, Linlithgow, should have read Mrs B. Smith, Linlithgow.

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