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PREACHING AND PRAYER

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe, is a statement by the Apostle Paul, which expresses the mind of God as to the employment of this means unto the blessed end of the salvation of sinners. And the Lord Jesus Christ devoted much of His public ministry, as is seen from the four Gospels, to preaching and teaching the gospel in its fullness as to doctrine, experience and practice having an application to the salvation of sinners. The divine Redeemer also gave Himself continually to prayer which no doubt concerned much more than His preaching, yet was also related to this prominent part of His public and holy activities.

Thus the Lord Jesus is the great example for all those who are truly sent to preach the gospel. "And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. x: 15). And those who are truly sent are converted and commissioned men, having the Spirit of Christ and the graces of the Spirit, including the Spirit of grace and of supplications. They can do nothing without Christ, and have need of divine guidance and help to be workmen that need not be ashamed, "rightly dividing the Word of God" in their labours as to meditation and study regarding the Word of God, from whence they derive the gospel they are to preach to sinners and saints. The constant need of this divine guidance calls for prayer to their Lord and Master to grant unto them the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whose Office it is, to guide into all truth. In this, as in every other matter, their sufficiency is of God.

It is a solemn and onerous thing to have laid upon one the constant duty of serving the Lord Jesus by way of proclaiming the whole counsel of God, His gospel, to all classes of men. This ought to be done with clarity, faithfully and without fear of man and in love to precious souls on their way to Eternity. The preacher, as such, is accountable to God, that he seek to please not men, but God, who trieth over hearts. How much the preacher requires to resort, before duty, to the throne of grace, for strength,

wisdom, power and unction from on high! The Lord Jesus spake as one having authority and not as the scribes; and He can give a measure of this authority to His servants as they endeavour to hold forth the Word of life to their hearers. And then, even worldly men may have to testify that the preacher is no formalist but speaks forth the words of truth and soberness.

Then all who are humble and devoted servants of Christ in the Gospel are deeply exercised in these days as to the spiritual dearth everywhere. How few are turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God through Christ, even where all the saving truths of the gospel are regularly declared. Thus ministers of the gospel are made continually aware of the fundamental fact, that God alone can give "the increase." Yet they must preach on, as Paul declared, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." But also they have need of seeking more and more a "wrestling" spirit, in secretly imploring the God of all grace to send the Holy Ghost with the preaching of the Word. Then sinners in our congregations and communities, presently dead and indifferent, will be convinced of their sins and brought to flee from the wrath to come, unto the crucified and risen Redeemer, and be by faith joined unto Him, unto their salvation. Then also shall the poor and needy, who fear the Lord and wait upon Him, be fed with food convenient for them, be comforted in their trials and encouraged on their pilgrimage journey to a better country, even an heavenly. These things the divine power of the Holy Ghost alone can accomplish; yet by means of the preaching of the Word of the truth of the gospel. How applicable in this connection, therefore, are the Words of Christ which encourage to prayer: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Again all the Lord's people, especially those privileged with the ordinance of the gospel, will surely be exercised in prayer in the behalf of preachers of the gospel, that the Lord will endue them with power from on high, that their own needy souls will be spiritually benefited and that others will be brought under the power of the truth. Paul in writing to the Romans asks for their prayers: "Now I beseech you brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me: That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints . . ." (Rom. xv: 30, 31). Everything which tends to hinder believers as to the performance of this spiritual duty should be guarded against. In remembering the Sabbath Day, Christians are not

limited to an outward conformity to the religious exercises of that day, but have a special call to secret prayer with special reference to the preaching of the gospel of Christ. And this applies to all occasions when believers go to and come from hearing the Word.

The Church must of necessity devote regular and stated times for the public ordinances of divine worship, including the preaching and exposition of the truth. Therefore there should be a careful and constant application to the Lord in prayer, in secret, for the divine blessing to accompany the public means of grace and salvation. How can the Christian, in the neglect of prayer, expect a blessing in the house of God? This is not a legal observation but one which enters into the spiritual state of the soul as before God in relation to the privilege of the preaching of the Word.

And so, when and where there is the faithful preaching of the truths of salvation and humble and earnest prayer for the power and the blessing of the Holy Spirit; then it may be expected, in the sovereign mercy of God, that experiences calling for praise will follow. In the Acts of the Apostles chapter iv, we read that when Peter and John were let go by their enemies, “. . . they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord thou art God. . . . And now, Lord behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word . . . and when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul. . . .” Here we see preaching, prayer and the blessing of the Holy Ghost all linked together. May the Lord thus come today to His Church and people, in the midst of an evil generation, to revive His people and to build up Zion to His own praise.

A NEW REFORMATION

By Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow

The present exceedingly low state of the professing Church in the world today, together with the growing power of materialism with its attendant decay in morals and proper living, has stimulated the conviction in the minds of many that there is a profound need of a reformation in the Church. The precise nature of this reformation has been a matter of dispute among theologians for some time, and varied proposals have been put forward in the

hope that these would become acceptable as a means of producing the desired change. It is also realised that in order to effect such a reformation, the necessity of it and the method of procuring it would need to become obvious not only to theologians but to lay people. Attempts have, therefore, been made from time to time to filter through to the public the opinions of theologians who are concerned over this particular matter. Having this in view, those who have endeavoured to transmit these theological views to the general public have concentrated on making them relevant to the modern age. This has naturally resulted in a non-biblical approach to the subject, as it is generally conceded at the present time that the public are grossly ignorant of the Scriptures.

Prominent among the writers who seek to lay before the general public the necessity of a new reformation is the Bishop of Woolwich, the author of the notorious book, *Honest to God*. He has recently produced a book called *The New Reformation (?)*, and it is interesting to notice that the desire to write this book arose from a remark made to him by Cardinal Bea, the wily German Jesuit head of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity. Cardinal Bea said, "The Counter Reformation is over" (p.9). This remark meant that, in his view, the Counter Reformation of the Papal Church which was intended to put an end to Protestantism had been successful. This does not unduly worry his friend, the Bishop, for he himself says, "In that sense the Reformation is over. Let it go. It is the end of an era" (p.10). While Cardinal Bea and the Bishop of Woolwich may rejoice that the Reformation of the 16th Century no longer appears to have the active support that it had at one time, it would be a mistake on their part to assume that the victory had been gained by the forces of Anti-Christ. As long as the Lord's people are on the face of the earth, who are the true worshippers of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Roman Catholicism has not gained the ultimate victory. Indeed, the Scriptures give us every reason to believe that the very time the Papal Church is ready to rejoice in full victory is the time when she is nearest her inevitable destruction.

The new reformation as envisaged in this book approaches the whole subject of Christianity from an entirely different point of view from that presented in the Words of God. The 16th Century Reformation was concerned with the question, "How can I find a gracious God?" This is the cry heard in every soul awakened to realise that he has sinned against the God of Eternity, in every age in which the Holy Spirit has visited the Church with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It was heard on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what must we do."

It was the cry of the publican, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." This new reformation, on the other hand, is concerned with finding the answer to a different question. "For the world is not asking 'How can I find a gracious God?' It is asking, 'How can I find a gracious neighbour?'" It is insisted, therefore, that the new theology ought to approach modern man, not in the sense of the Redeemer being revealed as the One Who came to seek and to save that which was lost but, to quote Dr. Robinson, "If men are to see Christ, and therefore God, they can only do it through the one who comes to them, in the first instance, not as a messianic figure, but as one of themselves, as Fred or Harry or the man across the street" (p.35). To illustrate this particular point Dr. Robinson goes on to say, "And in fact on the Emmaus Road he does not confront the couple on their walk as the Christ, but simply as a stranger who comes alongside them in their questioning and their sadness. It is only from there, as the man for others and with others, that he can make himself known to them as the Messiah of whom their Scriptures spoke" (p.36). To say the least of it this is an extraordinary view of this incident. The purpose of the Saviour was to enlighten the two disciples in the sufferings and resurrection as these are seen in the light of the Old Testament scriptures. The particular doctrine which he taught them was the necessity for the sin-bearer to suffer before He could enter into His Glory. This doctrine has no place in the new theology, and to endeavour to use the incident in the way outlined above to support a humanistic approach to the gospel is an effort of the imagination rather than the product of sound exegesis.

Another strange idea held by Dr. Robinson is his idea of the Church. Borrowing from Paul Tillich, an American pseudo-theologian, he makes the distinction between what he terms the "manifest" Church and the "latent" Church. The manifest Church means the Church as an organised body attached to the Creeds and publicly professing Christianity. The "latent" Church, on the other hand, is composed of all the circles of humanity outside the "manifest" or professing Church. This distinction is intended to obliterate the conception of the Church being in the world and yet not of it and, in this capacity, causing the light of Truth to shine in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and death with which it is surrounded. Even in connection with the manifest Church Dr. Robinson quotes Tillich as saying, "A church is a community of those who affirm that Jesus is the Christ. The very name 'Christian' implies this. For the individual this means a decision—not as to whether he, personally, can accept the assertion that Jesus is the Christ, but the decision as to whether he

wishes to belong or not to a community which asserts that Jesus is the Christ " (p.44). This means that to be a member of the manifest Church does not involve belief in a Person Who came in God's great name to save, called Jesus Christ, but a willingness to associate with those who hold this belief. This view would seem very strange to the Ethiopian eunuch who was told by Philip that the condition of his entry into the professing Church by baptism was, " If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Dr. Robinson does not believe that the function of the Church is to seek to bring into its fold those who are outside, but rather to convince those who are outside that Christ is the gracious neighbour. This "secular" interpretation of the gospel message he hopes will permit men to become Christians without forcing them to feel that in order to do so they must commit themselves to the creeds and beliefs of the Church, which were founded upon the Bible. He, himself, says, " I would gladly see subscription to the 39 articles abolished as it has been in other parts of the Anglican communion without disaster or loss of definition " (p.44). Judging from Dr. Robinson's views, the Church of England is sadly in need of definitive teaching along the lines of the Articles, which present a Calvinistic point of view. That a Bishop who signed these Articles and swore to defend them should write books such as Dr. Robinson has written is indeed a disaster for that unhappy Church, and a painful evidence that there are very few within its borders who are prepared to carry out the necessary steps to secure the banishment of Dr. Robinson and his school from its midst.

The whole idea of making the gospel relevant to modern man by so purging it of its divine elements is bound to prove a complete failure. The gospel is only made relevant in the true sense of the terms when the Holy Spirit opens the blinded understandings of men to see the realities of Divine Revelation. The natural man does not understand the things of the Spirit of God in virtue of the intrinsic blindness of his mind due to sin. Unless visited by the Holy Spirit, he remains in that condition no matter whether he lives in the 20th century or the 1st century. The cataracts of verbiage which are poured forth about the "secular" man, the "scientific" man, the "modern" man, etc., are a wearisome waste of effort because they all ignore the fact of original sin and man's essential blindness in the things of God until illuminated by the Spirit. There will be no New Reformation until this is realised and taught.

The attempt to obliterate the distinction between the world and

the Church contains within itself the seeds of failure. The scripture clearly states that "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" and all modern conceptions of the Church which do not understand this are mere intellectual mirages of no substance. The attempt to find the gracious neighbour is likewise destined to disappointment for the simple reason that, until a man finds the gracious God, he cannot love his neighbour as himself. Further, the man who has not come to see the grace of God in God, Himself, cannot see the grace of God in others, and what else can a truly gracious neighbour mean than one in whom the grace of God is to be seen. A church such as envisaged by Dr. Robinson is in no condition to effect any reformation among the people of this or any other generation.

Due to a failure to examine the present situation in Christendom in the light of God's Word, modern theologians have lost sight of a very important factor. Every reformation which has taken place in the Church, whether in Old Testament or New Testament times, has been preceded by repentance for former decays and apostacies from God. Reformation in the life of the individual must be preceded by repentance, and it is equally true in the life of the community or the nation or the generation. True repentance is the necessary forerunner of true reformation. It needs to be realised also that the reformation of the individual is the leaven which leads to the reformation of the community, and in ever-widening circles reaches to the nation and generation. In Psalm li, David expresses his sense of repentance and, having tasted of that pardon which is bound up with his genuine repentance, then goes on to pray, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem." The reformation of the Church, in other words, needs the regeneration of the individual and, when this is secured, the Church will be reformed and its benefits extend to the generation. There is no appreciation of this in the writings of Dr. Robinson and his school. Indeed in one place he acknowledges that he is a "once-born" man, and seems to see no incongruity in such an individual taking upon himself to teach others! The new Reformers need the new birth. "Verily, verily, I say unto you except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

CONVERSION OF JAMES LAING

(Continued from page 181)

One night I went with my cousin to see James. I said, "I have brought my Jamie to see you." He took him kindly by the hand, and said, "We're twa Jamies thegither. May we

both meet in heaven. Be earnest to get Christ. You'll no' get Christ unless you are earnest." When we were gone, he said to his sister, "Although Jamie bides with the minister, unless the Spirit open his eyes, he canna get Christ." His knowledge of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel was very wonderful. It was not mere head knowledge—it came fresh and clean from the heart, like spring water welling up from a great depth. He felt the sovereignty of God very deeply. Once I quoted to him the hymn "Chosen not for good in me." He said, "I am sure it was for naething in me. I am a hell-deserving sinner." Often when speaking of the great things God had done for their family, he would say, "Ah, Margaret, I wonder that Christ would look in here and take us."

Once he said, "I wonder how Jesus died for such a sinner as me. Why me, Lord, why me." The greatest want in the religion of children is generally sense of sin. Artless simplicity and confidence in what is told are in some respects natural to children; and this is the reason why we are so often deceived by promising appearances in childhood. The reality of grace in a child is best known by his sense of sin. Little James often wondered "how God sent his servant sic often to him, such a hell-deserving sinner." This was a common expression of his. On one occasion he said, "I have a wicked, wicked heart, and a tempting devil. He'll not let me alone, but this is all the hell that I'll get. Jesus bore my hell already. O Margaret, this wicked heart of mine would be hell enough for me though there was no other. But there are no wicked hearts in heaven." Often he prayed, "Come, Holy Spirit, and make me holy—make me like Jesus."

The way of salvation through the righteousness of Christ was always sweet to him. He had an uncommon grasp of it; Christ crucified was all his salvation and all his desire. One day his sister said to him, "You must meet death in Jesus, and go to the judgment seat in Jesus, and spend eternity in Jesus. You will be as hell-deserving in yourself when you stand before the throne as now." He smiled sweetly, and said, "O Margaret, I see it must be all Jesus from beginning to end." Another time a little boy who was in concern for his soul came to James and told him how many chapters he had read, and how often he had prayed. James did not answer at the time, but a little after he said to his sister, "David was here, and told me how many chapters he had read. I see he's upon the working plan; but I must tell him that it's no' his reading, nor yet his praying, but Jesus alone that must save him." Another day he said, "The devil is letting me see that this word and another word in my

prayer is sin, but I just tell him it's all sin. I bid him go to Jesus, there is no sin in him; and I have taken him to be my Saviour." He had a very clear discovery of the dead and helpless condition of the carnal mind, and of the need of the Holy Spirit to convert the soul. Telling me once of the boy under concern, and of what he had been saying to him, he added, "But it is nonsense to speak of these things without the Holy Spirit." At another time I was speaking on John xiv: 1. He seemed to be thinking about something else, and suddenly said, "When we lose our first love, it's no' easy getting our second love; only the spirit of God can give it."

Often when he saw the family preparing to go to church he would pray that I might be filled with the Holy Spirit in speaking, so that some sinners might be caught. "I mind often sitting on the pulpit stairs careless; I would like if I had that place again. If I had but one sermon I would not be so careless now." He often wished to be carried to the church, but was never able to bear the exertion. He was no stranger to temptations from the wicked one. I scarcely ever visited him but he spoke to me of these. Once he said, "The devil often tempts me to think upon good people, but I tell him it is Christ I want. Another time, "What do you think. The devil tempts me to believe that I'll never be saved, because I have repented on my death-bed." Often when tempted, he would cry, "If I perish I'll perish at Christ's feet."

A few days before he died, he said, "I am afraid I will not be saved yet, for the devil will catch my soul as it leaves my body. But Jesus says, 'Ye shall never perish.' If I am in the hand of Jesus, the devil cannot pluck me out there."

Once I found him kneeling on a pillow by the fire; he complained of great darkness, and doubted his interest in Christ. I told him that we must not close with Christ because we feel him, but because God has said it, and that we must take God's word even in the dark. After that he always seemed to trust God in the dark, even at times when he had no inward evidence of being Christ's. At one of these times, a believer, who is often in great darkness, came in and asked him, "When you are in darkness, Jamie, 'how do you do, can you come to Jesus.' " He answered in his own pointed manner, "Annie, woman, I have no ither get to gang." The last text I explained to him was II Tim. iv: 7. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." I was wonderfully helped in shewing him that, from conversion to coronation the life of a believer was one continued fight. He said, "Would you not think that the devil would let a poor young creature like me alone,

but he is an awful tempter." He had a mind that loved to think on the deep things of God. One day a believer called and prayed beside his bed, asking for him that he might be "filled with all the fullness of God." The same person came another day and, before praying, enquired, "What shall I ask for you." He said, "You mind what you sought for me the last time. You prayed that I might be filled with all the fullness of God; I canna' get any more than that, but dinna' seek any less today."

A dear Christian lady used to bring him flowers. She spoke to him of Christ being "the lily of the valley," and on one occasion brought him one. He asked her to pick it out from the rest and give it into his hand. Holding the gentle flower in his pale wasted fingers, he looked at it, and said, "This might convince the world that there is a God, though there were nothing else. Aye, there is a God; there is a heaven; there is a hell; and there is a judgement seat; whether they will believe it or no'." He said this in a very solemn way, pausing between every member of the sentence. He loved singing praise to God, though not able to join in it himself. He frequently made us sing beside his bed, and often bade them sing the 23rd Psalm. "I have no strength to sing here (he would say), I have a heart, but no strength; when I get to heaven I will be able to sing there." Sometimes he would bid them sing these words, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord." The 65th Paraphrase was also precious to him, especially that part, "Hark how the adoring hosts above." He loved these verses, and often wished that he were among the praising company.

He delighted in secret prayer. In weakness and pain yet he spent hours upon his knees, communing with an unseen God. When unable for the outward part of the exercise, he said, "O Margaret, I prayed to Jesus as long as I was able. But now I am not able, and he does not want it from me; but I am just always giving him my heart." Many a night he got no sleep. I asked him if he wearied during the silent watches. He said, "No, his left hand is under my head, and his right hand does embrace me." God gave this dear boy a very calm and cheerful spirit in the midst of all his trials. Neither bodily pain nor the assaults of the devil could sour his temper, or ruffle his placid brow. At any time when his pain increased, he would say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." One time in deep darkness, he cried out, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. I long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; but then I am willing to wait on the Lord's time; good is the will of the Lord." Again he would say, "I long to be with Jesus. If I am spared to go out again, I must just

go leaning upon these words. My grace is sufficient for thee. They will be sure to mock me, but they mocked Jesus before." Once he said to me, "I wondered when I have heard you say that Christ was sweet, but now I feel him to be sweet, sweet." One time I spoke of the fullness that is in Christ, he said afterwards, "I just think that I am lying with my mouth at Christ, drawing from him."

On the last day of 1841 he said to his sister, "I will tell you what I would like for my New Year (gift). I would like a praying heart, and a heart to love Christ more." Next day a woman came in and said, "Poor Jamie! you'll get no fun this New Year's Day." James said, "Poor body, she thinks like as I care for New Year. I have far better than you have, though you had the whole world. This is the happiest New Year's Day that ever I had, for I have Christ." She was very deaf and did not hear what he said; but he often pitied that woman and prayed for her. At another time his father said, "Poor Jamie!" He replied, "Ah, father, don't call me poor, I am rich; they that have Christ have all things." A little after the New Year he said, "Margaret, I am not to die yet, for I have mair to suffer; but I am willing, though it should be for years." On one occasion when he was suffering much pain, he said, "Five minutes in glory will make up for all this suffering."

When Margaret had to go out with her father's dinner she used to lock the door, leaving James alone within. On returning, she asked, "Were you wearying, Jamie?" His reply was, "O no, Jesus takes care of me when you are out." One of his country friends came in one day to see him and said, "I am sure you have a weary time of it, Jamie." "I never weary; Christ keeps me from wearying." After a very happy communion season in April, I went to visit him, and he spoke in a most touching manner. "I was not sorry on Sabbath that all the people were sitting at the Lord's Table and me lying here, for I thought I would soon be at the table above with Christ, and then I would be far happier." In a season of great darkness he said, "Margaret, give me my Bible" (meaning a little book of texts called Dew Drops). When he got it he sought out the verse, "The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him." He said, "Margaret, I'll trust in him though I cannot see him. I will lie down upon that verse." When his bed was made up at night he would take another verse to lie down upon, as he called it; so he was fed by the dew and the word.

A young woman who lived in the same lane was awakened to deep concern the same winter that James was brought to Christ.

Before her concern she never came in to see James though her mother often advised her to do so. But when she was brought to feel her sin and misery she came in every Sabbath night, and was always tenderly kind to James. "How are you tonight, Jamie?" (she would say). "You are well off when you can say I have found Christ." Early in the spring this young woman evidently found the true rest for her weary soul in Jesus. She became a candidate for the Lord's Table, and was to have been admitted, but God called her away to sit at the table that can never be drawn. She died full of joy, with the praises of God upon her lips. Margaret had been present at this interesting death-bed, and when she returned home she told James. He answered with great composure, "I wish I had been away with her; but I must wait the Lord's time. Betsy is singing now, and I will soon be there too." James used to take the bitterest medicines without any reluctance. He folded his hands, shut his eyes, and asked God to bless it to him. "Ah, Margaret, if God do not bless it to me it will do me no good." Often she asked, "Is it not bitter?" He would say, "Yes, but Jesus had a bitterer cup to drink for me."

In the summer of 1841 another remarkable boy named James Wallace had died in the Lord. He was one whom God taught in a wonderful manner. He had a singular gift of prayer, and was made useful to many, both old and young. James Laing had known him well in former days. In 1839 a younger brother of James Laing, named Patrick, had died also, not without pleasing marks of having undergone a divine change. It is needful to know these things, to understand the following dream of our little pilgrim.

A short time after he believed, he said, "Margaret, I will tell you my dream." Margaret was afraid of some fancy leading him astray, and asked what it was. James: "I thought there was a ladder, the foot of it on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. I thought it was heaven I saw. There was a great multitude of people, but I knew none of them but Patrick and James Wallace. When I was standing on the first or second step of the ladder, James Wallace looked down and said, 'Aye, here's another one coming stepping up.' He explained it by referring to Jacob's ladder, and that Jesus is the ladder." Margaret said, "Aye, and you are just on the first step."

He was very fond of the life of John Ross, and nearly had it by heart. He said he was in the same mind. Another little book he loved was "A Dying Thief and a Dying Saviour." He left it to his father. He could write a little and, like John Ross, he used that talent in writing down precious sentences; one of his

little papers is now before me. "Stand fast in the Lord. Be ye faithful unto death. Abide in him, abide in him. Pray without ceasing. This is the end."

In the later part of his illness he was used as an instrument in awakening another boy, whose impressions I earnestly hope may never wear away. D. G. had been a very wild boy—so much so that he was expelled from the Sabbath School. He found his way into James's cottage and there saw exemplified the truth he would not listen to in school. From that day till James died, David regularly visited him, and learned from him with deepest interest the things that belonged to his peace. James often prayed with him alone. Sometimes both prayed at the same time for a new heart. Margaret was always made to withdraw at these times. He pleaded with this boy to seek Jesus when young. "Look at Annie (a grown-up person, who had been long under concern), she has been long in seeking Christ, and she is long in finding. Mind what I told you, for I will soon be in heaven." Boy: "Will you get to heaven?" James: "O yes. All that believe in Christ get to heaven, and I believe that Jesus died for me. Now, David, if I see you on the left hand you will mind that I often bade you come to Christ." Boy: "I'll have naebody to pray with me, and tell me about my soul, when you are dead." James: "I have bidden Margaret pray for you, and I have told the minister; and go you to our kirk, and he will tell you the way to come to Christ." Three times a day did this anxious inquirer seek the prayers and counsels of his youthful instructor, till James's strength gave way and he could talk no more. The day before he died the boy came in. James could hardly speak, but he looked steadily at him and said, "Seek on, David."

The last visit I paid to this young Christian was on the Tuesday before he died, in company with Mr Millar of Wallacetown, and Mr Smith, one of our Jewish missionaries, who was that same day to sail from his native land. After speaking a little we prayed, and I asked what I would pray for him. James said, "Dying grace." He shook hands with us all. When the Missionary held his hand, he said, "God's people have much need to pray for you, and for them there." When we had gone out he said, "Maybe I'll never see the Minister again."

On the Thursday he said, "Ah! Margaret, mind it's no' easy to die. You know nothing about it. Even though you have Christ, it is dark." The same day he bade her give D. G. his Sunday trousers and new boots that he might go to church. He gave his father "The Dying Thief," and said, "I am going to give Alick my Bible." There was a piece of money under his pillow. He said it was to buy Bibles to them

that never heard of Jesus. His Aunt came in on Friday morning. He said, "Oh Aunt, don't put off seeking Christ to a death-bed, for if I had Christ to seek today, what would have become of me; but I have given my heart to Christ." Margaret asked him, "What will I do, I will miss your company in the house." James answered, "You maun just go the mair to Jesus. Do not be ill about me now, when I am dead." Margaret: "If I thought that, I would be sorry and, more than that, God would be angry at you, for I would be far happier. It is better to depart and be with Christ. Ask grace to keep you from it."

All that day he spoke very little. In the evening he grew much worse. His sister wished to sit up with him all night, but he would not allow her. She said, "These eyes will soon see him whom your soul loves." James said, "Aye." After midnight, Margaret, seeing him worse, arose and woke her father. She tried to conceal her tears; but James saw them and said, with a look of solemn earnestness, "O, woman, I wonder to see you do the like of that."

He spoke very little after this, and about one o'clock on Saturday morning, 11th June, 1842, fell asleep in Jesus. From this affecting history all children should learn an impressive lesson. What is said of Abel is true of this dear boy. "He being dead yet speaketh."

[Taken from the Memoir and Remains of the late Rev. Robert Murray McCheyne]

THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE

Notes from John Flavel

*"I will cry unto God most high;
Unto God that performeth all things for me."*

—Psalm lvii: 2.

The greatness of God is a glorious and unsearchable mystery. "For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great king over all the earth" (Psalm xlvii: 2). The condescension of the most high God to men is also a profound mystery. "Though the Lord be high yet hath he respect unto the lowly" (Psalm cxxxviii: 6). But when both these meet together, as they do in this Scripture, they make up a matchless mystery. Here we find the most high God performing all things for a poor distressed creature.

It is the great support and solace of the Saints in all the distresses that befall them here, that there is a wise Spirit sitting in all the wheels of motion, and governing the most eccentric creatures and their most pernicious designs to blessed and happy

issues. And, indeed, it were not worthwhile to live in a world devoid of God and Providence.

How deeply we are concerned in this matter will appear by that great instance which Psalm lvii presents us with. It was composed, as the title notes, by David when he hid himself from Saul in the cave. It is inscribed with a double title: "Al-taschith, Michtam of David." "Al-taschith" refers to the scope, and "Michtam" to the dignity of the subject matter.

The former signifies "destroy not," or "let there be no slaughter," and may either refer to Saul, concerning whom he gave charge to his servants not to destroy him, or rather, it has reference to God, to whom in this great exigency he poured out his soul in this passionate ejaculation: "Al-taschith," "destroy not."

Three things are remarkable in the former part of the Psalm: his extreme danger; his earnest address to God in that extremity; and the arguments he pleads with God in that address.

His extreme danger is expressed in both the title and the body of the Psalm. The title tells this Psalm was composed by him when he hid himself from Saul in the cave. This cave was in the wilderness of Engedi among the broken rocks where the wild goats lived, an obscure and desolate hole; yet even there the envy of Saul pursued him (I Sam. xxiv: 1, 2). And how he that had been so long hunted as a partridge upon the mountains seems to be enclosed in the net. His enemies were outside the cave, from which there was no other outlet. Then Saul himself entered the mouth of this cave, in the sides and creeks of which David and his men lay hidden, and they actually saw him. Judge to how great an extremity and to what a desperate state things were now brought. Well might he say: "My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire" (Verse 4). What hope now remained? What but immediate destruction could be expected?

Yet this does not frighten him out of his faith and duty, but between the jaws of death he prays, and earnestly addresses himself to God for mercy: "Be merciful unto me O God, be merciful unto me" (Verse 1). This excellent Psalm was composed by him when there was enough to discompose the best man in the world. The repetition notes both the extremity of the danger and the ardency of the suppliant. Mercy, mercy, nothing but mercy, and that exerting itself in an extraordinary way, can now save him from ruin. . . .

A powerful, enraged and implacable enemy had driven him into the hole of a rock, and was come after him into that hole. Yet now, while his soul is among lions, while he lies in a cranny

of the rock, expecting every moment to be drawn out to death, the reflections he had upon the gracious performances of the Most High for him, from the beginning to that moment, support his soul and inspire hope and life into his prayers: "I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me." From the text then you have this doctrine:—

It is the duty of the Saints, especially in times of straits, to reflect upon the performances of Providence for them in all the states and through all the stages of their lives.

The Church, in all the works of mercy, owns the hand of God: "Lord, thou also hast wrought all our works in (or for) us" (Isa. xxvi: 12). And still it has been the pious and constant practice of the Saints in all generations to preserve the memory of the more famous and remarkable providences that have befallen them in their times as a precious treasure. "If thou be a Christian indeed, I know thou hast, if not in thy book, yet certainly in thy heart, a great many precious favours upon record; the very remembrance and rehearsal of them is sweet; how much more sweet was the actual enjoyment? . . ."

Now there is a twofold reflection upon the providential works of God. One is entire and full, in its whole complex and perfect system. This blessed sight is reserved for the perfect state. It is in that Mount of God where we shall see both the wilderness and Canaan, the glorious kingdom into which we are come, and the way through which we were led into it. There the saints shall have a ravishing view of it in its entirety, and every part shall be distinctly discerned, as it had its particular use, and as it was connected with the other parts, and how effectually and orderly they all wrought to bring about that blessed design of their salvation, according to the promise: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. viii: 28). For it is certain, no ship at sea keeps more exactly by the compass which directs its course, than Providence keeps by that promise which is its cyrosure and pole-star. The other sight is partial and imperfect which we have on the way to glory, during which we only view it in its single acts, or at most, in some branches and more observable series of actions.

Between these two is the same difference as between the sight of the disjointed wheels and scattered pins of a watch, and the sight of the whole united in one frame and working in one orderly motion: or between an ignorant spectator who views some more observable vessel or joint of a dissected body, and the accurate anatomist who discerns the course of all the veins and arteries of the body as he follows the various branches of them through

the whole, and plainly sees the proper place, figure and use of each, with their mutual respect to one another.

O how ravishing and delectable a sight will it be to behold at one view the whole design of Providence, and the proper place and use of every single act, which we could not understand in this world! What Christ said to Peter is as applicable to some providences in which we are now concerned as it was to that particular action: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii: 7). All the dark, intricate puzzling providences at which we were sometimes so offended, and sometimes amazed, which we could neither reconcile with the promise nor with each other, nay, which we so unjustly censured and bitterly bewailed, as if they had fallen out quite against our happiness, we shall then see to be to us, as the difficult passage through the wilderness was to Israel, "the right way to a city of habitation" (Psalm cvii: 7). And yet though our present views and reflection upon Providences are so short and imperfect in comparison to that in heaven, yet such as it is under all its present disadvantages, it has so much excellence and sweetness in it that I may call it a little heaven or as Jacob called his Bethel, "the gate of heaven." It is certainly a highway of walking with God in this world, and a soul may enjoy as sweet communion with Him in His providences as in any of His ordinances. How often have the hearts of its observers been melted into tears of joy at the beholding of its wise and unexpected productions! How often has it convinced them, upon a sober recollection of the events of their lives, that if the Lord had left them to their own counsels they had as often been their own tormentors, if not executioners! Into what and how many fatal mischiefs had they precipitated themselves if Providence had been as shortsighted as they? They have given it their hearty thanks for considering their interest more than their importunity, and not allowing them to perish by their own desires.

SECRET PRAYER : OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

By Thos. Boston

Some are ready to muster up a variety of objections against the duty of secret prayer, the chief of which I shall endeavour to obviate.

Objection 1. I have no time for secret prayer, for my work and business.

Answer 1. This is thy greatest work, even the salvation of thy soul, in comparison of which all thy other work is a mere trifle: and wilt thou take time for thy other work, and not for

this work, that challenges thy utmost care and attention? 2. Fools' haste is no speed. To rise out of bed, and go immediately to secular work, is foolish cursed haste. How canst thou look for a blessing on thy work without prayer? 3. Rise the sooner every morning, that you may not be scrimped as to time for this exercise, as our blessed Lord did (Mark i: 35). How wilt thou answer to God at the great day, for spending that time in sleep, which thou shouldst have spent in secret prayer? Daniel would not omit this exercise, though at the hazard of his life.

Objection 2. We are so wearied with our work through the day that we are not able to pray in the evening.

Answer 1. What difference is there betwixt you and the beasts that take their ease when their work is done, without any more ado? 2. You will take your meat for your bodies, though ever so weary; and why will ye not think of and provide meat for your perishing souls? (John iv: 6, 32). 3. Notwithstanding ye may be tired, do what ye are able. We are not commanded to tell you to make your prayers short or long; but by no means to neglect secret prayer altogether, which is very dangerous. But I suppose that when you say your body is not able to subsist with secret prayer, that yet if ye could gain a sixpence at that very time, you would spend twice as much more time for that paltry gain; and yet slight the concerns of your souls, under this frivolous pretence.

Objection 3. We have no convenient place for secret prayer.

Answer. Find out once a willing heart for this exercise, and I shall engage you for it you shall find a place. Are there not barns, byres, outhouses, and fields, for you to retire to? Will not these rise up and witness against thee that neglectest this duty, at the great day? For my part, I would rather go to prayer, even within a dwellinghouse, in the place where the beasts stand, or behind a bed, or at the back of a house, ere I should neglect it. God requires all men to pray, but He does not require all men to have chambers and closets.

Objection 4. But there are prayers in our family, and I join therein; what needs more!

Answer. Poor soul! hast thou no more to say of thyself to God, but what the master of the family says? Alas! thou knowest not thyself, and the dreadful case thou art in by nature; which if thou didst, then wouldst not think joining in prayer with others enough. Thou thinkest it sufficient that the master of the family pray for thee, and the other members of his family, and thou liest by without concerning thyself about duty for thyself; wilt thou think it enough, that he go to heaven for thee, and thou be shut out for ever?

Objection 5. But (says the master of the family) I pray with my family, and I hope that is enough for me.

Answer. In this command in the text (Matt. vi: 6), Christ has not excepted thee, neither dare I. Again, dost thou so well discharge family prayer that thou hast no escapes or failures to be matter of secret prayer? I tell you plainly that God will not have his worship halved: He will have either the whole or nothing. Being conscientious in family prayer is good, but can never excuse the neglect of secret prayer, which is as much thy duty. Yea, the more thou art helped to discharge family duty, the more wilt thou be inclined to the practice of secret duty. The false mother was for dividing the child, not the true one.

Objection 6. Some women that have children to nurse and wait on think that frees them from this duty.

Answer. It is a sad observation of many women who, while they are unmarried, and are not involved in the cares and troubles of a family, have some profession and practice of religion; but as soon as they get a house to manage, and have the care of young children especially, they cast off all religion, as if they had no more concern therein. But surely the very sight of the child whom thou hast conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, should remind thee of thy original guilt and corruption, and incite thee to apply to the blood and Spirit of Christ for pardon and cleansing, and be a powerful spur to thee to set about this great duty of secret prayer. And remember that the welfare of thy own soul, and that of the child, is more than that of the child's bodily welfare, which deserves but the second care in comparison of the other. I would not have you by any means to cast off the care of the young one's temporal welfare; but thou mayst so observe times and seasons, as thou mayst take time for this duty morning and evening, though it be not immediately after thou risest, or before thou liest down. Thou mayst even do it when thou art rocking the cradle, or suckling the child. Alas! it had been telling many that they had had the womb that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.

Objection 7. God knows the heart, and what needs so much ado about praying in secret, as if God knew not what we wanted, or what we would be at, till we sit down on our knees, and tell him.

Answer. God knows the heart of such an objector to be a graceless heart, and his end to be destruction (Matt. vii: 15, 20); and his heart to be a foolish atheistical heart, that will not call upon God (Psalm xiv: 1). Again, what is this but to argue God's command to be foolish? He bids us pray, and you say it is needless. O daring presumption! Though the Lord not only

knows your heart, but has a mind to give blessings to poor sinners, he will have you seek them by prayer: "For these things," says he, "will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them" (Ezek. xxxvi: 37). God never confers signal mercies on his people, without first pouring out on them the Spirit of faith and prayer, and determines them to seek ardently the very thing he has a mind to grant them. And this method is for the glory of his name, and for our real benefit.

Objection 8. Age and infirmity will not suffer me to go about that duty.

Answer. Will it suffer you to do your business in the world, and will it not suffer you to manage your soul's business, which is of infinitely greater importance? It would seem that the nearer we draw to the grave the more active we should be in preparing for it. It were good that old people would mind heaven more, and the world less, as they have so short a time to stay here. The concerns of the other world should mainly engross their care and attention, and they should then redouble their diligence in improving their span of time, and doing that which perhaps they too much neglected in the days of health and vigour. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness" (Prov. xvi: 31). "But the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed" (Isa. lxv: 20). Let this sound an alarm to all the old sinners among you, that ye may yet apply to the merciful Redeemer, who sets even some to work in the vineyard at the eleventh hour. It is sad to be tottering under the miseries and infirmities of old age, and to have no prospect of a happy landing. Fly then to Christ, thou old decrepit sinner, while his call reaches thee, lest thou speedily perish without remedy.

Objection 9. I am too young to mind secret prayer.

Answer. You are too old never to have entered on God's service. Remember that Josiah, when he was but eight years old, began to seek the Lord God of his father David. Obadiah, Ahab's steward, feared the Lord greatly from his youth. John Baptist was sanctified from the womb; and so was the prophet Jeremiah. Timothy knew the holy scriptures from a child. You can never begin to be religious too soon. None ever repented that they sought the Lord; but all have repented that they did not seek him sooner. You are as liable to death as the oldest person here, have a soul as precious as theirs, and as much need to mind your best and eternal interests as they. Up then and be doing, without putting off a moment longer.

Objection 10. I cannot pray.

Answer. The truth is that thou wilt not pray (Psalm x: 4). If thou hadst a will to the duty, thou wouldst soon learn. But if thou wouldst learn to pray, go to God that he may teach thee, as Christ taught the disciples; and consider the absolute need thou hast of divine instruction in this matter. Use the one talent, and God will increase it. Wherefore set about this weighty duty, and neglect it not. Think seriously with yourselves, whether those who are now in hell, and when they lived neglected secret prayer like you, would do so still if they were in the world again. I scarcely think they would. Pray now, therefore, lest ye repent your neglect, when it will be too late, and ye are tormented in the lake of fire and brimstone. Again, think with yourselves how you will get this criminal neglect digested on a death-bed, when ye are ready to leap into eternity, without having once prayed for God's mercy through Christ to your souls; and how will you get it digested before the awful tribunal of God, when he will drive you from his blessed presence for ever. Think with yourselves how precious time is, and what a sad business it is to spend it in pursuing the world and lying vanities, and neglecting communion with God, wherein lies the life of the soul. What! will ye delay it yet a while? O do it not! for delays are dangerous. Will ye be so foolish as to venture all to two or three words on a sick-bed or death-bed? Perhaps you will not get one, but may be hurried away in a moment. Consider that awful passage, Prov. i: 24-28, "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

PROFESSION WITHOUT PRACTICE

By J. C. Ryle, D.D., from his book on "Holiness"

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph. iv: 14). There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten path of our forefathers. Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine, without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true. There is

an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings. There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity. The religion of many is little better than spiritual dram-drinking, and the "meek and quiet spirit" which Peter commends is clean forgotten (1 Peter iii: 4). Crowds, and crying, and hot rooms, and high-flown singing, and an incessant rousing of the emotions, are the only things which many care for. Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide, and so long as the preacher is "clever" and "earnest," hundreds seem to think it must be all right, and call you dreadfully "narrow and uncharitable" if you hint that he is unsound.

I must honestly declare my conviction that, since the days of the Reformation, there never has been so much profession of religion without practice, so much talking about God without walking with Him, so much hearing God's words without doing them, as there is in England at this present date. Never was there so many tinkling cymbals! Never was there so much formality and so little reality. The whole tone of men's minds on what constitutes practical Christianity seems lowered. The old golden standard of the behaviour which becomes a Christian man or woman appears debased and degenerated. You may see scores of religious people (so called) continually doing things which in days gone by would have been thought utterly inconsistent with vital religion. They see no harm in such things as card-playing, theatre-going, dancing, incessant novel-reading, and Sunday travelling, and they cannot in the least understand what you mean by objecting to them. The ancient tenderness of conscience about such things seems dying away and becoming extinct, like the dodo.

A Scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to that vague, dim, misty, hazy kind of theology* which is so painfully current in the present age. It is vain to shut our eyes to the fact that there is a vast quantity of so-called Christianity now-a-days which you cannot declare positively unsound, but which, nevertheless, is not full measure, good weight, and sixteen ounces to the pound. It is a Christianity in which there is undeniably "something about Christ, and something about grace, and something about faith, and something about repentance, and something about holiness;" but it is not the real "thing as it is" in the Bible.

A Scriptural view of sin is one of the *best antidotes to the extravagantly broad and liberal theology* which is so much in vogue at the present time. The tendency of modern thought is

to reject dogmas, creeds, and every kind of bounds in religion. It is thought grand and wise to condemn no opinion whatever, and to pronounce all earnest and clever teachers to be trustworthy, however heterogeneous and mutually destructive their opinions may be. Everything forsooth is true, and nothing is false! Everybody is right, and nobody is wrong! Everybody is likely to be saved, and nobody is to be lost. The Atonement and Substitution of Christ, the personality of the devil, the miraculous element in Scripture, the reality and eternity of future punishment, all these mighty foundation stones are coolly tossed overboard, like lumber, in order to lighten the ship of Christianity, and enable it to keep pace with modern science. Stand up for these great verities and you are called narrow, illiteral, old-fashioned, and a theological fossil.

SECURITY OF GOD'S CHILDREN

A father may frown upon his son for his fault, but doth not easily disinherit him; but a servant, on his offence, is turned out of doors. When Adam held by the first covenant, he was but an honourable servant; therefore when he offended his master, he was turned out of doors; but now we have by Christ the title of children, and though God may chastise us, he will not disinherit us. "My lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips"—Psalm lxxxix. 33, 34. He hath reserved a liberty in the covenant that He will chastise us: "I will visit their transgression with the rod," etc. (verse 32), but He will never alter the purposes of His love and His counsel towards us. A child may be whipped, but not disinherited. God hath not only pawned His word to us, but given us an earnest that He will not change His purpose. The inheritance is passed over in court: "Who hath sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 22. Those that make the purposes of God to be changeable, cut the sinews of Christian comfort; always ready to fall; but God hath given us assurance that He will never reverse the purposes of His love. When we have once an interest in it, our right is indefeasible, and we cannot lose it. And mark, it is not only a sure title in regard to God, but also in reference to men; for as God will not take our heritage from us, so men can not. We may lose goods, lovings, lives, but we can never lose our heritage; this is sure in Christ. None can take away our better portion. "All things are yours" (I Cor. iii. 22), and even death is but a portion of our heritage.—Thomas Manton.

GOD ALONE

By Charles Simeon

"In God, and in God alone, I have all that I can need; and therefore my eyes are turned to Him always, Him exclusively, Him without the shadow of a doubt. Were I to look at Him through the medium of my own experience, it would be like looking at the sun through the medium of the waters; the sun would appear to move as the water undulates; whereas when viewed in Himself alone, He is uniformly and steadily the same, without any variable-ness or shadow of turning And I recommend you to enter into the chambers of all His glorious perfections, and to shut the doors about you, and there abide till He shall have accomplished all the good purposes of His goodness both in you and by you. Nothing less than a mutual indwelling of God in us and of us in God will suffice — beyond that we want nothing." Infinite wisdom has arranged the whole with infinite love; and infinite power enables me to rest upon that love. I am in a dear Father's hands — all is secure. When I look to HIM, I see nothing but faithfulness — and immutability — and truth; and I have the sweetest peace — I cannot have more peace. But if I look another way — to the poor creature — O then there is nothing — nothing — but what is to be abhorred and mourned over."

GLEIDHEADH A CHRIDHE

Leis an Urr. Iain Flavel

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 185)

(2) 'S e aobhar eile bhi dearmad 'ur cridheachan cùraman saoghalta. Tha cinn agus cridheachan mhòran air an lionadh le leithid de chomhlan agus de dh'fhuaim mu ghnothuichean saoghalta, agus gu'm bheil iad gu duilich agus gu mothachail air tuiteam agus air seargadh 'n an eud, 'n an ghràdh, agus 'n an tlachad ann an Dia; 'n an dòigh neamhaidh, stòlda, agus bhuannachdail ann a bhi còmhraidh ri daoine. O cia mar a dh'iadh am fàsach mu'n cuairt oirne. Tha a bhlas air ar teagasgan agus ar co-reusanachadh, seadh, agus air ar 'n ùrnuighean agus ar dleasdanasan: bha leithid de dh'obair a mach as an tigh, agus nach robh sinn comasach air dad a dheanamh a stigh. B'e gearain muladach duine diadhaidh, " O is duilich ri smuainteachadh cia cho lion cothrom luachmhor a chaill mi; cia cho lion gluasad agus earail mhilis bho'n an Spiorad a chaidh mi seachad orra gu neo-tharbhach, agus a thug mi air an Tighearna labhairt gu diomhain: ann an cogarsaich dhiomhair an Spioraid, ghairm an Tighearna orm, ach bhà mo smuaintean saoghalta fathasd a gabhail

comhnuidh annam, agus cha robh àite air bith ann am chridhe air son a leithid sin de ghairmean bho Dhia." 'S cinnteach gu'm bheil dòigh air a bhi mealtuinn Dhé 'n ar gairmean saoghalta; cha chuireadh Dia sinn annta a chùm ar call; " Agus ghluais Enoch maille ri Dia " (Gen. v: 22). Ghluais e maille ri Dia, ach chà do chùm e air ais, agus chà do dhealaich se e fein bho nithean na beatha so: agus na h-ainglean a tha air an cur gu obair le Criosd ann an nithean an t-saoghail so (oir tha spioradan na'm beo-chreutairean anns na rothan), is creutairean crìochnaichte iad, agus cha'n urrain iad a bhi an dà àite aig aon am; gidheadh cha'n eil iad a call ni dhe'n taisbeanadh bheannaichte 'n am frithealadh: " Oir tha mise ag ràdh ruibh, gu bheil an ainglean-san air neamh (eadhon 'n uair a tha iad ri frithealadh dhoibh) a' faicinn a ghnàth gnùis m'Athar-sa a tha air neamh " (Mata xviii: 10). Cha leig sinn a leas a bhi call ar taisbeanaidhean le ar 'n obair, mar a biodh gu'm bheil a choire againn fein. Mo thruaigh. gu'm biodh Criosduidhean, a tha seasamh aig dorus na siorruidheachd, agus aig am bheil barrachd air an làmhnan na tha'n ùine bho chd ghoirid a tha'n so gu leoir air a shon, fathasd a lionadh an cinn agus an cridheachan le nithean gu'n seadh.

3. Bh'uaithe so tha mi tuigsinn air son dùsgadh nan uile, ma's e gleidheadh a chridhe obair mhòr a Chriosduidh, an sin cha'n eil na fìor Chriosduidhean ach tearc anns an t-saoghal.

Gu dearbh mà tha h-uile neach a dh'fhoghlum cainnt a Chriosduidh, agus a labhras mar naomh; mà tha h-uile neach aig am bheil tiodhlacan agus buadhan, agus le còmhnaidh cumanta làithearachd an Spioraid is urrain searmonachadh, ùrnuigh, agus labhairt mar Chriosduidh; ann am focal, ma's urrain a h-uile neach a tha ga'n ceangal fein ri sluagh Dhé, agus a tha gabhail tlachd ann a' meadhonan, a bhi air gabhail riutha mar Chriosduidhean, tha'n àireamh uime sin mòr.

Ach, mo thruaigh. ach ciod e'n aireamh bheag a dh'ionnsuidh an crup iad ma bheir thu breith orra leis an riaghailt so. cia cho gann 's a tha iad a tha deanamh coguis de ghleidheadh a chridhe, a faire thairis air smuaintean, agus a toirt breith air an crìochaibh. O cha'n eil iad ach ainneamh a' measg luchd-aideachaidh a tha na'n daoine na clòsaid. Tha e fada ni's furasda do dhaoine a bhi reidh ri dleasdanas air bith na iad sin. Cha bhean a chuid dhìomhain dhe'n t-saoghal uibhir agus ris a chuid a muigh de dhleasdanas aibh diadhachd, agus ni's lugha gu mòr ri so; agus air son a chealgair, ged a tha e modhail agus annasach mu'n a nithean so bho'n leth a muigh, gidheadh cha'n urrain thu a cho-eigneachadh a chùm na h-obair so an leth a stigh, an obair dhuilich so, a dh'ionnsuidh nach eil tarraig air bith le moladh bho dhaoine: an obair so, a dh' fhoillsicheadh gu luath a ni nach toil leis a

chealgaire fios a bhì aig air; agus mar sin, le co-aontachadh coitchionn, thà'n obair cridhe so air a fàgail ann an làmhnan beagan de dhaoine diomhair, agus thà e cur orith orm a bhì smuainteachadh cia cho gann 's a thà iad.

II. *Feum, air son earail.* Ma thà gleidheadh a chridhe 'n a ghnothuich cho cudthromach; ma thà cothroman cho taghta a ruigheachd oirbh leis; ma tha leithid de chòiribh mòr agus luachmhor air am filleadh suas ann, 'n sin gairmean air sluagh Dhé anns gach àit iad a chumail dlùth ris an obair so.

O gabhaibh beachd air bhur cridheachaibh, deanaibh faire air bhur cridheachaibh, gleidhibh bhur cridheachaibh. cuiribh bh'uaibh connsachadh neo-tharbhach, agus gach uile cheisd dhiomhain; cuiribh bh'uaibh gach ainm diomhain agus gach samhla diomhain; cuiribh bh'uaibh gach còmhradh neo-tharbhach agus a bhì toirt breith air muinntir eile; tionndaidhibh a stigh oirbh fein; rachaibh a stigh do bhur clòsaidean, agus rùnaichibh a bhì gabhail còmhnuidh an sin. Bha sibh 'n ar coigrich do'n obair so tuilleadh 'us fad; ghleidh sibh fion-liosan dhaoine eile air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'n do dhearmaid sibh bhur fion-lios fein tuilleadh 'us fada; chosg sibh bhur 'n ùine gu diomhain tuilleadh 'us fada timchioll air iomallaibh diadhachd; chùm an saoghal so sibh tuilleadh 'us fada bho bhur 'n obair mhòr; an rùnaich sibh a' nis amharc ni's fearr ri bhur cridheachan? An dean sibh cabhag gu bhì tighinn a mach as na h-iomadh gnothuch, agus fuaimean an t-saoghail agus an cùm sibh sibh fein ni's diomhair na bhà sibh a deanamh. O nach rùnaich sibh an diugh air a sin.

A leughadair, thà mì smuainteachadh gu'm bu chòr dhomh buaidh a thoirt ort: 's e so a mhàin nà thà mì'g iarruidh, gu'n rachadh tù ni bu trice an leth-thaobh gu bhì còmhradh ri Dia, agus ri do chridhe fein; nach fuilingeadh tù do na h-uile ni diomhain do thoirt an leth-thaobh; gu'n cumadh tu cùntas ni's cinntiche agus ni's dilse air do smuaintean agus air t-aignuidhean; gu'n agradh tù gu stòlda so air do chridhe, aig a chuid is lugha gach feasgar; O mo chridhe, c'ait an robh thù'n diugh? C'ait an d'thug thù turas an diugh? Mar eil na chaidh a ràdh a cheana go leoir gu bhì ga'd tharruig, thà agam fathasd tuilleadh chriochaibh r'a thairgse dhuit. Agus 's e cheud aon so:

1. Cuidichidh a bhì gabhail beachd, a toirt fa'n ear, agus a gleidheadh gu dìchiollach bhur cridheachan, gu h-iongantach bhur tuigse ann an diomhaireachdan domhain diadhachd.

Tha cridhe onarach, fein-fhiosrachail, 'n a chuideachadh sònraichte do cheann lag; ni leithid sin de chridhe feum leabhar-mineachaidh dhuibh air mòran dhe na Sgrìobhturan; leis a mheadhon so tuigidh sibh nithean Dhé ni's fearr na'n luchd-teagaisg ionnsaichte, ma thà iad gun ghràs agus gun fein-

fhiosrachadh; cha bhi beachd ni's soilleir agaibh orra, ach bithidh 'ur breithneachadh agus 'ur blas orra ni's milse. Faodaidh neach labhairt gu fallain agus gu domhain air nàdur agus toraidhean creidimh, trioblaidean agus comhfhurtachdan na coguis, agus milseachd co-chomunn ri Dia, nach d'fhairich riamh eufachd agus millseachd làraichean nan nithean sin air a spiorad fein: ach O oia cho dorch agus tiorum 's a thà na beachdan sin, ann an coimeas ris-san air an d'oibrich na nithean sin air a chridhe. 'N uair a leughas a leithid sin de dhuine sailm Dhaibhidh, na litrichean Phòil, ann an sin thà e faotainn a cheisdean fein air an cur agus air am freagairt. O a deir e, tha na daoine naomh sin a labhairt na tha 'n am chridhe: 's e'n teagamhan-san mo theagamhan-sa, 's e'n trioblaidean mo thrioblaidean, agus am fein-fhiosrachadh m'fhein-fhiosrachadh-sa. Tha cuimhne agam gu'n do chleachd *Chrysostom* a leithid so de chainnte, ann a bhi labhairt r'a shluagh ann an *Antioch* mu thimchioll fein-fhiosrachadh taghta araidh," 'S e fein-fhiosrachadh a' maighstir-goile is fearr. O uime sin gabhaibh beachd air bhur cridheachan.

2. Thà bhi faire agus a gabhail beachd air bhur cridheachan 'n a dhion dhuibh bho mhearachdan cunnartach agus gabhaltach nan amaibh agus nan àitibh anns am bheil sibh beo.

Oir ciod a thà sibh a smuainteachadh is aobhar gu'm bheil uibhir de luchd-aideachaidh an Sasuinn air an creidimh a threigsinn, agus a toirt aire do fhaoin-sgeulachdan: gu'm bheil uibhir de mhilltibh air an treoireachadh air falbh le mearachd nan aingidh; gu'm bheil *Jesuits* agus muinntir eile, a chuir teagasg truailidh, a buain a leithid de fhoghar pailte 'n ar measg, ach a chionn gu'n do choinnich iad ri cuideachd de luchd-aideachaidh falamh actrom, dha nach b'aithne riamh ciod a bhuineas do dhiadhachd chleachdail, agus do thoirt an aire do'n cridheachan fein.

Na'n deanadh luchd-aideachaidh ach a bhi beachdachadh, a rannsachadh, agus a faire thairis air an cridheachan bhiodh an daingneachadh aca annta fein air am bheil Peadar a labhairt (I Peadar iii: 17), agus bhallaisdicheadh agus shuidhicheadh e iad Eabh. xiii: 9). Smuaintichibh nan labhradh Pàpanach seolta riubh sin mu thimchioll urram agus eifeachd oibrich matha; an oibrichheadh gu bràth annta sin creidimh nan leithidibh sin aig am bheil mothachadh nan cridheachaibh fein air a leithid de dhorchadas, de bhàs, de sheacharan, agus do eas-creidimh, a bhi leantuinn an dleasdanasaidh is fearr? Is e riaghailt mhath a th'ann, "Cha'n eil deasbaireachd air bith an aghaidh blas." An nì a dh'fhairich agus a bhlaic daoine air, cha'n urrain neach a bhualadh dheth le argumaid.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Woman Deplores Women Elders

It appears that Church of Scotland Presbyteries are again discussing and voting on the question of women Elders being introduced into their Church. The Edinburgh Presbytery voted by a good majority in favour of congregations electing women to the office of Elder at a recent meeting. It is significant to read, following upon the aforesaid decision, that Mrs Elizabeth Whitley, wife of the Rev. Harry Whitley, minister of St. Giles', strongly disapproved of the decision of the Presbytery of Edinburgh. She expressed the fear that this might bring the Eldership down to the level of a mixed woman's guild. We are of the opinion that but a small minority of women strongly support the campaign to make this office available to women.

Southern Rhodesia

At the time of writing, Southern Rhodesia has been much in the news. Our special interest in Southern Rhodesia is of course on account of our Church's foreign mission being situated there. Mr Ian Smith, the Premier of Rhodesia, has been threatening to declare his country independent, irrespective of the views of the British Government opposed to such action. Now Mr Smith has been to London at the beginning of October for discussions with the British Government and Mr Wilson, the British Prime Minister. He refused to agree to the five principal points set down by the British Government, for the present and future government of all the people living in Southern Rhodesia. One of these points was: "Union-aided progress to majority rule." There is much injustice undoubtedly meted out to Africans in Southern Rhodesia by the White Government or by virtue of the fact that they rule. There are problems and difficulties. For instance, we understand that the politically-minded Africans are divided among themselves. And it is asserted, with some reason, that the Africans are not nearly ready for the task of governing the country. And it seems that the Africans, given power, would not readily agree to share government with Europeans. But we trust that the Lord will in His kind providence prevent anything being done by Mr Ian Smith's Government which will cause strife, more animosity between Africans and Europeans, and even bloodshed. African Christians and European Christians, of course, look at such matters principally from the Scriptural and Christian point of view, although the Christian may well have considered views upon political issues. It is to be hoped that the work of the Church and gospel activities among the needy Africans by our European and African staff will not be

impeded or adversely affected by what politicians may do. May the Lord Jesus Christ protect His Cause in these foreign parts in His divine mercy.

R.C. Bishops Plead for the Poor

It was reported from Vatican City on October 6th that an Archbishop from India proposed the creation of a special office in Rome to encourage help for the under-privileged, Christian and non-Christian alike. During discussion of a draft decree, "The Church in the Modern World," the decree was criticised by Bishop Joseph Hoeffner of Muenster, on behalf of 80 German-speaking bishops. He said the document was unclear on questions such as agriculture and monetary policy. "Pious exhortations do not help much in economic life, and the text is full of them," he said. Another Bishop called for "a campaign of education . . . to arouse concern over world poverty." We read these statements and think of the untold and unrevealed wealth of the Roman Church. Little or nothing of this is allocated to the poor as far as we know. The Civil War in Spain, prior to the last World War, arose on account of lack of educational privileges and poverty, etc. The Church of Rome rules there. A few million pounds from Vatican coffers might help the poor of Spain. And if the R.C. Church would cease to demand money for every religious service rendered to their own poor people, this might give a little needed relief to quite a number. No financial statements are ever published by the Church of Rome. It would be interesting to learn just how great a sum the said Church could, with ease, release for the benefit of the poor. The Bishops would do well to demand from the Vatican millions of pounds to be allocated to some specific purpose helpful to poor and underprivileged peoples. There would be no need for the creation of a special office in Rome.

CHURCH NOTES

Communions

January—Fifth 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, Breaclete, Portnalong and Fort-William; second, Gisborne, N.Z.; third, London and 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 Beaul; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Achmore, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, 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; fourth, Gisborne, N.Z., Greenock; Lochinver; fifth, Wick. *November*—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Staffin and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

London Communion Services

The services will be as follows (p.v.):—Thursday, 2nd December, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Friday, 3rd December, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 4th December, 2.30 p.m. (Gaelic), 3.30 p.m. (English) and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 5th December, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday, 6th December, 7 p.m. The week-day services will be held in the Bridewell Hall, London City Mission, Eccleston Place, S.W.1, and the Sabbath services in St. Michael's Hall (opposite Victoria Coach Station), Eccleston Place. Rev. Alex. Murray, M.A., Applecross, and Rev. D. M. Macleod, Stornoway, are expected to assist at the Communion (p.v.).

To All Congregational Treasurers

As it is intended (p.v.) to close the Books for the year ending 31st December, 1965, on 7th January, 1966, the Finance Committee requests all Congregational Treasurers to send in 1965 Funds by that date to the General Treasurer and/or the Publications Treasurer.

Tribute to the late Mr Duncan MacRae, Elder, Lochcarron

The Western Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland met at Kyle of Lochalsh this 31st day of August, 1965, would place on record the loss sustained by the sudden removal by death on 17th March of Mr Duncan MacRae, Elder, Lochcarron, who had on several occasions represented the Lochcarron Kirk Session in this Court.

Mr MacRae's maternal grandfather, Sandy Ross, Ullapool, was well known as a lay-preacher in the early days of the Free Presbyterian Church, and so Duncan was brought up among the traditions of godliness. This itself can never be sufficient but, in due time, and while still in early life, the subject of this tribute was brought to know himself as a lost sinner and, then, to receive that salvation from sin which alone may be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. In public exercises Mr MacRae made it known that he possessed a sound experimental knowledge of this salvation.

Our late brother's public witness was not to be long—eleven years as a Member, and almost seven as an Elder—when at the age of 38 years, by the agency of a tree falling during a storm upon his car, as he travelled on the public highway a few miles

from his own house, his life was at an end. This event must appear as solemn and mysterious, and something to be observed by all, as, more especially, in his own congregation. Assuredly, it is the voice of the Great King who may do with His own creatures whatsoever He may please and who is at the same time, "just in all his ways, holy in his works all" (Psalm cxlv: 17). For those who knew him best, there is the remembrance of a peculiar sweetness as attached to their last opportunities of fellowship with Mr MacRae and he himself gave remarkable evidence to his wife that it was his expectation that his body would soon be laid in the grave. He is now laid to rest in the Church-yard of Lochcarron there to await the resurrection morn.

To his sorrowing like-minded widow, as to the two little children, the Presbytery would extend its sincere sympathy and commend them to the grace of Him who is "the widow's stay" and "the orphan's help" (Psalm cxlvi: 9).

ALEC MURRAY,

31st August, 1965.

Clerk of Presbytery *pro. tempore*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr W. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.3, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:—

Sustentation Fund.—Mrs MacLeod, Brora, £2; Misses J. and K. MacKinnon, Tarbert, per Mr J. G., £2.

Home Mission Fund.—Anon, Helmsdale postmark, £1; Misses J. and K. MacKinnon, Tarbert, £1, both per Mr J. G.

Foreign Mission Fund.—Anon, £2; Mrs MacLeod, Brora, £3; G. G. Raasay, £2 for Hospital; D. Neilson (Clapham postmark), per Rev. J. C., £10; A Friend, 100 dollars; Miss I. MacDonald, Eston, £13; Anon, £40; T. MacDonald, Eston, £39 9s 6d; Mr Kitchen, Winnipeg, £100; Friend, Applecross, £1 10/-; Friend, Skye postmark, £5; Misses J. and K. MacKinnon, Tarbert, £1, last three per Mr J. G.

College and Library Fund.—"In memory of dear parents," £1; Friend, Tarbert, £2, and Friend, Stornoway, £5, both per Rev. D. MacL.; A. MacD., £3.

Aged and Infirm Ministers', etc., Fund.—Anon, Helmsdale postmark, £1, per Mr J. G.

Home of Rest Fund.—The Far North, £6; Friend, Helmsdale, £2; Friend, Portgower, £1, all three per Rev. W. G.; P. Wood, Glasgow, 36/-; Alex. Ross, Achlochan, Scourie, £20; F. P. Drumbeg, £2, per Rev. A. F. M.; Anon, Helmsdale postmark, £1; Wellwisher, Staffin, £10; Anon, Lochgilphead, £1; C. Kerr, Lochinver, £2; Mrs Turnbull, Dundee, 8/6; Friend, Broadford, £5, last six per Mr J. G.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, acknowledges with grateful thanks the following donations:—

Publications Fund.—A Friend, Tomatin, 10/-; Mrs F., MacLean, N.S.W., Australia, 6/9.

On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society.—Anon, Argyll, £10.

Welfare of Youth Fund.—Anon, Helmsdale, £1; Anon, per Mr W. D. F., £1.

Free Distribution Magazine Fund.—Mr C. J., Chippenham, 10/-; Mr E. S., Inverness, 6/5; Mr M. M., Fort William, 5/-.

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Tomatin Congregation.—The Treasurer acknowledges with sincere thanks: £5 from R. MacDonald, Grantown-on-Spey (for the Cause); Two Friends, £5; Mr Montgomery, Aberfeldy, £1 for Sustentation Fund; F. P., Inverness postmark, £1.

Broadford Manse Fund.—Mr J. MacLean, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £10 from Friend, Broadford (3rd donation).

Waternish Congregation.—Mr A. Campbell, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £1 from Friend, Edinbane, for Sustentation Fund.

Greenock Manse Purchase Fund.—Mr A. Y. Cameron, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks: Miss B., Dunoon, £2; Friend, Uig, £2; Friend in Sutherland, £5; Staffin Friend, in memory of late Rev. James MacLeod, £2; also £10 for Congregational purposes from Mrs L., Dunoon, all per Rev. L. MacLeod.

Glendale Congregation.—Mr A. MacLean, Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks: £182 3s 9d, a legacy bequested by Miss Isabella Morrison in memory of her dear parents, for Congregational purposes, per Mr Wm. MacKinnon; Mrs Kirkham, Leeds, £3 for Sustentation, £3 for Home Mission and £2 for Foreign Mission; Lonemore F.C. Adherent, £1 for Foreign Mission, per Mr Duncan MacKay; Two Visitors, £5 for Foreign Mission; £1 from Friend, Edinburgh postmark, towards replacement of Minister's wrecked car.

London Church Building and Manse Purchase Fund.—Mr J. Campbell acknowledges with grateful thanks, £50 from Anon, per Rev. D. B. MacL.

Raasay Congregation.—Mr N. MacLeod acknowledges with sincere thanks, Anon, Glasgow, £1 for Sustentation Fund and £1 for Home Mission Fund, "A righteous man's memorial."

Daviot Congregation.—Mr Wm. MacQueen acknowledges £1 from Daviot Adherent, o/a Communion expenses.

Wick Congregation.—A Special Collection of £155 was taken at a talk on Church Mission by Rev. D. M. Campbell, Missionary, to help pay the expenses of African Elder attending Synod at some future date (D.V.)—J. Martin, Treasurer.

Oban Congregation.—Mr John Martin acknowledges with sincere thanks, £10 from Mr and Mrs MacDougall for Foreign Mission Fund.

Lochcarron Congregation.—Mr R. Macrae acknowledges with sincere thanks, £5 from Two Stornoway Friends towards Communion expenses and £5 for Sustentation Fund, "In fond memory."

Stratherrick Congregation.—Mr E. Fraser acknowledges with sincere thanks, £2 from Anon, Inverness postmark, for Sustentation Fund.

Hilton, Fearn, Church Building Fund.—Mr Wm. MacDonald acknowledges with sincere thanks: Wm. MacKay, Hilton, £1; Mrs Murray, Newton, 10/-; Psalm 80, vv. 17, 18, 19, per Mr J. G., £4 12s 10d.

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