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THE HEATHEN IN OUR MIDST

Those whom we understand to be pagans, as in India and Japan for instance, have set up gods, idols, the work of their own hands and worship them. They have built themselves temples for worship and have many religious rites and rules of conduct. The heathen, as we call them, as distinct from pagans, do not possess or worship gods of wood or stone. Some of them are said to worship the spirits of their ancestors. They do not erect temples or buildings wherein to gather for any form of public religious worship. They may have some limited code of conduct which they recognise among themselves. Generally speaking, the heathen have neither a special "god" nor organised religion of any kind; but are principally concerned with seeking and obtaining that which will sustain their mortal bodies during their sojourn in the world. Then they die and return to the dust as their bodies and their souls enter eternity—a lost eternity. To such fellow beings, the Christian Church in this nation have been sending missionaries with the professed design of bringing the Christian Bible and the gospel of Christ to them. This work has been going on for many, many years and there have been, here and there, and from time to time, encouraging signs and fruits in heathen sinners being brought by the power of the Holy Spirit through the gospel to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus and to shine as living Christians in a dark world.

But now, a grievous state of affairs obtains in our own professed Christian nation, in that there is an increasing number of heathen rising up from among ourselves. This number is probably greater than we are aware of. The existence of the Christian religion with all its witness and activities, and education to all standards available to all and an advanced state of civilisation, have not affected the deplorable drift into heathenism on the part of multitudes among us.

One fundamental procuring cause of all this has been the departure of many sections of the professing Christian Church

from belief in and adherence to the Holy Scriptures as the inspired and unerring Word of God. Foundational doctrines and truths of the Christian faith have been "torn to tatters," to use a rather crude expression. "Believe generally what you like as long as your beliefs have some semblance to Christianity," has been a widespread and soul ruining gospel.

Then the backslidings of fathers and mothers in recent generations have left many today in our midst without any recognition of God—the Christian's God—or the knowledge of Christian principles of conduct. In fact family life without any religion whatsoever has been the legacy handed down from one generation to another in the recent past. Today, the effect and fruit of this is to be seen in the large number of heathen in our midst; and it is in the light of God's Word we view these things. Hezekiah, king of Judah, said, "The fathers to the children shall make known thy truth." This has been the command of God to those favoured with the truth, right down through the ages. But when a generation turns its back on the truth of God then as a consequence generations of heathen will arise to be complete strangers to the true religion of the Bible and the gospel of the crucified and the risen Redeemer.

There are distinctive marks which identify the heathen in our midst; and we will only concern ourselves with those marks which are obvious. God searches the hearts of men, seeing and beholding all sons of men full well. And those marks we may hint at are all linked up one with the other.

Many have not the slightest concern about God and God is not in all their thoughts, from day to day. This may be easily discovered by way of conversation with such. As far as they are concerned, there could be no God. Truly, in an all embracing sense, they are without God in the world. Then such never at any time appear in any place for the public worship of God, be it church building, school, hall or dwelling-house. This may be in cases a deliberate line of action or complete indifference to the name of God. Another aspect of the character of the heathen among us is that they are like the heathen Ephesians and those in Philippi—bitterly opposed to what they may know of the Church's faithful teaching respecting the doctrines of the faith once delivered to the saints. They cannot abide the Biblical doctrine of sin, of salvation through the Cross and the blood of Christ, or the need man has of being "born again." All such-like truths they hate; as of course all men by nature do. But many natural men sit under the teaching of the gospel regularly—not the distinctively heathen. Either the Bible is *never* opened

or referred to in their homes, or there is no Bible there at all. Religion of any kind is completely absent from their family life as to profession or practice. And this in the midst of a professed Christian nation with its history of Divine favours especially spiritual ones, throughout past centuries. Again, they are zealously devoted to the things of the world. We all need to work that we may eat. But the Lord Jesus says: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God . . ." But the heathen among us seek first and primarily what they may eat, drink, and mind earthly things. They entirely "mind earthly things." And finally here, their code of personal conduct is, "That which is right in their eyes." And so there are in our midst many who recognise neither God nor religion. They are heathens, out and out.

Lot in Sodom was vexed in his righteous soul on account of what he saw and heard of the conduct and speech of those around him. Today, the Lord's people are similarly vexed. The true Church of Christ and its gospel are despised by many who live literally at the door of the Church. Men are manifestly going down the broad way to destruction. And God's name is greatly dishonoured in a nation to which the word of salvation was sent centuries ago. So those among us, who fear and love His blessed name, have in all this another outstanding matter for earnest prayer, in the words of the Psalmist: "O Lord our God, us save, and gather the heathen from among, that we thy holy name may praise in a triumphant song" (Psalm cxi: v. 47); and also, "Turn us again, O Lord our God, and upon us vouchsafe to make thy countenance to shine, and so we shall be safe" (Psalm lxxx: v. 3).

We will conclude these observations with a personal note. While travelling last summer, we had some conversation with a young lady from Switzerland who was a domestic science teacher. She mentioned that she came to Scotland to see the country, improve her English and to witness at first-hand how the people lived. She stayed three months with a prosperous farming family. They took her to several places of interest throughout a wide area. Before we parted, the question arose as to whether she had been to public worship in a church during the three months; there being many in the area where she resided. The answer proffered was that she had had no opportunity afforded her. She remarked that she was a Protestant. Our thoughts upon this case centred upon it as another evidence of there being heathen in our midst. A prosperous farming family, active and industrious, entertaining a stranger in their midst—but no God, no religion, no divine worship in how they lived! Darkness covers the land and gross darkness the people.

A SERMON

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

(Continued from page 172)

III. The Congregation in which He Preached Righteousness.

(1) We are told that it was a *great* congregation. It is true that in His earthly ministry He had, at times, great congregations. On the two occasions when He miraculously fed the multitude with bread and fishes we read that there were five thousand and four thousand, beside women and children. We have reason to believe that these were small numbers in comparison with the number who heard Him preach at other times as, on each of these occasions, He preached in desert places, far from the habitations of men, so that truly He preached righteousness in great congregations during His earthly ministry. We cannot, however, confine ourselves to any number, no matter how great, who heard Him preach in this world, for there was a greater congregation in which He preached righteousness.

(2) He had a great congregation at Calvary. To the world He appeared as a Victim who was suffering a shameful death. The crowd who cried, "Let him be crucified," and who preferred Barabbas, little thought what they were doing, and as little realised that they were hastening this Preacher to His pulpit from which He preached the most wonderful sermon that was ever preached in this world, and that, to a congregation the like of which no preacher ever had. The chief priests thought Him a fit subject for mockery, those who passed by might wag their heads and sarcastically say, "Save thyself," and the thieves who were crucified with Him might revile Him, but all the time He was preaching a sermon, which, as far as men were concerned, was falling on deaf ears. If, by divine power, the eyes of those mockers and revilers had been opened as the eyes of one of the thieves latterly were, O what a sight they would have seen. The cross would have been transformed into a pulpit, the Victim into a Preacher, and around Him a congregation gathered from Heaven, earth and Hell.

In this indescribably vast congregation the Attributes of the Godhead were to be found. Without enlarging on the appearing of these Attributes in this great congregation it may be pointed out that the Holiness of God, that cannot look upon sin, was there. Yea, in this congregation was given the greatest demonstration that was given in this world of the nature of Holiness, for when the infinitely holy Son of God appeared, bearing the sins of His people in His own body on the tree, He had to testify

that the Eternal Father hid His face from Him. The Justice of God was there requiring and receiving satisfaction for all the sins of the whole elect of God. The Truth of God was there requiring that the Scriptures be not broken, and that "one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The Mercy of God was there, in Love seeking a channel by which it could flow out to perishing sinners in a manner consistent with Holiness, Justice and Truth. On this part of the great congregation, and it is, by far, the most important part, the preaching of righteousness had a most wonderful effect, for we read that "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven" (Psalm lxxxv: 10, 11).

The elect of God were in this congregation as they are represented in Christ Himself. He has been their dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth, or ever he had formed the earth or the world. While they were not, and could not be, partakers with Him in His sufferings, for it required to be fulfilled in Him, "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me;" yet, as elected in Him, they were parties who had an interest in this great transaction and, therefore, He preaches to them of a righteousness about to be finished, a redemption price about to be paid, and an emancipation about to be accomplished out of the prison-house of Justice, for no sooner did the glorious Attributes of the Godhead kiss each other in perfect, heavenly harmony than Justice said with respect to every one of the elect of God, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." To the Divine Preacher Himself it was said, in order that He would declare it to His people, "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

Though holy angels were not actively to participate in the glorious righteousness which was preached on Calvary, yet they were, by no means, uninterested spectators, for we read that what the Spirit of Christ, through the prophets, "testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow," and what is now declared concerning these things, are matters which "the angels desire to look into" (I Peter i: 12). As far as is revealed, all the circumstances attending the solemn transactions on Calvary were dark to the angels, but one thing they knew, and that is that this was their Lord and their God. It is true that they were bound to know that His mission into this world was in order to save men, for was it not an angel who came to herald His advent into the world, and was he not accompanied by a multitude of the heavenly host, saying "Glory to God in the

highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"? Did they not know also that He was to suffer? for after the temptation in the wilderness, did not angels come and minister unto Him? And again, in the garden of Gethsemane, when He was in an agony, did not an angel appear unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him? But this was something new, something unexpected. Willingly they would have given all the help that they would be empowered to give, but no orders were given to minister the least consolation. The devil, lost angels, and wicked men had become confederates in pouring out their venom upon Him, yea, the Eternal Father Himself had turned from Him and hid His face. The angels might say, "It was never so before," but all that they could do was to stand in mute astonishment till He cried, "It is finished," and then it all became clear, and they could see matters in the same light as the Apostle saw them when he wrote, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii: 9, 10). Thus they could again sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

It was all too evident that the devil and the fallen angels were in this great congregation. He often appears in this world in congregations where the gospel is preached, but on this particular occasion his scope seemed to have been enlarged more than ordinarily. Did he not, as preliminaries to this awful scene on Calvary, employ Judas to betray his Master with a kiss, sift Peter in his sieve till he denied with oaths and cursing that he knew Him, stir up the enmity of Church dignitaries to hand Him over to the civil power, fan the rage of an ignorant and blinded people to demand that He should be crucified, delude Pilate into thinking that by washing his hands in water before the people he could be clear of guilt in condemning Him, and, as if that was not enough, did he not put it in the hearts of the soldiers to crucify Him between two malefactors of the worst kind in order to make sure that all the obloquy that was possible would be heaped upon Him? Now He was nailed to the cross, the devil was well-nigh sure that his foul purpose was accomplished, hence the mockery and the scornful taunts of men who had been his willing servants in this awful work. Now they gather round, preparing themselves to hurl their envenomed shafts at Him in the closing scene, but in the very act of hurling these shafts, they hear a cry which seems to them louder than all the thunders of the Almighty which,

until now, had been terrifying them. He who was the object of their malice cried, "It is finished," and the, to them, awful truth was revealed, that their plans had miscarried, and that their rage, malice and ingenuity were as so many chariots to carry forward the Divine purpose in connection with the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. The work of thousands of years in endeavouring to rob God of His glory had absolutely failed, and the prime and most powerful actors in these endeavours had to return to their dismal abode, while a sense of their impotency against the power and wisdom of the Almighty caused the roar of their baffled fury to echo and re-echo through the interminable vaults of Hell. An everlasting righteousness had been finished and proclaimed in the great congregation, and it is of such a nature that it will save the guiltiest sinner of Adam's race, but it is not for the angels that kept not their first estate, "For verily he (Christ) took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii: 16).

IV. The Manner of His Preaching.—"Lo, I have not refrained my lips."

(1) He omitted nothing in preaching righteousness to the great congregation. Many a preacher, through a momentary lapse of memory, omits things that he intended to say to his congregation during his discourse, but this One, being a perfect Preacher, and the only perfect Preacher who ever appeared in this world, omitted nothing of what was for the good of man to know. His revelation of the Eternal Father is a perfect revelation, the righteousness which He worked out is a perfect righteousness. His declaration of man's needs and of the almighty power of God to save to the uttermost, proclaims His own perfection, and the exercise of His power in performing miracles by which He confirmed His teaching all speak of the perfection with which He preached righteousness during the days of His flesh.

(2) In preaching righteousness He concealed nothing of what was needful for man to know. Many who go under the name of preachers sinfully conceal from their congregations the plain unvarnished truth as to God's character as holy and just, and as to man's character as a sinner who is self-ruined and hell-deserving, for fear of offending some whose favour they want to retain. This Preacher, however, concealed nothing. Self-righteous Pharisees heard their character and their doom, would-be disciples, though they might complain that His sayings were hard, did not get softer words, polite ears which do not want to hear anything of the sterner aspects of religion had to listen to a description of a lost eternity as "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone,"

and all were directed, like Nicodemus, to the necessity—the absolute necessity—of experiencing the “New Birth.” They were exhorted to repent and believe the gospel, and those who thought they could do something in the way of working out salvation for themselves were plainly told that “This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent” (John vi: 29).

He preached in faithfulness to God and to men. He came in God’s great name to save sinners, and His own declaration is, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day” (John ix: 4). Though He had almighty power to turn aside His enemies, yet, as one bound by the terms of the Covenant of Grace, He must carry out the obligations of the Covenant. We see this in connection with His being apprehended on the night on which He was betrayed, when Peter drew his sword Jesus told him, after ordering him to put his sword again into its place, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? but how then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matt. xxvi: 53, 54). The Scriptures declared that this was the way in which God was to be glorified in connection with the salvation of sinners, and in faithfulness to God’s glory, He did not keep back from suffering and shame, but fulfilled what was written of Him, “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah i: 5, 6).

As He manifested faithfulness to God so He manifested faithfulness to men. During His earthly ministry many applied to Him for help and no one was ever turned away. The blind, the lame, the halt and the maimed, knew Him as their Friend who not only helped their physical infirmities but proved also a spiritual Physician who could say to them, “thy sins are forgiven.” In the same faithfulness He rebuked those who did what should not be done. He wisely and gently rebuked their sinful ambition when they disputed among themselves who should be the greatest; Peter got a terrible rebuke from Him when he was told, “Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men;” and after His resurrection He upbraided His disciples “with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.” Sin would not be unrebuked in any, not even in those who followed Him when others esteemed his doctrines “hard sayings.” This was done in faithfulness to their souls, and by it He preached righteousness in faithfulness.

(4) Lastly, as to the manner of His preaching righteousness, He did it in love to sinners. The Word of God is full of the redeeming love of the Son of God in engaging in the councils of eternity to fulfill, on behalf of those elected in Him, the terms of the Covenant of Grace, in coming into this world to take the law-place of His people, and in suffering in their room and stead all that the Justice of God required. O the wonder of this love, that it was manifested on behalf of lost, ruined, dead, hell-deserving sinners. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v: 8). When the question at any time arises in the mind of a child of God, Why is it that Christ died for such a vile sinner as I am? he can get no answer to that question apart from the eternal and unspeakable love of a Triune God, and the answer which the love of God supplies to that question will afford matter for sweet meditation to the child of God on his pilgrimage journey through this world, as it will be the theme of the song of the redeemed on Mount Zion above world without end.

Now, my dear fellow-sinners, consider this righteousness which Christ preached in the great congregation. It is a righteousness that you stand in need of and that you cannot do without, for to be without this wonderful robe of the righteousness of Emmanuel is to be exposed, world without end, to that wrath which is a consuming fire to all who make themselves fuel for it. Think of all that it cost the Saviour of sinners to come to this world to proclaim, by word and deed, this righteousness to you, for we read that in coming to this world He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philip. ii: 6-8). The only way to heaven is by embracing Him by faith, who preached this righteousness, and to despise Him is to make one's bed in hell. O sinner, to whom Christ is freely offered in the Gospel, think of what you are doing today in despising Christ. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" "Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tare you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

May He bless anything said in accordance with the mind of the Spirit.

REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS

Evangelist and Missionary (1815-1868)

By Rev. D. A. MacLean, M.A., Halkirk

(Continued from page 178)

In October of the year 1858 he sailed for Amoy. His brethren there anxiously desired his return; they were blessed and made a blessing. The word of the Lord was sounded abroad with great success. The Chinese converts became the willing ambassadors of Jesus Christ. But the Church of Christ never had success without meeting with great opposition. The adversary is described as "a roaring lion" and "offences shall come." Dissensions arose; the tares which mingled among the wheat gave offence. Church disciplinary measures were called for. At this time William Burns, known as the missionary in whom patience and tact excelled, went to Fah-chow where his excellent influence was felt by all. His very presence seemed a source of encouragement both to European and to Chinese. A colleague wrote of him, "Our helpers soon learned to feel a great regard for Mr Burns, and their piety was quickened and deepened apparently through his influence. His power over them arose from his own deep piety; his accurate knowledge of the Chinese language and the great fund of Christian knowledge at his command; and the singleness of purpose which he ever manifested. We felt it a privilege to have our native preachers under his influence and instruction."

Satan was very active in Amoy, persecution was stirred up. Believers who were but children in grace and knowledge met with the hostility of their own people. The Truth was fulfilled, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake," and "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." The environment whether heathen or civilised will not alter the fulfilment of Scripture—"The disciple is not above His Master, nor the servant above his Lord." It was an easy matter for the persecutors to suspect the creed which was foreign to them in every sense. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The followers of the Lord Jesus were branded as Beelzebub. They were in constant fear, there was hardship and suffering; property was spoiled and stolen, even cattle were driven away. Those who made use of the wells of salvation were denied the use of public wells. This trial was once more permitted. It was the trial of their faith which is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth though it be

tried with fire." It worked for their good and was found unto the praise, honour and glory of Jesus Christ who enabled them to endure through much opposition. As Paul wrote, "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourging, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sown asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins: being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy): they wandered in deserts, and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi: verses 36-38). Thus they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods knowing that in Heaven they had a better and an enduring substance. Ambition that seeks after praise and place has no place in the Kingdom of Him who made Himself of no reputation and took on Him the form of a servant! The same is true of the vain and the proud. The Lord Jesus is meek and lowly. In Amoy what amazed the enemies of Christ and his people was the fact that those who witnessed a good profession possessed their souls in patience. They were strengthened and upheld by the Lord. In this way they continued steadfast to the delight of those who were their spiritual instructors. William Burns was soon able to plead boldly on behalf of those "persecuted for righteousness sake." His experience in his travellings among the heathens proved of great help to him. He knew what it was to live near to his God. What was said of Brainerd was equally true of this missionary. "Let us often look at Brainerd in America pouring out his very soul before God for the perishing heathen without whose salvation nothing could make him happy. Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness. A competent knowledge of the language where the missionary lives, a mild and winning temper, a heart given up to God in closet religion—these, these are the attainments which, more than all knowledge or all other gifts, will fit us to become the instruments of God in the great work of human redemption."

Once more without fear William Burns looked to Him; the God who had so often proved to him a present help in trouble. He knew the King's "golden sceptre" and earnestly he made supplication on behalf of God's faithful witnesses. At the same time he made representations to the Chinese authorities through the British consul. To Mr Burns' credit this proved successful. With his usual simplicity and pious fervour he conducted the matter.

It also fell to him to proceed to Peking where he could meet Sir Frederick Bruce and thus seek a permanent agreement for the Chinese Christian. He was wise and diplomatic for such a mission.

Through sympathy and compassion he was able to care for his inferiors; he was also able to respect his superiors in civil authority. Sir Frederick Bruce could state afterwards that Mr Burns was one of the most charming and attractive personalities he ever met. His mission was not altogether fruitless although he did not gain all he desired.

By that time, however, the missionary's physical constitution showed clearly that his journeyings often and his many perils and exposures began to take effect. His mind was alert and he was willing to take care of all the churches, but in body he was not so robust. He wore himself out physically. While in Peking he could have stayed and enjoyed the hospitality of other missionaries there. This was not his choice. He rented a small house and made it his humble residence for three years. He enjoyed quietness and lived on little and thus gave more to the cause to which he wholeheartedly devoted himself. Although this was his choice yet he would not bind others to do as he did. He was neither odd nor eccentric. It was his manner to enjoy communion with the Lord in the quiet atmosphere of his own room. A missionary of another persuasion wrote of him, "He was at home with all Protestant Christians, and was greatly loved by all his brethren. His manly character, his sober views, his practical good sense, his kindly sociality, his mental strength, his moral decision and his consistent and unaffected piety made him a friend greatly valued by us all. We enjoyed his coming to sit in the evenings, to share with us in a simple way at the social meal, to unite with us in family worship or to join in the exercises of the weekly evening prayer meeting. He frequently preached in English at the Sabbath evening service, held for the benefit of the Mission families, and was always welcomed as one whose sermons were invariably characterised by solidity and faithfulness. He impressed his auditors with the fact that he was a man of power and devotedness, a man whose atmosphere was prayer, and whose daily food was Scripture." In the words of Spurgeon, "One bright benison which private prayer brings down upon the ministry is an indescribable and inimitable something—an unction from the Holy One. . . . If the anointing which we bear come not from the Lord of Hosts, we are deceivers, since only in prayer can we obtain it. Let us continue instant, constant, fervent in supplication. Let your fleece lie on the threshing-floor of supplication till it is wet with the dew of Heaven." The more we follow the footsteps of William Burns the more we see how weaned he was from the world. An epistle, he was "known and read of all men."

(To be continued)

BRIGHT ORNAMENTS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST JOHN KNOX

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

Among the bright ornaments of the Church of Christ in the world none can claim a higher place than John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, and certainly none suffered more of the enmity of the world, both in his life and after his death. There were none in Scotland who did more for the Cause of Christ, and it may safely be questioned if any did as much, and certainly he was exempt from the woe of those of whom all men speak well.

The subject of this short sketch was born "of honest parents" at Giffordgate near Haddington. The date of his birth is believed to be 1513 or 1514, and not 1505 as stated by Dr. McCrie in his excellent *Life of Knox*. His earlier years are shrouded in mystery, but it can safely be stated that he was brought up in the Church of Rome and taught early to pay homage to her superstitious worship. His parents, although not rich as far as this world's goods are concerned, were able to give their son a liberal education, and sent him, first of all, to the Grammar School of Haddington, after which he matriculated in the University of Glasgow, and studied under John Major, who appears to have been at one time a Professor in the University of Paris, where he acquired views that were more liberal than those professed in his native country. Knox taught philosophy as one of the regents of the University, and ultimately was advanced to clerical orders and was ordained a priest. His enquiring mind led him to study the Scriptures which were able to make him wise unto salvation. The work seems to have been gradual for he did not publicly profess the Reformed faith till about the year 1542. This was, for him, the beginning of times of struggles and dangers, and his enemies would no doubt have accomplished their aim to murder him were it not that the Lord brought him under the protection of Douglas of Longniddry, who engaged him as tutor to his two sons. This was the time when he came into contact with George Wishart, the famous preacher and martyr, in whose company he was found when the latter was arrested. He had thoughts of flight from Scotland but was prevailed upon to seek refuge, with his pupils, in the Castle of St. Andrews, which had been seized by those who conspired against Cardinal Beaton. It was here, on the Call of the congregation, that he began publicly to exercise his ministry. Through pressure from land and sea, the castle capitulated and the residents were carried prisoners to France, where Knox served as a galley slave, chained to an oar, and with some of his fellow-prisoners suffered all the indignities with which

Papists were accustomed to treat those whom they regarded as heretics.

It was in connection with these indignities that Knox relates an incident which, though he does not mention himself, it is highly probable that he was the actor, and it shows his integrity in dangerous circumstances. "One day a fine painted image of the Virgin was brought into one of the galleys, and a Scottish prisoner was desired to give it the kiss of adoration. He replied, saying that such idols were accursed, and he would not touch it. 'But you shall,' replied one of the officers roughly, at the same time forcing it towards his mouth. Upon this the prisoner seized the image and, throwing it into the river, said 'Let the lady now save herself: she is light enough, let her learn to swim.' The officers with difficulty saved their goddess from the waves; and the prisoners were relieved for the future from such troublesome importunities." He was confined a prisoner in the galleys for nineteen months, where he suffered much from privations and ill-health. It was during this captivity that he expressed his conviction that as God had first opened his mouth to his glory in St. Andrews, He would do so yet in the same place, which certainly came to pass, though at the time he uttered it there appeared no prospects of his words being accomplished.

After his release he preached with much success in Berwick, and in various parts of England, in the midst of persecutions and intrigues by his enemies. On being, on one occasion, falsely accused by his enemies he was cited to London, but the Council, being satisfied with his defence, and being convinced of the malice of his accusers, gave him an honourable acquittal, manifesting that the intrigues of his enemies were to the confusion of Satan and the glory of God. After being absent from London for some time he returned, and Archbishop Cranmer was directed by the Council, with the approval of King Edward VI, to present him with the living of All-Hallows, which he refused, "owing to the present state of the Church of England." His refusal, and the reason for it, gave offence, and he was summoned before the Privy Council, but he defended himself and his scruples with an independence which is the fruit of the work of the Spirit in the soul. Afterwards Edward VI offered him a bishopric, with the same result, stating frankly that he believed that the Episcopal office was destitute of Scriptural warrant. Shortly after this King Edward died and Queen Mary, a bigoted Papist, ascended the throne, and Knox found himself outwith the protection of the law. He took ship from England, landing safely at Dieppe on 20th January, 1554.

From Dieppe he travelled through France to Switzerland, where

he was cordially received by friends of the Reformation. He made many journeys during his time in Switzerland to Dieppe to get information as to the progress of events in England, so that he was well posted as to the persecution of Protestants there. At Geneva, he made the acquaintance of John Calvin, then in the zenith of his reputation and usefulness. An attempt was made to settle Knox as one of the pastors of the English congregation of Frankfort, but owing to the troubles raised by sticklers for the English Service Book, the attempt proved abortive and Knox returned to Geneva.

In August, 1555, Knox left Geneva for Dieppe from which port he sailed for Scotland, landing near Berwick, to which town he repaired to join his wife and mother. After some time he left for Edinburgh where he met with, and preached to, increasing congregations, and caused a formal separation between the Popish Church and the friends of the Reformation. This public preaching of the gospel aroused the apprehension and the ire of the Popish clergy, and they summoned Knox to appear before a convocation of the clergy in the Church of the Blackfriars at Edinburgh. When they learned that he purposed to appear they deserted the diet against him, so that on the very day that he was to appear as a culprit he was preaching the gospel publicly to a much larger audience than he had ever before addressed in his native country. In July, 1556, he left Scotland for Geneva after receiving word from the English congregation there that he had been appointed as one of their pastors. The Romish clergy were no sooner aware of his absence than they renewed their summons against him and, not having appeared, they condemned "his body to the flames, and his soul to damnation," and caused his effigy to be burned at the cross of Edinburgh. Knox's visit to Scotland at this time was the means of greatly strengthening the Reformed cause.

Three years later Knox returned to Scotland and found matters in a critical state as far as the Reformation was concerned. The Queen-Mother, who was Regent, had avowed her determination to suppress the Reformation, and took strong measures to carry out that determination. A provincial council was convened by the Queen-Regent and the Popish Bishops, and met in the monastery of the Greyfriars, Edinburgh, to deliberate on the steps to be taken to suppress the Reformers. During the proceedings a messenger came in who informed them that John Knox had arrived in Scotland and slept last night in Edinburgh. The clergy were panic-stricken and the council was dismissed without doing anything. The presence of such an able champion of the Reformed faith greatly strengthened the Protestants. The result which followed was that the Protestant worship was set up in various

places, such as St. Andrews, Crail, Cupar, Lindores, Stirling and Edinburgh. On the 7th July, 1559, the inhabitants of Edinburgh met in the Tolbooth and elected John Knox as their minister, and with this election he deemed it his duty to comply. Soon after this, eight other towns in Scotland were provided with Protestant ministers, and more places would have been provided for were it not for the scarcity of ministers.

Knox, being the central figure of the Reformation in Scotland, was in extreme danger. A reward was publicly offered to any who should apprehend or kill him; and not a few lay in wait to seize his person. In spite of this he was always at the point of danger, and spent his time in preaching during the day, and writing letters at night in connection with the Cause of Christ. Matters at last came to a climax and the Queen-Regent was removed from her place of authority and a council was appointed to rule the kingdom until a free Parliament met. When a free Parliament met, it required the ministers to furnish it with a summary of doctrine which they could prove to be in accordance with the Scriptures, and which they desired to be established. The ministers were not unprepared for this, and in four days they produced a Confession of Faith which was in accordance with the Confessions of other reformed churches. It was the joint production of Knox and other three ministers, and was received by Parliament. They were afterwards instructed to prepare a book of church polity which they did in a very short time. It is known as the First Book of Discipline. Thus we find that in 1560 the Roman Catholic religion was overthrown in Scotland and the Reformed faith established in its place, with its Confession of Faith and Book of Church Polity, and all this under the leadership of John Knox in the face of strong opposition. After this the first General Assembly met on 20th December, 1560. It was at the close of this year that Knox suffered a heavy domestic loss in the removal of his wife to whom he was greatly attached.

In 1561, Mary Queen of Scots, arrived in Scotland and assumed the reins of government into her own hands. Being a bigoted Papist, like her mother and her uncles, her main endeavours throughout life were to establish the Roman Catholic religion and to overthrow Protestantism. Knox being looked upon as the leader of the Reformers, it was natural that he should receive much of the hatred of the Queen and her flatterers, but he was unaffected by either the flattery or the rage of the Queen. It would lengthen this imperfect sketch beyond all reasonable bounds to give examples of the interviews between her and Knox; suffice it to say that he stood his ground and that he persevered to the end in his faithfulness to the Cause of Christ.

At last the strain of all his labours began to tell on the Reformer's health, and by 1571 it was apparent that he was in a dying condition. A colleague and successor, in the person of John Lawson, was appointed, and was installed in St. Giles on 9th November, 1572, and John Knox preached the sermon on this occasion. This was his last public appearance. On 24th November, 1572, he passed away to be forever with the Lord. On 26th November he was buried in the churchyard of St. Giles, in the presence of a large concourse of people, and of all the nobility of the city. When his body was laid in the grave, the Regent Morton pronounced his eulogium in the well-known and well-deserved words, "There lies he who never feared the face of man."

The late Rev. Thomas McCrie, D.D., said of him, "Few men were ever exposed to more dangers, or underwent greater hardships. From the time that he embraced the reformed religion till he breathed his last, seldom did he enjoy a respite from trouble; and he emerged from one scene of difficulty and danger only to be involved in another still more distressing. Obligated to flee from St. Andrews to escape the fury of Cardinal Beaton, he found a retreat in East Lothian, from which he was hunted by Archbishop Hamilton. He lived for several years as an outlaw, in daily apprehension of falling a prey to those who eagerly sought his life. The few months during which he enjoyed protection in the castle of St. Andrew's were succeeded by a long and rigorous captivity. After enjoying some repose in England he was again driven into banishment, and for five years wandered as an exile on the Continent. When he returned to his native country it was to engage in a struggle of the most perilous and arduous kind. After the Reformation was established, and he was settled in the capital, he was involved in a continual contest with the court. When he was relieved from this warfare, and thought only of ending his days in peace, he was again called into the field; and, although scarcely able to walk, was obliged to remove from his flock, and to avoid the fury of his enemies by submitting to a new banishment. He was repeatedly condemned for heresy, and proclaimed an outlaw; thrice he was accused of high treason, and on two of these occasions he appeared and underwent a trial. A price was publicly set on his head; assassins were employed to kill him; and his life was attempted both with the pistol and the dagger. Yet he escaped all these perils, and finished his course in peace and in honour. No wonder that he was weary of the world, and anxious to depart; and with great propriety might it be said at his decease that 'he rested from his labours.' "

—*Life of Knox (Ter-centenary Edition, p. 277).*

PICTURES OF CHRIST

by J. Marcellus Kik.

Exodus 20: 4-6, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

In this second commandment we are forbidden to make any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. We are forbidden to bow down to them or to serve them. Now the question has been asked whether or not this commandment forbids the use of pictures of Christ. Naturally the commandment forbids the bowing down before such pictures and worshipping them. There can be no question of that.

But in many Protestant churches and in many evangelical churches pictures of Christ are used in teaching and in the homes of Christians pictures of Christ are hung up to remind them, I suppose, of Christ. Is that Scriptural? Does it meet with the approval of God? Is it sinful? Is it another way of breaking the second commandment?

No doubt, if I state that the use of pictures of Christ is unscriptural; that it does not meet with the approval of God; that is sinful; and that it is a breaking of a second commandment—I will be considered as a fanatic, reactionary, and perhaps not quite normal. But before you have such unkind thoughts, please hear me out. If we are Christians, our service and worship will be regulated by the Word of God. The Bible is our infallible guide in faith and worship.

Now here is the surprising thing. Nowhere in the Bible, either in the Old Testament or New Testament, is there a physical description of Christ. Isn't that strange if God wanted to use the picture of Christ in spreading the Gospel or in worship, that we are not told whether Christ was tall or short, fair or dark, light or dark hair, blue eyes or brown eyes?

With all their love for the Lord you would think that Peter or John would have given a description of Him unless, of course, they were forbidden. They wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Surely it is significant that neither they nor any other of the Scriptures gave a physical description of the Lord. Surely if God desired the use of pictures of Christ to further the cause

of Christ He would have had a physical description of His Son in His Word. Why should we consider ourselves wiser than God and provide what He has deliberately left out?

The second amazing fact is that in the first four centuries of the history of the Church, no picture of Christ was used. These were the years when the Church made her most astonishing growth. These were the years in which the Christians conquered Pagan Rome. It is so frequently stated that we need pictures of Christ in order to teach the Gospel. The apostle Peter did not need pictures of Christ to instruct the young or bring the Gospel to adults. The apostle John did not need pictures of Christ to convert pagans and instruct the Church. The apostle Paul did not need pictures of Christ to convert Barbarians and Greeks. The early church did not need pictures of Christ to conquer paganism. They accomplished it by preaching the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

When pictures of Christ were first introduced, they were opposed. The Church historian Eusebius who lived in the fourth century declared himself in the strongest manner against images of Christ in a letter to the Empress Constantia who asked him for such an image. Amongst other things Eusebius wrote: "Who can therefore counterfeit by dead and insensible colors, by vain shadowing painter's art, the bright and shining glistering of such His glory?"

Here Eusebius touches on one of the reasons why it is impossible to have a true picture of Christ. If you want a picture of Christ do you want it as He was upon earth or as He is now in heaven? If you want a picture of Him as He was upon earth, you have quite a problem. There was no picture of Him painted. The so-called pictures of Christ which are present today are from the imaginations of the artists. That is why there are so many different pictures. Not one of them is a true picture. So every time you say this or that is a picture of Christ, you are uttering a lie. You cannot teach truth by a lie. Christ is the Truth and surely He would not want the use of false means to point to Him. Christ abhors lies and falsehoods.

How would you like it if someone who never saw you painted a picture and told everyone that it was a picture of you? Certainly you would resent it. And certainly Christ must resent all those counterfeit pictures of Him.

But supposing you wanted a picture of Christ as He is now. The disciples had such a vision of Him on the mount of transfiguration. We read in Matthew 17:2, "And his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." This was the glorified Christ. No artist could give us a picture of Christ which would show the glowing of Christ's face as the sun and His raiment as

white as the light. They would only rob Christ of His glory by miserably falling short of a true painting of Christ in His present glory.

But someone will state that at least we can depict the humanity of Christ as He appeared upon earth. But who are we to separate His humanity from His divinity! The apostle John states in his Gospel, chapter 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Notice that the apostle states that even while Christ was in the flesh they beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. In other words, they beheld His divinity as well as His humanity. This one cannot paint. So one must behold His humanity as separate from His divinity. Then one falls into the ancient error of Nestorius. He stated that Christ consisted of two persons: one human and the other divine. There was, according to Nestorius, a separation between the human and the divine persons.

That was the ground on which the Council called by Constantine V condemned paintings of Christ. You see, this question of pictures of Christ was the subject of controversy throughout the eighth century. So Constantine called a council in 753 of three hundred and thirty bishops. Their conclusion was this: "If any person shall divide the human nature, united to the Person of God the Word; and, having it only in the imagination of his mind, shall therefore, attempt to paint the same in an Image; let him be holden as accursed. If any person shall divide Christ, being but one, into two persons; placing on the one side the Son of God, and on the other side the son of Mary; neither doth confess the continual union that is made; and by that reason doth paint in an image the son of Mary, as subsisting by himself; let him be accursed. If any person shall paint in an Image the human nature, being deified by the uniting thereof to God the Word; separating the same as it were from the Godhead assumed and deified; let him be holden as accursed."

This council points out the difficulty and indeed the impossibility of painting a protrait of Christ. Christ is more than man. He is God-man. It is impossible to depict by a painter's brush the almighty power of Christ; the glorious majesty of Christ; the infinite knowledge of Christ. You cannot localize by a painter's brush the presence of Christ. One can only succeed in degrading Christ. When one considers the deity of Christ it is no wonder that the apostles did not attempt a physical description of the Lord and Saviour.

There is always, also, the danger of worshipping the picture of Christ and attaching power to it. Even a Protestant publishing

firm stated that there is power in a picture of Christ. It stated; "When one plants deeply and firmly in his mind the picture of Christ, it has a strong and powerful influence in his life." Thus instead of attributing this influence to Christ and the Holy Spirit they attribute it to the picture they are trying to sell. That is a breaking of the second commandment.

But can it not help in the saving of souls, it is asked. But how? looking at a picture of Christ hanging upon the cross tells me nothing. It does not tell me that He hung there for sin. It does not tell me that He hung there for my sin. It does not tell me that He is the Son of God. Only the Word has been given us to tell the story of salvation through the blood of Christ. It is not through the foolishness of pictures that sinners are converted but through the foolishness of preaching.

It is amazing how slowly unscriptural practices enter the Christian Church. We must at all times go back to the Scriptures. The Bible is our infallible guide. And if our practices and doctrines do not conform with the teachings of the Scriptures then we must eliminate them. The Bible instructs the Church not to make any likeness of Christ. The present day pictures of Christ are false and no one would make a serious claim that they resemble Christ upon earth. They separate His humanity from His deity. They do not at all give us a glimpse of His present glory. They are not condoned by the inspired apostles.

God has ordained the foolishness of preaching to evangelize the world. He has promised to attend the preaching of the Word with the power of the Holy Spirit. The so-called pictures of Christ are a hindrance and a temptation to idolatry. Let us cleanse the Temple of God from them. (For additional copies of this tract and other messages on God's way of salvation, please write: GRACE LITERATURE, P.O. Box 879, Gaffney, S. C. 29340, U.S.A.)

VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NORTHERN PRESBYTERY

"Infancy and the Law"

Recommendations re Drink Law

We, the Northern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Dingwall on 30th August, 1966, have considered carefully the pamphlet, *Infancy and the Law*, prepared by Mr Leon Brittan and sent to the Latey Committee on the Age of Majority, and wish to state that we view with the greatest disquiet one particular recommendation in the pamphlet to the effect that young people be accorded the legal right to buy alcohol at the early age of 16, not as at present at 18 years.

We feel that the grounds given in the pamphlet for this change

are exceedingly superficial, namely, that while a youth cannot buy a drink at a pub under 18, he can "take alcohol with a meal provided that the meal is served in a room used specifically for that purpose;" and, if the age were reduced to 16 for all, that "drinking would be subject to some degree of control if it took place on licensed premises." Surely these are reasons that call for the strengthening of the law rather than for further relaxation.

Also, that young people today attain physical and mental maturity more quickly, is no reason why the legal age allowing them to buy alcohol should be lowered. However quickly young people may mature, the formation of character is not sufficiently advanced at 16 to permit them to make a wise decision on such an important matter as the use of alcohol, which is likely to affect their whole after life and character.

These reasons given in the pamphlet, we feel, are so lacking in force or reality as to give us the impression that they have been advanced merely as debating points, and are tragically insufficient to decide the legal age at which our young people should be permitted to buy alcohol.

Experienced officials in the drink trade such as Mr Austin Webb, London chairman of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, is reported to have strongly objected to this proposal as placing temptation in the path of the young and imposing heavy responsibility upon the people in the drink trade who have to decide the age of the youths who frequent their premises to get drink.

We are convinced that this suggested change in the present law is bound to implement the very objection, so lightly dismissed in the pamphlet—page 7, that it will lead to "an increase in juvenile drunkenness," and, we may add, to irresponsible and juvenile crime as well.

We, therefore, respectfully and strenuously submit that this particular recommendation of the pamphlet, *Infancy and the Law*, that the legal age permitting young people to buy alcohol be reduced to 16 be rescinded.

On behalf of the Northern Presbytery of the F.P. Church
of Scotland,

A. F. MACKAY, Clerk.

(The pamphlet, *Infancy and the Law*, prepared by Mr Leon Brittan, unsuccessful Conservative candidate for North Kensington in the last election, appears under the auspices of the Bow Group, a Conservative organisation, with a foreword by Rt. Hon. Edward Du Cann, M.P., Chairman of the Conservative Party Organisation).

Crime and the Death Penalty

We, the Northern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, met at Dingwall on 30th August, 1966, alarmed and

disturbed by the steady increase of crimes of violence throughout the country, and particularly by the murderous attacks carried out upon members of the Police Force by armed criminals, are convinced that the laws governing the punishment of these crimes, especially the crime of murder, are altogether inadequate, and wish to emphasise the need for strengthening these laws and, in the case of murder, of re-introducing the Death Penalty.

We confirm this demand by observing:

That the Word of God in both the Old and New Testaments gives authority for the punishment of murder by requiring the Death Penalty. This command is clearly expressed in the Lord's words to Noah:

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man."

—Genesis ix: verses 5, 6.

We refer among other passages to the Apostle's words in Romans xiii: verse 4, where the civil magistrate is divinely authorised to "execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," as he "that beareth the sword;"

That the unwarrantable tampering with the Law of Capital Punishment has produced a crop of savage and sadistic crimes;

That only when less sympathy is shown to the criminal, and crimes of murder sternly suppressed by the Death Penalty, will society become safe for ordinary citizens to follow their peaceable lives unmolested.

We therefore respectfully but solemnly ask that you give all support in your power to strengthen the laws dealing with crimes of violence; and that the Death Penalty be re-introduced as the only adequate law to protect our people; we particularly ask, as a matter of urgency, that the Death Penalty be immediately re-introduced for the murder of policemen, by Parliament.

As we understand that proposals to have the Death Penalty restored for the murder of policemen are under contemplation for the new session of Parliament, may we have your assurance that you will give unqualified support to these measures?

On behalf of the Northern Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,

A. F. MACKAY, *Clerk.*

Copy sent to:

Rt. Hon. William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland.

Mr Russell Johnston, M.P. for Inverness-shire.

Mr Alexander MacKenzie, M.P. for Ross-shire.

Mr Robert MacLennan, M.P. for Caithness and Sutherland.

LITERARY NOTICES

The Life and Labours of a Native African Missionary, by M. MacPherson. Obtainable from the Publications Treasurer, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness. Price 4/-.

The Native African Missionary whose life and labours are set forth in this book was the Rev. J. B. Radasi, the first Missionary of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland to Rhodesia. Mrs MacPherson, Gisborne, thought that if the letters and reports contained in the Free Presbyterian Magazine from Mr Radasi relating to his work were put into one volume they would form an interesting account of the Foreign Mission work in that distant land. Mrs MacPherson hopes in particular that young people will find her production to be good reading material for them.

It might have been thought that it was doubtful if such a method would be much of a success but, on reading over the book, one cannot but be impressed with the presentation of the facts in connection with development of the Mission at Ingwenya. Despite the letters being of different dates and dealing with various subjects, there is a remarkable degree of continuity preserved throughout the book which makes it absorbing reading.

It is evident that Mr Radasi was not only concerned to keep members of his Committee informed with regard to his work but that he understood the absolute necessity that the people of the Church should be equally well informed. It is not enough that annual reports should be submitted and read in the Synod Proceedings. The work of the Mission needs to be kept continually before the minds of the people.

The book contains in Mr Radasi's own words an account of his troubles and trials as he endeavoured to preach the gospel to his fellow-Africans. There are also a number of accounts of remarkable conversions which took place during the course of his ministry. These make edifying and encouraging reading.

One of the interesting points which this book reveals is that Rev. J. B. Radasi's father was apparently a converted man. Speaking of his death, his worthy son says, "My father, I understand, was ill for fourteen days. It is said that he desired the Bible to be read to him every day when he was no longer able to read it for himself. The chapter he desired to be read to him just shortly before he died was the eighth chapter of Romans and when he got to the eighteenth verse, he desired them to repeat the eighteenth verse. He was a convert of one of the early missionaries and always spoke very highly of the old missionaries who first came to Africa. He was a man who was strongly opposed to such things as concerts and

tea meetings for Church purposes. He used to say the old missionaries never did these things. He was not at all pleased with the state of the Church at the present time." (page 73).

Both young and old will find this book interesting and it is commended to all as edifying reading. May the Lord be pleased to bless the reading of it to the stimulating of prayer for and interest in the Mission work in Rhodesia.

We look forward also to the early appearance of a biography of the late Rev. James Fraser by Rev. A. MacPherson, Dornoch, which the Banner of Truth Trust intend to publish. (DV). D. MacLean.

COS-CHEUMABH IONGANTACH AR RÌGH

Leis an Urr. Domhnall Corbet, Cean Loch Buirbhidh

Roimh-radh.—Chualadh mi suspainn na sgeul iongantach a leanas, bho cheann iomadh bliadhna, bho bhilean Mhaighsteir Corbet, a chuir gu cùramach ann an sgriobhadh nithean a bha air innseadh dha le iomadh seann Chriosduidh. Ged a bhios neach ullamh gu teagamh a chur innte gidheadh tha i uille fìor, agus bithidh sluagh Dhé, ann a bhi 'g a leughadh, air an treorachadh gu bhi toirt moladh do'n "Tì a mhàin a nì nithean iongantach," agus aig am bheil a chreutairean is anamhuinn luachmhor agus urramach (Isaiah xliii), air an gràdhachadh le gràdh sìorruidh.—*Andrea A. Bonar.*

Caib. I.

Aig an am 's an deachaidh an Creidimh Ath-leasaichte a chur suas anns an rioghachd so (1688) agus a bha mòran ann an Alba a bha dìchiollach air son a Phàpanachd a thoirt a stigh, agus an creidimh sin a bha sgrios anamaibh a chur suas a ris, thuair a Bhan-tighearna Grange, a rugadh ann an Siorramachd Fiofa, agus a bha pòsda ann an Dun-eidean, a mach gu'n robh a fear-pòsda agus mòran dhaoine uasal eile a deilbh innleachdan a chum na crìche so a thoirt mu'n cuairt. Bha gràdh mòr aice dha fear agus chleachd i h-uile meadhon air son toirt air a rùn a threigsinn, ach 'n uair nach deanadh ùrnuigh, na aslachadh, reusanachadh na comhairle a chùis, do bhrìgh gu'n robh tuilleadh gràidh aice do theagasgan a Bhiobail a bha saoradh an anama, do aobhar an Fhir-shaoraidh bheannaichte, agus saorsa tìr a dùthchais, na bha aice da fear-pòsda, ge bu mhòr a gràdh dha, dh'innis i gu soilleir dha, gu'm foillsicheadh i na b'aithne dhi dheth na h-innleachdan anns an robh e cho domhain air fhilleadh. 'N uair a chunnaic e nach gabhadh stad a chur oirre thuair e a giulainn air falbh gu dìomhair gu dachaidh caraid dhà anns na h-Earradh.

Cha do sguir geur-leanmhuinn na bean uasal so aig a sin. Tha

eilean far cladach na h-Earradh, fada mach 's a chuan, ris an abrar h-Irt. Tha sinn ni's eolaich air ainm an eilein so an diugh na'n uair a thachair so. Anns an àm 's an robh cumhachd beatha agus bàs aig na uachdarain air Gaidhealtachd agus anns na h-Eileanan bha'n t-eilean so na àite fògraidh, mar a bha Eilean Phatmos aig na h-Impirean Ròmanach, agus gu cinnteach cha ghabhadh prìosan cuain na b' aonaranaiche a bhi air fhaotainn. Smuaintich fein bean uasal, air a togail ann an saobhbheas, cleachd-te ri communn riomhach, agus bho's ceann na h-uile nì, aig an robh inntinn agus cridhe a bha'g iarruidh co-chomunn fìor shluagh Dhé, air a cur ann am birlinn ceann-feadhna, agus an deigh turas-cuain sgitheil, gu'n dìon bho'n ghaillionn, a dlùthachadh air an eilean chuain so. Tha i faicinn nan creagan àrd mu'n cuairt, gu'n coltas lamaruig an àite air bith. Tha'n cuan 'n a mhòr chumhachd a bualadh air na creagan agus a chop ag eirigh deich troighean fichead. Ma dheireadh tha seorsa lamaruig ri faicinn, ach an urrainn iad faotainn gu tìr? Faic mar tha'n tonn a bualadh, agus ga chruinneachadh fein as ùr, mar gu'm bitheadh e dol a thoirt ionnsuidh eile air an t-eilean a thilgeadh thairis.

Co iad so aig an lamaruig? Prasgan do dhà fhichead duine làidir, ciar-lachdunn. Tha'n trusgan, agus an coslas gu leir ag innse gur e daoine borb a th'annta. An e naimhdean na càirdean a th'annta? Ciod e sin do'n bhean uasal so a tha faicinn annta, na'm mnathan agus na'n cloinn, companaich na'm bliadhnachan aonaranach a bha air thoiseach oirre. 'N uair a chuimhnicheas i air a seann seirbhisich dhileas aig an dachaidh a nis cha'n e a dachaidh-se ni's motha; 'n uair a shamhlaicheas i a daimhean agus a càirdean gaoil riutha-san a' measg am bheil a crannchur a nis air a thilgeadh; 'n uair a bheir a chlann bheag leth-ruisgte so 'n a cuimhne a clann bheag gràdhach fein, nach fhaic i ni's motha—nach leoir e gu toirt air a h-anam cràiteach briseadh troimh'n phaillean chriadh? Nach eil an cridhe ullamh gu sgàineadh? Agus sgàineadh e gu cinnteach mar a bitheadh gu'n robh timchioll oirre làmhnan gràsmhor a Mhaighsteir ghlòrmhor, dha robh gràdh aice; agus air son an robh i fullung do bhrìgh a dillseachd Dhà. Chùm an Tighearna suas i, oir bha rùintean Aige r'a choimhlionadh nach b'aithne dhith.

Ciod e nis? Tha'm bàta a dlùthachadh air a chladach a tulgadh air mullach tonn atmhor. Tha na daoine air a chladach a deanamh greim oirre mus buail i'n tràigh, le greim daingeann gus a cumail bho bhi air a tarruig air ais leis an tonn; tha iad ga'n socrachadh fein fodh a cliathaichean agus ga togail fein agus an sgioba, 's na bheil innte, ga giulain suas bho chumhachd nan tonn. Tha Bhan-tighearn Grange a nis air tìr, taobh a stigh ballachan an eilein

a bha nis gu bhi 'n a phrìosan dhith. 'N uair a chaidh Alasdair Selkirk fhàgail air eilean Juan Fernandez, bha poit iaruin agus beagan de nithean feumail air a chur air tìr còmhla ris. Dh' fhaodadh e bothan a thogail dha fein, agus bha nithean a fàs gu nàdurra 's an eilean, leis am faodadh e se fein a bheathachadh. Thaobh a Bhan-tighearna Grange bha cùisean eadar-dhealaichte. Eadhon ma dh'òrduich a tighearna cruaidh-chridheach, nithean a chur ga h-ionnsuidh—agus bithidh e coltach gu'n d'òrduich—cha b'urrainn iad a ruidheachd ach uair 's a bhliadhna. Cha robh tigh air ullachadh dhith; dh'fheumadh i còmhnuidh a ghabhail ann an aon dheth na bothain, a bha'n leth fodh'n talamh, a bha aig na h-Irtich, agus i fein a shineadh 's an oidhche ann an aon de na leapaichibh a bha air am faotainn ann am ballachan a leithid sin de dh'ait. Cha robh anns na bothain so ach aon seomar le àireamh de leapaichibh eile; mar so, timchioll a bhallachan. Bha'n teine air meadhon an làir, agus bha'n ceo, do bhrìgh nach robh e faotainn rathad a mach, a cuartachadh na bha stigh le neul a bha ga'n tachdadh. Bha'n luatha, maduinn an deigh maidneadh, air a sgaoileadh air an làr, agus air a saltairt sìos gu cruaidh, agus chitheadh tù an crodh 's na caoraich na'n laidh fad na h-oidhche an ceann eil a bhothain. Cha robh oidherp air bith air a dheanamh air son am bothan a ghlanadh, gus an tigeadh àm an earraich, agus am bitheadh an salachar a chruinnicheadh fad na bliadhna, air a sgaoiladh air an talamh, agus sin air son beagan bàrr fhaotainn bho'n talamh neo-thorrach a measg nan creag.

A mhuinntir òg, am bi sibh a nis nì's ullamh air smuainteachadh le taingealachd air a chùrum a bha air a ghabhail dhìbh fein bho am bhur leanabachd? Is cinnteach gu'm bi sibh nì's ullamh air eisdeachd ris an Tì a tha'g ràdh ribh, a thaobh bhur sochairean, "Cuiribh gu buil iad, gus an tig mise." Feoraicheam dhìbh an e nach eireagh sibh ann an uamhar agus a' mì-thoileachas agus ann an ceannaire an aghaidh riaghladh Dhé, agus nach abradh sibh, "Is ceart dhomh a bhi ann an corruich gu bàs." Na'm bitheadh e fìor an deigh dhuibh eirigh bho leithid sud de leabaidh, agus biadh fhaotainn de dh'ecoin air an droch còcaireachd, na de dh'uibhean coin-mhara air an droch dheasachadh, gu'n amhairceadh sibh suas ris an Tighearna agus gu'n iarradh sibh gràs gu bhi toilichte. A thaobh na bean uasal so, chunnaic an Tighearn, nach toir cùntas 'n a ghnìomharan, iomchuidh gur ann an Eilean h-Irt—ait anabarrach borb aig an àm so, agus fada bho mheadhonan follaiseach nan gràs—a bha obair an naomhachaidh gu bhi air a ghiulain air adhart. B'iongantach an soitheach ionnlaid; ach tre Fhocal Dhé, tre chreidimh agus ùrnuigh, bha chrìoch air a coimhlionadh. An deigh iomadh

bliadhna a dhol seachad thàinig crìoch air a fulungasaibh, agus tha a duslach 'n a laidhe air taobh an iar an Eilean Sgitheanach, ann an dòchas beannaichte ri aiseirigh ghlòrmhor.

Ann a' meadhon na nithean so cha robh a Bhan-tighearn Grange a ghnàth gun leus chomhfhurtachd. Cha'n urrain sinn innse nì air bith mu thoradh a saothair ris an t-shluagh, a bha i chòmhnuidh 'n am measg, an deigh dhi beagan dhe'n cainnte ionnsachadh. Cha'n eil teagamh nach robh a h-eisempleir agus a caith-beatha air a bheannachadh, ged nach eil doigh againn air fhaotainn a mach cia cho fad. Ach chuir an Tighearna aon chòmhnadh sònraichte dha h-ionnsuidh, agus mar sin dh'oibrich E chum a ghlòir Fein. Dhealbh a fear-posda mòran bhreug gu bhi ga dhion fein, agus a deanamh ainm na bean-ualas cho maslach agus nach robh oidheirp air bith air a dheanamh gu bhi ga saoradh. Ach air do'n mhinisteir aice air Ghalltachd fios fhaotainn, ann an dòigh nach robh suil aige, air an àite san robh i air a fògradh, bha e comasach air taghal oirre uair sa bhliadhna. Chaidh aige mar an ceudna air cainnta an t-sluaigh, anns na siorramachdan mu thuath, a' measg an robh e triall, ionnsachadh, air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'n robh e comasach air Focal na Beatha shearmonachadh dhoibh. Thug a thuras e do'n Eilean Sgitheanach, agus 's ann an sin, air aon dhe na turasan mu dheireadh a ràinig beannachadh air Màiri Nic Bheathain.*

*Is ann sa bhliadhna 1730 a bha Bhan-tighearna Grange air a giulain bho dachaidh an Dun-eidean agus air a toirt an toiseach, gu diamhair, gu Hoisgeir, naoidh mìle bho Uibhist a Chinn Tuadh, agus an deidh sin gu h-Irt, agus be'n aon bhan-chompanach a bha aice, nighean bheag a bha frithealadh dhith; ach 'n uair a bha oidheirp air a dheanamh air son a cur saor chaidh a giulain do'n Eilean Sgitheanach. Bithidh e gle choltach gur ann an deigh dhith dol do'n eilean so a thuair a seann mhinisteir a mach i, agus a thoisich e air taghal oirre uair so bhliadhna. Bha i mu dheich bliadhna an sin, agus chaochail i sa bhliadhna 1740.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Episcopalian Canon and the Church of Scotland

The Episcopalian Church in Scotland has manifested, from time to time, its professed interest in the Ecumenical movement which of course includes the Church of Scotland. We have always been of the opinion that Episcopacy in Scotland and in England will never forfeit their basic ecclesiastical forms and traditions; but will ever seek that The Church of Scotland will give up much belonging to Presbyterian principles and practices.

And in this connection we note a report in the *Greenock Telegraph*, 17th September, 1966. A gentleman belonging to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Greenock, wished to attend instead The Church of Scotland, Mid Kirk. He was refused a letter of commendation by the Episcopal minister, Canon G. N. Pennie, who stated that the Church of Scotland and the Episcopal Church were not in communion with each other. The Canon said: "I cannot stop you joining the Mid Kirk, but if you do so, you do it without my blessing." This attitude on the part of the Canon might have been justified from a purely ecclesiastical point of view, if there was none of this talk about "the disgrace of a divided Church of Christ" and that Christian charity demanded a coming nearer together of the different denominations. The Canon certainly is not a protagonist of any movement away from the Episcopal Church towards the Church of Scotland. He likely would give his "blessing" to one coming from the Church of Scotland to join the Episcopal Church. We are of the opinion also that Church of Scotland leaders are blind to the *real* attitude of the Church of England and Episcopal Church of Scotland re the question of Church Unity. Some of these leaders may of course be longing for a measure of Anglican ritual, while not prepared to leave the Presbyterian fold altogether. Men who are devoid in heart of the life of grace must make much of outward forms to sustain a superficial interest in organised religion.

A Blasphemous Story

A prize-winning story entitled "Eastern Centurion," by a 16-year-old schoolgirl, was published in *The Scotsman's Weekend Magazine* of September 24th. It was in the form of a "Monologue by the Centurion in charge of the Crucifixion." Some of the references to Christ by the Centurion, in the story, were as follows:—"... the poor bloke carries his own gallows." "Small he was, a sort of desert-rat, like you see a lot of in Asia." "A little Galilean told me he'd said he was the Messiah . . . must have been some kind of crank." All that is recorded of the Centurion's expression of opinion in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark is contained in these words: "Truly this was the Son of God." And in the Gospel of Luke he is said to have exclaimed: "Certainly this was a righteous man." And therefore to the sensitive Christian with a reverence for the Biblical account of events connected with the Crucifixion of the Son of God—this schoolgirl permitted her imagination and pen to run to unseemly lengths. Yet she obtained a first prize for her effort by appointed judges. Originality, although joined with blasphemous expressions, earned the commendation of the judges. A letter to the

Editor of *The Scotsman*, critical of this published story, was not published although written in a restrained manner. True friends of the Son of God are few today.

A Peculiar Donation

Alcoholism is becoming increasingly a matter of experience in the case of many wretched persons; and units in certain hospitals are endeavouring to deal with more and more cases. And yet the manufacture and sale of whisky are being increased in this country. Millions of pounds are being spent on advertising strong drink to encourage the public to drink. One of the largest business organisations engaged as above is the Distillers' Company Ltd., of Edinburgh. Yet, this same company are donating £50,000 to the Scottish Hospital Endowments Research Trust for the promotion of research into alcoholism. A peculiar donation indeed considering the source of it! The report on this donation also states that alcoholism was now recognised to be a disease; and if the research did anything to alleviate it, the company would be happy, said a spokesman for The Distillers' Company Ltd. But alcoholism is brought on by drinking alcohol to excess and over a period of time; and the donators of this £50,000 are supplying the alcohol, and pushing sales by every means in their power. Their interest in research is, to us at anyrate, difficult to understand.

The Now Fashionable Joint-Service

The inaugural service of the World Methodist Conference in London, at the end of August, was attended by representatives of the Church of England and other Churches. And it was attended by Cardinal Heenan of the Roman Catholic Church. It seems that ecclesiastical activities and conferences and the like have reached a stage in a large area of the professed Protestant Church, when things are not complete without a representative from the Roman Church. This suits Rome well. Rome will not change in dogma and otherwise. But more and more uninformed people are being deluded into thinking that Rome is changing to compromise with other Churches. This is one of the strong delusions common today.

CHURCH NOTES

Communion

January—Fifth Sabbath, Inverness, Auckland. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, North Uist, Kyle of Lochalsh. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness, Portree and Tarbert; third, Finsbay; fourth, Kinlochbervie, London and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Achmore,

Portnalong, Stoer and Fort-William; second, Fearn, Gisborne, N.Z.; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross; second, Shildaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch, Inverness, Auckland. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaul; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton; fifth, Achmore. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Stornoway, Thurso and Vatten. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool, Breaslete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert, Stoer and Vancouver (Canada); fourth, Applecross. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta, Lochcarron, Fort-William; second, Dumbarton, 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 (D.V.): Thursday, 1st December, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Friday, 2nd December, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 3rd December, 2.30 p.m. (Gaelic), 3.30 p.m. (English) and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 4th December, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.; Monday, 5th December, 7 p.m. The weekday services will be held in the Bridewell Hall, London City Mission, Eccleston Place, S.W.1, and the Sabbath services in St. Michael's Hall (opposite Victoria Coach Station), Eccleston Place, S.W.1. Rev. D. A. Maclean, M.A., Halkirk, and Rev. A. E. W. Macdonald, M.A., Gairloch, are expected to assist at the Communion (D.V.).

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College and Library Fund.—Two Friends, Inverness, £5, per Rev. D. McL.; Mrs MacA., Flashadder, per Mr J. G., 16/-.

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