

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
AND MONTHLY RECORD

Vol. LXXI

February, 1967

No. 10

WOMEN ELDERS—AN UNSCRIPTURAL INNOVATION

Statement on the Decision of the Church of Scotland Assembly of 1966 re the Eligibility of Women for Admission to the Eldership, by the Religion and Morals Committee

As is well known to the people of our Church, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland held at Edinburgh in May, 1966, decided, by an overwhelming majority, that women are now eligible for admission to the Eldership in that Church. In view of this serious departure from the Divinely authorised order of the Church of God by a branch of the visible Church in Scotland, the Religion and Morals Committee felt it their duty to draw up a Statement containing:—

1. A review of the main reasons which led the Church of Scotland Assembly to this erroneous decision.
2. An assessment of the true Scriptural teaching on the eligibility of women for the eldership.
3. A repudiation of this unscriptural act by the Church of Scotland Assembly.

That an examination of the alleged reasons warranting the admission of women to the eldership is necessary and may prove useful, can be gauged from the high ground adopted with reference to this very subject in a Petition presented to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as early as 1931 which claimed that *the exclusion of women from office was contrary to the mind and teaching of Christ and that it limited the operation of the Spirit of God*. This high claim, if substantiated, would indeed open the door to the eldership for women, and, consequently, we may usefully proceed to weigh the grounds on which the Church of Scotland has concluded that it has been substantiated.

1. REVIEW OF REASONS.

(1) *Reasons based on utility or expediency.*

The following is a selection of such reasons:—

- (a) It would be difficult to claim that women are incompetent by nature or by grace to share in the administration of the Church or to take part in the oversight of a congregation.
- (b) When capable women are employed to train theological students, missionaries and deaconesses, and when they have been awarded the B.D. degree and given licence to preach, how inconsistent to refuse to make them elders on sex grounds alone!
- (c) Women may be ordained Deaconesses: Why open one office and not another?
- (d) It would contribute to the "wholeness" of the Church, i.e. the effective participation of every part of the membership in the life and work of the Church.
- (e) It would strengthen Kirk-Sessions rendered ineffective by the lack of suitable men.

While many answers could be given and have been given to reasons of this sort, yet on the grounds that they are based merely on utility or expediency, we feel fully justified in dismissing them at once as having no authority whatsoever in arriving at a decision on a subject on which Scripture has given a clear directive. Moreover, it is obvious that if these reasons are to be accorded the precedence over Scriptural grounds, which they evidently obtained in the minds of the Commissioners to the General Assembly of 1966, then they would be equally valid in admitting women to the office of the ministry as well. If it should appear, however, as we shall see it does appear, that God has for all time debarred women from holding any office in the Church, then these reasons all fall to the ground, and no other reply need be made to them than—"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8, 20).

(2) *Reasons purporting to be drawn from Scripture.*

In answering the alleged Scriptural reasons, what we have to do is to demonstrate the erroneous principles or pre-suppositions which lie behind a distorted interpretation of the Scripture references bearing on women's place in the Church. The following principles have been insisted on as necessary and legitimate in coming to a sound interpretation of the relevant Scripture portions and in adducing the overall Scriptural teaching on the subject. (See Church of Scotland pamphlet on "The Place of Women in the Church").

These principles are:—

(a) *That in the unity of Scripture, specific texts cannot be taken as conclusive pronouncements.* If, for instance, Scripture as a

whole be maintained to teach something different from certain texts, even supposing there be three of them by the Apostle Paul, as in this case, Paul's words may be considered inconclusive.

(b) *That because there is a "time-boundness" in Scripture which relates it to the scientific and sociological views of a past age, Biblical situations cannot be imposed as a stereotype on present day situations.* Applied to Paul's pronouncements on women's place in the Church, this rule would allow the assertion that Paul was conceding to the customs of the times rather than boldly proclaiming the new place of equality granted to women through the new creation in Christ.

(c) *That a distinction must be drawn between "form" and "content" in the witness of Scripture.* Thus it would be said that the "form" in which the male-female relationship appears in Scripture is not to be recognised as relevant "content," that is, the true Word of God for the contemporary situation.

Equipped with this elaborate apparatus for interpreting the Word, there is no difficulty in allowing to be Scriptural, views on the subject of women's place in the Church which are exactly the opposite of those which the Scriptures, literally interpreted, teach.

(d) *In addition to these principles, an erroneous theory is accepted regarding the full equality of men and women in an attempt to prove the unreasonableness of withholding the office of the eldership from women.* The importance of this theory to the case for women in office must not be overlooked. Can it be established that women now have full equality with men (ignoring the express prohibitions of Scripture), the case has largely been made out. Only, of course, as with the reasons of utility and expediency, it proves too much in that it affords every justification for admittance to the office of the ministry as well, a conclusion to which their reasoning inexorably led them.

The theory of full equality is set out in the following way. In Genesis 1: 27, 28, we learn that to begin with there was full equality between the man and the woman. They were alike created in the image of God, they were together blessed, and both were given power to rule over the lesser creatures. The Fall brought about woman's demotion, but when Christ restored the original relationship between God and man, He also restored that between man and woman in His new creation. Thus Paul says: "There is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3, 38). Paul's argument for women's place in the Church, in so far as it stems from Genesis, would thus be based on the place given to women in a fallen creation.

It will be noted that this theory requires that Paul contradict himself. In one Epistle he is taken to say that through Christ the sexes are restored to full equality of status, and in another that the woman is not to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. This is only one of the difficulties which beset those who agree that the Scriptures are a unity but attempt to make them say in unison something which in fact they do not say.

2. ASSESSMENT OF THE TRUE SCRIPTURAL TEACHING.

We may now pass on to indicate the true Scriptural teaching as to the eligibility of women for the office of the eldership. The Biblical passages generally agreed to have a direct bearing on the subject of women's place in the Church are: Gen. 2: 18-24; 3, 16; 1 Cor. 11: 8, 9; 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35; and 1 Tim. 2: 11, 14. In view of the clarity and positiveness, and direct bearing on the question of women holding office in the Church of God, especially of the last two of these references—"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted to them to speak," and "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence,"—our first reaction must be one of amazement that the subject of women in office should ever have been ventilated in the Courts of a Church claiming to be Christian.

The Scriptural teaching in this matter will be further elucidated by examining the reasons given in Scripture for the prohibition placed on them. In 1 Tim. 2, 11-14, Paul combines the substance of his two other pronouncements in 1 Corinthians: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." Writing as an inspired Apostle, he here states that in public worship the woman's role is to be that of listener and learner, by no means teacher or exercising authority over men, duties which fall to the Elder. The reason Paul gives is that the woman is really subject to man, and that relationship is to be carefully maintained, especially in the house of God who ordered it so.

This relationship was inaugurated at Creation: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Or as the Apostle states it in 1 Cor. 11, 8: "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." God made Adam first, and Eve after him and out of him. This subordination also appears in the reason for the creation of the woman: "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." Now what Scripture reveals as the

order of nature, all human experience confirms, namely that men and women are differently constituted in several ways so that it is natural for the man to lead, to protect and to provide for, and for the woman to follow, to accept protection and to be a helpmeet.

But not only is woman's subordination fixed by the order of Creation, it is judicially confirmed on account of Eve's part in the sin which ruined the race. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." She whose place was to follow sinned in usurping the place of leader. The ambition to be "as a god" not only vitiated her relation to God but to her husband also. The equality of status, which the theory previously mentioned affirms to have been given at Creation, was in fact something which Eve, when tempted, sinfully coveted. Carried away with the thought of all the advantages she would obtain, she took the initiative in eating the fruit and persuaded her husband to do likewise. "And so she fell into transgression, into the fatal stepping aside from the path of obedience. And now that which before was an unmingled blessing—namely, that Eve, by virtue of her creation, constantly followed Adam—is an unmingled blessing no longer; for she who, by her sinful example, chose to rule him who at that moment was still her sinless husband, must obey the creature of her own designing, namely, her sinful husband. Hence, let none of her daughters follow her in reversing the divinely established order. Let none assume the role which was not intended for her." (Hendriksen on 1 Tim. 2, 14).

Paul is here teaching authoritatively what agrees with all Scripture. There was subordination from the beginning. It was judicially confirmed at the Fall, and the equality between male and female which Paul speaks of in Galatians 3, 28, has nothing to do with the permanent relationship between the sexes, but with their equal eligibility for the benefits of the redemption purchased by Christ. In Him the distinctions of nationality, social class and sex are abolished in so far as every believer becomes a full participant in saving benefits. Under the old dispensation Jewish men did have privileges denied to women, but that is now at an end.

We wonder what those who press the theory of an original equality now restored in the new creation think about Paul's instructions to husbands and wives in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. Is Paul wrong there too? Are wives not to submit themselves to their own husbands as unto the Lord? Is the husband not the head of the wife even as Christ is the Head of the Church? Is the wife not to be subject to her husband in everything, just as the Church is subject to Christ? Surely it is

just in this tenderly beautiful passage that we see most clearly that the subordination of women to men, so far from being degrading, unjust or unkind, is the natural relationship ordained by God from the beginning, and here made the type of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Love and service on the one hand, love and submission on the other; that is the Christian order, and it is this which has raised women to the place of honour and influence which they occupy in a truly Christian society.

3. REPUDIATION OF THIS UNSCRIPTURAL ACT.

The Commission of Assembly which reported to the General Assembly of 1942 expressed itself as being of the opinion that *the exclusion of women from the office of the eldership can no longer be justified, and that the highest interests of the Church are seriously prejudiced by this exclusion.* The highest Court of the Church of Scotland has now homologated these sentiments. Accordingly, the Religion and Morals Committee of our Church, taking into consideration the arguments adduced in favour of women in office on the one hand, and the clear teaching of Scripture on the other hand, find themselves compelled to repudiate the action of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as being utterly without warrant from Scripture and consequently injurious to the interests of true Christianity and of the Cause of Christ in Scotland. We cannot characterise otherwise than as unchristian, an act whose tendency is to remove women from their true and honourable place in the Church of God and encourage them to usurp an office in the Church which they were never intended to fill, thereby exposing them to the judgment of God, and endangering the souls of those over whom they will bear rule.

We have no hesitation in condemning the decision of the Church of Scotland Assembly as an unscriptural innovation and an act of plain disobedience to Christ the Head of the Church. In His Word Christ has forbidden women to hold office in the Church, and however disagreeable this divine command may be to many in this generation, it is part of the inerrant Scriptures of Truth. For more than nineteen centuries the Church has largely accepted as God's revealed will the exclusion of women from office, yet in 1966 the professedly Scriptural, Reformed and Presbyterian Church of Scotland opened the office of eldership to women. We regard this decision as wrong and regrettable beyond words, yet in view of the Church of Scotland's very unsatisfactory relationship to the Bible and to its own subordinate standards such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, we are not unduly surprised. The

same blatantly unscriptural trend which in recent years has shown itself in relaxation of Sabbath observance and in movements towards Romanism, and now in admitting women to the Eldership, may be expected to continue. The trend is to the immeasurable hurt, spiritually and morally, of the people of Scotland, and we can only plead that the Lord will pour upon that Church and upon the whole nation the spirit of repentance, in order that the accelerating spiritual and moral decline may be arrested, and the nation and Church turned back to God and to beliefs and practices agreeable to His Holy Word.

THE DEACONESS—IS THERE SUCH AN OFFICIAL IN THE CHURCH

By Rev. A. M. Cattanach, M.A., S. Harris*

I come now to this question, Is there any warrant in Scripture to suppose that there was anything corresponding, in the Apostolic Church, to the diaconate, as far as women were concerned? By its very definition, the word "deaconess" obviously means a "female deacon." It cannot be denied that there are, in our own day, women set apart as deaconesses, both in the nominally Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and in other non-Presbyterian Churches. Neither can it be denied that there have been, at other periods of Church history, in various denominations, deaconesses or their equivalents. Indeed, even in the early Church itself, we have mention made of them in several of the writings of the Fathers. Be that as it may, however, it in no way proves that their existence in such churches substantiates the truth that such an order existed in the Apostolic Church.

My observations, therefore, upon this part of my subject, shall take the form of a short discussion upon the following three topics, viz.:—

- (a) The Place of the Deaconess in the History of the Church.
- (b) The Place of the Deaconess in the Scriptures.
- (c) The True Place of Women in the Church.

(a) The Place of the Deaconess in the History of the Church.

In both modern and ancient times, we find mention of deaconesses in the organisation of the Church. In keeping with

* This Paper was additional to Rev. A. M. Cattanach's Paper on "The Office of the Deacon," delivered at the recent Theological Conference. It is published by request of the Editor to follow the statement by the Religion and Morals Committee on "Women Elders." This article was not written for publication, and Mr Cattanach states that this will explain the use of technical and linguistic terms.—*Editor.*

my aim throughout this paper, I confine my attention, in matters of Church Polity, at present, to the Presbyterian Branch of the Reformed Church, for the modern period, and merely raise one or two interesting points relative to this subject.

It is only in fairly recent times that we find such an order in the Church of Scotland itself; its introduction coincides, broadly speaking, with the decline of vital godliness and the rise of modernism in that Church. You will find no mention of such an order in the polity of the Church of Scotland in its best days. In vain will you look for the name in any of the noble documents of the Reformation, First or Second.

While it may be granted, for the sake of argument, that modern deaconesses perform valuable work, in their own sphere, yet the work is rather of a social nature, and need not, in any way, be connected with office in the Church as such. They could conceivably perform their work as well, without ordination, as with it. The movement to have women in office began in the modern era, with the "emancipation" of women in general. It would appear, from events that deaconesses were easier to introduce and have accepted by the authorities in the Church of Scotland than either of their obvious counterparts in ecclesiastical organisation, women elders and women ministers. The former have only now by a majority vote at last General Assembly been accepted, and are beginning to form part of the set-up of the Church throughout the land. Many have been the moves to have women ministers introduced into that Church; so far unsuccessfully. Yet it is to be feared, from the trend of recent events, that the day of their introduction is not far distant. Against all this movement we, as a church, have been rightly opposed, and our position is made clear in the "History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland," Appendix III, Section III on Differences in Practice. Under the sub-division entitled "Admission into Office," it is stated:

"We condemn the modern movement of admitting women into office in the Church as contrary to Scripture. The United Free Church (Continuing) has already opened its doors for admission of women into office, and in the Church of Scotland there are many zealous advocates of the movement."

Leaving the modern era we may now say a little on a section of Calvin's Institutes which will provide us with our introduction to the early Church, as we trace the history, in brief, from modern to ancient times, of this particular ecclesiastical order. Dealing with the order of nuns in the Church of Rome, he draws a comparison between them and the deaconesses of the early Church, and writes:

“ But what ground can there be for applying this passage to nuns? (dealing with the question of celibacy). For deaconesses were appointed, not to soothe God by chanting or unintelligible murmurs, and spend the rest of their time in idleness, but to perform a public ministry of the Church towards the poor and to labour with all zeal, assiduity and diligence in offices of charity. They did not vow celibacy” (Institutes, Book IV, Chapter 13, Section 19).

It is clear from this quotation that we may infer that the Church of Rome, at that time at least, contended that the order of nuns was directly connected with the early order of deaconesses. Calvin ably refutes this, as above. There could be no question of the two being in any way alike; the Romish order was plainly a corrupt one. One point emerges, however, of much interest to us here—Calvin admits to such an order as deaconesses in the early Church. Does he, in fact, support the contention of the advocates of this order in the modern Church, that not only in the early Church, but even in the Apostolic Church, such an order existed? It would appear, indeed, that he does.

I quote again from the Institutes, in a section dealing with the diaconate, based on Romans xii: 8, “ He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness,” when he writes thus:

“ This clause refers to those who had devoted themselves to the care of the poor and the sick. Such were the widows of whom Paul makes mention in the Epistle to Timothy (I Timothy, v. 10). For there was no *public office* which women could discharge save that of devoting themselves to the service of the poor. If we admit this (and it certainly ought to be admitted), there will be two classes of deacons, the one serving the Church by administering the affairs of the poor; the other, by taking care of the poor themselves” (Institutes, Book IV, Chapter 3, Section 9).

If we interpret him aright, Calvin here considers the passage in question from Romans to refer to male and female deacons, the latter being regarded by him as equivalent in meaning to the “widows” of I Timothy, v. 10. It is true that others are of the same opinion; Jamieson, Fausset and Brown’s commentary, however, differs as to the equivocating of the widows and the deaconesses as one and the same ecclesiastical order. It rather regards them as distinct orders, and holds the deaconesses to have been an order of younger women. Others appear to suggest that the deaconesses were chosen from the order of the “widowhood” or “presbyterial widows” as they are sometimes called. All this seems to suggest that the orders which, without doubt, existed from a period in the sub-Apostolic age, say from the late 2nd century onwards, are, by some eminent scholars and even

by Calvin himself, back-dated to the Apostolic age itself. Are they justified in doing so? We think not. There is little enough evidence in the Scriptures themselves on the subject for scholars to be dogmatic in any way. Truly, deaconesses have existed in the Church from very early times, but who constituted them as an order? Have we any record of their appointment as we have of their male counterparts, the deacons? None whatever. Assuming the importance of a public office such as an ecclesiastical order, intended for permanent use in the Church, is it not natural to expect some account, however small, of the origin of such an order, in the Scriptures themselves?

The fact that they constituted an order in the days of the Church Fathers of the early Christian era is evident, for example, from a study of the "Apostolic Constitutions." In the earlier books of this document, for example, under the name of *diakonos*, we see that women were constantly employed in the work of the diaconate. In later books, again, they are referred to by the feminine noun *diakonissa* from which our own "deaconess" is derived (Bk. VIII, 19, 20, 28). Pliny the Younger, the Roman governor of Bithynia, in a letter to the Emperor Trojan in 110 A.D. speaks of them as being in the Church there (i.e. in Asia Minor), but apart from this, it is not certain that they are referred to in any other 2nd century writing.

The inference which I draw from all this is that what prevailed in the Church after the decease of the Apostles is no criterion for us as to what actually prevailed in the Apostolic Church of the New Testament Scriptures. The latter are our only record of such events, not the sub-Apostolic writings, of which we have many, where the order is taken for granted.

(b) The Place of the Deaconess in Scripture.

This brings me to my second point, which are the passages of Scripture most often adduced by the advocates of the modern deaconesses, as their basis for having such an order in the visible Church? Apart from mere references to be found in single words of certain verses (from which nothing so definite as the warrants above can fairly be adduced) the two main passages referred to are Romans xvi: 1 and I Timothy iii: 11.

Let us take a quick glance at them in turn.

(i) Romans xvi: 1 reads, in the Authorised Version:

"I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea"

The words translated thus, "a servant of the church" are, in Greek, *diakonon tes ekklesia*.

Notice the following points then:

- (a) *Diakonos* is a Greek noun of common gender; no separate form is found for the feminine gender; hence it is applicable to both sexes.
- (b) It can mean, as we have seen already, either “a servant” (one ministering to the needs of others), or “a deacon,” in the technical sense. The former is its primary meaning—the latter only secondary.
- (c) The phrase itself, “servant of the Church,” might seem to suggest, possibly, a title—but this is by no means necessarily the case.

In the matter of interpretation, we would suggest that there is no reason to suppose that *diakonos* here is used in the technical sense of deaconess—a use to which the word was undoubtedly put in later writings—apart from the fact that, by the year 110 A.D., the practice of having deaconesses had been established in the Eastern Churches, to which region of the Empire the Church at Cenchrea, the seaport of ancient Corinth, would naturally belong. By universal agreement among New Testament scholars, the Epistle to the Romans is dated circa 57 A.D. It will be seen then that there is over half a century in difference between these two dates. What other evidence have we for supposing that, as early as 57 A.D. or so, there was an order of women helpers in any of the Churches established during the great Apostles' own lifetime? There would appear to be none, because our evidence is the New Testament itself alone, and in it there is no record of such having ever been appointed. Their argument is an “a priori” one, based on later evidence; in this particular instance, not a very convincing one.

Even if we were to grant, however, that *diakonos* is here used in a technical sense, it need not follow that an order of deaconesses such as existed later had already arisen. From the separate and secluded life of women in the East, many have argued that women deacons were a necessity. Acts vi makes mention of widows in dealing with the prime cause for the origins of the deaconate; were women chosen to sort out the differences? The fact that seven men were appointed by the apostles at that time would seem to give the lie to such an argument. If female deacons were such a necessity in the existing conditions of society, would not the inspired Apostles have been led to make suitable provision? On the contrary, seven brethren are appointed to the work.

All this leads me to conclude that much has been read into this passage from later times and later customs, and therefore cannot be accepted by us as proof that deaconesses existed in the Church in Apostolic times.

The word *diakonos* is used here in the feminine sense quite obviously; it occurs nowhere else in the N.T. in this sense. It seems rather precarious, therefore, to base an argument such as this upon the slender evidence of one passage alone, when the spirit of the Scriptures, as a whole, would seem to be clearly against such a conception of women officers in the Church. "A servant of the Church" Phebe certainly was; more likely in the sense of a patroness or benefactress, in a private capacity, than in any public capacity, as an official of the established Church order. Indeed, in verse 2 she is so described by the use of the word *prostatis*, a "succourer" or "helper," the Greek equivalent in fact of the Latin *patronus*, a patron. She would seem to have been a lady of means who used her wealth in the service of love which is mentioned here, as many others of her class in other days of Church history.

(ii) I Timothy iii: 11 is the other passage most frequently quoted as a basis for such an order.

This is one of the verses which occur in the section dealing with the qualifications of deacons. In the A.V. this reads:

"Even so must *their* wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things."

The word translated "wives" (*gunaikas*) is also the Greek for "women," and since there is no possessive pronoun in the original text for "their" (as can be seen from the italics in our Bibles), some have translated the passage thus, "Even so let the women be grave . . ." and then interpreted it to mean 'the women' as an order, distinct from the bishops and deacons (with which the whole section deals) that is, the deaconesses. This is only our assumption really; there is no reason why the passage should not be taken to refer to the wives of deacons. Not much weight can be laid upon such an argument as the following: Why deacons' wives and not those of bishops also? Why should the former be singled out? Might it not be that the work specially assigned to deacons required of their wives the very qualifications specified here? Another point to note is that no definite article is expressed in Greek with the noun and, if a class of women were intended, it is more natural to expect it whereas, without the article, it is quite natural to take it to refer to the deacons and translate, not "the women" but "wives."

I feel that any proof from this passage may therefore be quickly disposed of, the translation, and consequent interpretation, of the A.V. preferred. Indeed, if verse 11 of this passage is taken to refer to deaconesses as a distinct order, there is an abrupt interruption in the line of the Apostles' thought, since verse 12

goes on to speak of the deacon again and lays down, as a regulation, that he "be the husband of one wife"—not so unnatural, if verse 11 refers to the wives of deacons.

So much then for the Scriptural references brought forward to support the existence of such an order as this in Apostolic times. I trust that it has been sufficiently established, from our discussion above, that there is in fact little or no support at all for the contention of the advocates of this modern movement, at least from the various passages referred to above; in fact the whole concept of such an order of women in office in the Church seems to be patently contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture and its teaching as to the place of women, in general, and in particular, in the visible Church.

(c) The True Place of Women in the Church.

This brings me, finally, to say a little on this question. If we accept and believe that the testimony of Scripture is that the deaconess, as such, has no place in the organisation of the Church, what then is the true role which women, in whom the Lord has wrought a good work, may occupy in the Church visible? Truly they occupy an important role in the life of the Church—the Scriptures make this abundantly clear. No serious reader of the New Testament can fail to see that women, from the very infancy of the Church, have been highly honoured by the Lord, in being called to follow Him, to love Him and also to serve Him. Names spring to the reverent mind at once: Mary and Martha of Bethany; the former sitting at His feet, the latter serving; the woman that was a sinner and her alabaster box; the women of Galilee who followed Him to Jerusalem and who remained by the Cross (albeit afar off), who saw where Joseph and Nicodemus had laid his precious body, and who also prepared the spices and came early to anoint Him. These are but a few from the Gospels; in Acts, we think of Dorcas and her work of love in making garments for the poor; of Priscilla, Damaris and others, who believed: in the Epistles, we read of many dear women of old, of whom we know no more than their names, and the fact that they helped the great Apostle of the Gentiles and others—Phebe, Enodia, Syntyche, Typhaena and Tryphosa, Julia and the like. All these were "holy women of old," shining lights in a dark world.

If there were no deaconesses in Apostolic times, there were plenty of godly women who served Him well, though not in office in the Church. Their sphere of work lay elsewhere; theirs was a special service and labour of love and they sought not to usurp that authority which Christ had vested in others of the opposite

sex. Like those women of Galilee, of whom we read that "they followed Him, ministering unto Him" (in Greek, *diekonoun*, the very word used, in the technical sense, of doing the work of a deacon), they were content to render that humble service as the fruit of faith and love. Not only then, but in later ages also, we find such noble women in the history of the Church. Our thoughts go back instinctively, in this connection, to that noble band of women who suffered, some even unto death, for their Lord and Master in Scotland in "the killing times"; noble ladies of the Covenant, too, who were not ashamed of Jesus and His Cross. The following quotation from the pen of the late revered father of our Church, Rev. D. Beaton, Oban, in the introductory chapter to his little book, "Scottish Heroines of the Faith," expresses my own personal feelings exactly:

"In writing to the Philippian Christians, the Apostle Paul speaks of certain women who laboured with him in the Gospels, and calls upon the Philippians to help them. The generous nature of the great Apostle of the Gentiles recalls with pleasure those days of happy fellowship enjoyed at Philippi; whatever sphere their labours may have covered, it may be taken for granted that these did not encroach upon the provinces of public teaching and ruling in the Church of Christ, for there are certain very explicit statements in the Apostles' own writings that expressly prohibit any such interference. But though the Word of God so strongly condemns any such infringement of the constituted order of God's house, yet there are many outlets in the service of Christ for the zeal and devotion of godly women."

These outlets are even with us—not merely acts of benevolence, but the ministry of prayer, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, the helpful word in season and so on. Mothers in Israel there have always been; let those among ourselves who fall into such a category seek earnestly to follow in the footsteps of the noble cloud of witnesses, who have gone before. Mothers in Israel; women of Galilee; fellow-labourers with the Apostles—by whatever connotation they may be known—their successors are with us, not in the deaconesses of modernistic churches today, but rather in the humble, penitent, loving followers of Jesus, who are not ashamed to minister still to His needs, in His body, the Church, in the spirit of the divine Saviour Himself, and who, like them, are honoured to bear the message of redeeming love in a Scriptural way and so help us, who are called to public office, to continue to bear witness to that precious truth, which Mary and the other women first communicated to the disciples on the glorious Resurrection Morning. "The Lord is risen indeed!"

SERMON

By Rev. A. Mackay, Tarbert, Harris

Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified and they took Jesus and led Him away.

And He bearing His cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.—John xix: verses 16, 17, 18.

In this chapter we see the Lord of Glory brought before wicked men and dealt with as if He was utterly worthless. The Officers of the Jews led Him to Annas and Annas sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest. From there He was led into the hall of judgment. He was treated as if He were a malefactor. We read in Luke that Pilate sent Him to Herod, who was highly displeased. When Jesus answered him nothing, Herod then sent Him back to Pilate. We must look closely at this and try to realise by faith that Jesus must have been tired—oh, so very tired. Neither respite nor sleep was offered Him. Assuredly He was the eternal Son of God but it is equally evident that He was a true man. His humanity must have been tired after the anguish He endured in Gethsemane. The anguish was so intense that it caused Him to sweat as it were great drops of blood. It was after such exquisite suffering that He was led from one tribunal to another. Friends, let us look at this more closely and admire the marvel of it. Let us stand in holy awe in view of the fact that the Eternal Son of God was in our nature and on behalf of His people. While Pilate found no fault in Him, he chose to please men rather than have a conscience void of offence towards God. These solemn words are written about him “Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified!” As the Lord may enable us we would like to notice three things:—

1. A little regarding the reason for which Christ was delivered. He could not be delivered without a charge being preferred against Him.
2. Christ going forth bearing His cross.
3. Something regarding the sight brought before us here. We read “Where they crucified Him and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.”

Not only is this a sight which is past, it is presented to us this very morning in the gospel.

I. We may now consider why Christ was delivered to the Scribes, Pharisees and elders. Their malicious reasoning was that

He was a malefactor and guilty of blasphemy. They were bringing the Bible forward to accuse Him. They would with an open Bible condemn Jesus to death, for under the Jewish law those guilty of blasphemy were to be put to death. They affirmed that He was worthy of death because He made Himself the Son of God. He declared Himself to be co-equal with the Father, and the eternal Son of God.

We must note, however, that the Roman law did not condemn Christ. The Romans prided themselves on the justice and fairness of their laws. This law in the person of Pilate pronounced this judgment on Jesus. "I find in Him no fault at all." Pilate as the representative of the Roman law acquitted Him from the charges of sedition brought against Him. The Jews were going to condemn Him by the Bible and by civil government. This is not unusual. Men try this even in our own day. They seek to crucify Christ and His Cause by the so-called Church and, if they could, by civil government. But the Cause of Christ will stand and withstand every attack levelled against it. That is the promise. It shall continue till the millenium and to the end of the world. "And upon this rock I will build my church and the gales of hell shall not prevail against it."

Christ went forth to Calvary bearing His Cross. As you know the curse is bound up with the cross. "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Were it not that Christ went forth bearing His cross each one of us would have to go forth from this world under the curse of God due to us for sin. Further, we would have to go from death to the judgment seat and from the judgment seat to a lost eternity. Oh! sin is such an evil thing that God demands infinite punishment from every sinner who remains without faith in and love to Jesus Christ. For a sinner dying with a guilty conscience the penalty of the Holy Law of God knows no limitation. Oh! friend, let each of us seek diligently to know our state before God and in view of eternity. For should you die and your conscience not sprinkled with the blood of Christ, without faith in Christ, without love to God, the penalty of the law will know no end, no end, to all eternity.

Jesus went forth bearing His cross, bearing the curse bound up with the cross. It was not merely a literal Cross which He bore on His shoulders. He was bearing the infinitely heavier load of the curse of God due to His people for their sins. He was the sin-bearer, the Just in the room of the unjust. Had He not done so, my friends, you and I must needs go forth to a lost eternity where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. They who died without a saving knowledge of Jesus as their own sin-bearer now realise the demands of the Holy Law of God.

They are even now experiencing the terrors of it. If you will not love Christ bear in mind your responsibility to believe in Him. If you continue impenitent you must die the second death and endure the pains of Hell forever. May we seek to understand the brevity of time: how short a time we shall on earth remain. "For over it the wind doth pass and it away is gone, and of the place where once it was it shall no more be known."

Now we see Pilate contrary to the terms of Roman law and contrary to the dictates of his own conscience delivering Christ to three parties—to the Scribes, to the chief priests and to the elders of the people. Nothing would satisfy these parties but that Jesus be brought forth to Calvary and hung on the accursed tree.

But there is another and higher law and we must look within the veil and see another Judge before whose tribunal Jesus as the Surety of God's elect is standing—standing as their sin-bearer. God, in the person of the Father, was, as Judge, dealing strictly with His own Beloved Son in our nature as the elect's Surety. Oh! think of it, you who cherish a good hope for eternity: think of your sins and let me think of my sins imputed to the Son of God in our nature, and He bearing the guilt of each and every sin. As we see on the great day of Atonement the high priest with both hands on the head of the goat confessing Israel's sins and the goat then led away to the wilderness. Here there are imputed to Jesus the sins of a number no man can number, the sins of Manasseh, the sins of Saul of Tarsus, yea and your own sins, child of God, sins which you see to be so heinous and are verily so.

God as the eternal Judge delivered Jesus to three parties infinitely higher and more authoritative than the scribes, priests and elders. He delivered Him to Eternal love in the bosom of God: love to His people whom He loved from all eternity. Nothing would satisfy the scribes, priests and elders but to have Christ crucified to gratify their maliciousness, but to the believer and to Jesus Himself He is being delivered in keeping with the Covenant of Grace and in the fulfilment of prophesy.

He was delivered to eternal Holy Justice, "Awake, oh sword against my shepherd." Justice demanded satisfaction and Jesus alone could meet its demands on behalf of all united to Him by faith. Justice is well satisfied and salvation is now offered to sinners freely and without price.

The world, the devil, the scribes, the chief priests and the elders could never have taken Christ to Calvary. They would have failed miserably though it was their heart's desire to crucify Him. There is a third party to whom Jesus was delivered and that was His own holy and blessed will. Were it not for God's eternal love and justice and Christ's own will, your sins would

still be on your own head. These were the three parties which, in holy harmony, brought Jesus to Calvary. The Church of God below views these wonders by faith, above it views them by sight. Christ is Himself the great high Priest offering up the sacrifice of His own Holy obedience from the womb to the cross where He cried "It is finished." That is the spotless sacrifice He offered. Friends—we need Christ—His blood to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living and true God, to cleanse us from the guilt and from the pollution of sin. Nothing but Christ and Him crucified will deliver and cleanse us.

II. Christ going forth bearing His Cross.

His enemies thought that death by the cross would make an end of Jesus, and that He would trouble them no more. But instead of death making an end of Jesus, He by His death made an end of death. In abolishing death Jesus has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

At Calvary the terms of the Eternal Councils are being unfolded and fulfilled. Oh, that the Holy Spirit would reveal these glorious mysteries to our poor benighted souls. In place of the stigma and shame usually associated with the cross, the sweet fragrance of the name of Jesus will yet fill the whole earth. His glory shall fill the whole earth and all nations shall worship Him.

His enemies thought that the followers of Jesus would conclude that He was a deceiver but instead of that thousands were added to the Church and the gospel message spread to the benefit of mankind to this day. The saved in Heaven and on earth believe that the blessed and glorious One crucified on Calvary is the Eternal Son of God and that His Obedience unto death is the way and the only way to Salvation.

The unsaved in a lost eternity gnashing their teeth and suffering the flames of everlasting anger which says "Though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished," have a witness in their now awakened conscience that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified between two malefactors, is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. "That at the name of Jesus every knee must bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth and that every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father."

In the 17th verse we read that Jesus was brought to the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha. Some think this name was given because the heads of many malefactors were broken there and others explain it away by saying the shape resembles a skull. But to the child of God Calvary is the place of a skull in that here the head of the serpent was broken for

eternity, in fulfilment of the promise given in the Garden of Eden—that the seed of the woman was to bruise Satan's head. That is what transpired at Calvary. Christ broke the head of the serpent; took the sting out of death and so saved His people with an everlasting salvation.

III. The sight before us here.

We see Jesus raised up between two malefactors. He is raised up before us in the Gospel. Where are we in relation to Jesus Christ? We are either with the impenitent malefactor or with the penitent one believing in Jesus, desiring with a holy desire to be with Christ in Paradise. Calvary is before you in the Gospel today. Are you with the ungodly malefactor with a heart full of enmity to God? If so, think of your awful condition on your way to Eternity. Are you with the penitent, repenting of your sins, desiring to believe in Jesus, longing to be with Christ throughout eternity?

Raised up on the Cross Jesus cried "I thirst." Why? So that you would drink out of His sweet fullness throughout the everlasting ages.

The natural sun was darkened. While in that natural darkness, Jesus endured a deeper darkness. The Father was withholding His comforting Presence so that Jesus was constrained to cry, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why indeed? So that you poor unworthy sinner could enjoy the light of eternal day beholding the Lamb in the midst of the throne forever and ever. Let us, however, bear in mind that although the Father withheld His comforting Presence He was even then with eternal love loving Christ, His own Beloved Son. He loved Him and upheld Him, when by a deep (we cannot understand it) sense of His absence Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me." Was He loved by the Father at that moment? Oh yes, verily yes, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth."

No drink was given to Christ so that His people, though utterly unworthy in themselves, could drink out of His love, world without end. No angel was sent to give Him a drink. When He was agonising in Gethsemane an angel was sent to strengthen Him, but when He was thirsty on the cross there was no angel with a cup of cool water from the pool of Bethesda or Siloam. Were it not for Jesus, you and I would be shut up in hell without one drop of cold water to quench our thirst. The inflexible Justice of Jehovah was standing between the lips of the Sin-Bearer and one sip of water. All this (oh, our incapacity to comprehend) was in the curse of the Law for Jesus. Why? Oh, why must it be so? So that you, child of God, could enjoy the Presence

of Christ to all Eternity, and participate in the holy fellowship of the children of God for ever and ever.

We know little—oh, so little—but assuredly the believer will have Christ, and enjoy the love of Christ here, at death and throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Oh! friends, how we ought to love Christ! Do you love the Lord? Perhaps you say you don't know. Is it a point you long to know? You may be here and saying "I am desperately wicked," but you would love to love the Lord. How much you desire to love the Lord! You are grieved in your soul because of the sense you have of your lack of love to Jesus. That fruit has as its root the grace of love in your soul.

This Jesus is now alive and alive forever more and He is saying to His people "Because I live ye shall live also." Further, it is written "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also."

May God bless His Word.

FRIENDLY VISITS

by Matthew Henry

(Continued from page 277)

Nay, even from what we hear and see, which is foolish and blame-worthy, we may learn that which will be profitable to us. Solomon received instruction, even from the field of the slothful, and the vineyard of the man void of understanding. What we observe indecent in other, we must learn to avoid; and take warning by others' harm. Thus out of the eater may come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.

But it is now time to conclude, with a word or two of exhortation, upon the whole matter.

1. Let us all remember our faults this day, and be humbled before God for the guilt we have contracted by our mismanaged visits of our friends. In our common conversation, as well as in our common business, it is hard to keep ourselves unspotted. Think, how much time we have lost in needless and unprofitable visits, which might have been better bestowed, and cannot now be recalled! What mean and low ends we have proposed to ourselves in making our visits, and how we have in them walked after the course of a vain and foolish world, and not after the conduct of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. *Are we not carnal, and do we not walk as men?* as the Apostle speaks (I Cor. iii: 3) far short of the spirit of Christianity, that high and holy calling wherewith we are called.

Think, how little good we have done in the visits we have made and received! How few have been the better for us: it is well if many have not been the worse for us, and for our corrupt communication. When the company has fallen into vain discourse, that foolish talking and jesting which the word of God expressly condemns (Eph. v: 4) have we not been as forward as any to promote it and keep it up, and showed ourselves well pleased with it? Have we not provoked one another's lusts and passions, instead of provoking one another to love and good works? Have we not given offence, and put an occasion of stumbling in our brother's way, by taking too great a liberty of speech in our conversation with our friends, encouraging the hearts of the licentious in their looseness, and grieving the hearts of those who are serious themselves, and expect we should be so too? Let us for these things *judge ourselves* this day, that we *may not be judged of the Lord*.

2. Let us be so wise as to chuse those for our intimate friends, who will concur with us in a serious endeavour to get this matter mended. For the truth is, in this as in a trade, we have the making but of one side of the bargain; we can do but little toward the rectifying of what is ordinarily amiss in conversation, and the improving of it to some good purposes, unless those we converse with will do their part: those therefore we should desire to associate ourselves with, who will edify us and be edified by us, whom we may either do good to, or get good by, or both.

It is our wisdom to avoid that company which we find corrupts our minds, and makes them vain, and indisposes them for serious exercises: what good there is in us is apt enough to dwindle and decay of itself, we need not the help of others to quench it. Therefore take Solomon's counsel, *Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge* (Prov. xiv: 7).

But since the communion of saints is intended to be the furtherance of our holiness and comfort, and the earnest of our future bliss, and we are taught by the pattern of that truly primitive Church (Acts ii: 42) to continue steadfast, not only in the Apostle's doctrine, but in fellowship, let us acquaint ourselves with some who appear to be serious Christians, without distinction of parties, and converse with them; let such only be our bosom-friends: and let us say to them, as the neighbour nations did to God's Israel (Zech. viii: 23) *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you*. Let God's People be our People, and David's resolution ours (Ps. cxix: 63). *I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts*.

3. Let us all resolve, by the grace of God, to look well to ourselves, and to the frame of our own spirits, in giving and receiving visits. If we cannot reform the world, yet I hope we may reform our own hearts and lives, and every man prove his own work, so shall ye have rejoicing in himself alone, although perhaps not in another; so shall his praise be of God, though perhaps not of men.

Christians, I am not persuading you to anything that is rude or morose; or looks like an affectation of singularity: nor am I declaiming against the innocent diversions and entertainments of conversation, which make it pleasant to yourselves and your friends, and are a relief to the fatigue of business: but I am only to remind you that you be very careful not to lose your religion in them. Remember that you are Christians, and you must speak and act in everything as becomes saints (Eph. v: 3). Remember that you are hastening into eternity, the days of your probation will shortly be numbered and finished; you are therefore concerned to spend your time on earth as those who are candidates, and probationers for heaven, so that you may not *seem to come short*. Converse with this world of sense, as those who know—You must shortly remove to the world of spirits; and let this thought give a check to everything that is vain and frothy, and put you upon considering, seeing you look for such things, What manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness (II Pet. iii: 11). (To be continued)

LITERARY NOTICES

The Millennium by Jonathan Edwards. (A Westminster Standard Publication).

This devotional treatise in abridged form, by the renowned Jonathan Edwards, sets out the significance of the Millenium to the Christian Church, and the importance of having Scripturally clear and correct views on the future prosperity of Christ's cause in the world, when all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before Him (Ps. 22: 27).

This booklet running into 36 pages gives a very comprehensive outline of this glorious time. In the Appendix the views of Augustine, Calvin, Witsius, John Owen, Samuel Rutherford, etc., are quoted, confirming the generally accepted interpretation that the latter day glory will be through the outpouring of the Ho'y Spirit, and not as the Premillenniarrians hold, by Christ's personal return to this world. Such a view does despite to the work of the Holy Spirit, and involves Christ in a second humiliation.

The Amillennarians hold that the Bible does not predict the Millennium to take place on earth, but is to be interpreted as signifying the reign of the saints with Christ in heaven.

The Postmillennarian view—the general view of the Church down through the ages, is that the Church will be raised to her millennial glory through a plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit leading to the “Fulness” or the widespread conversion of the Gentiles and the national ingathering of the Jews.

This booklet deserves the attention of all who have an interest in the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom, and should prove a wholesome corrective to the mistaken views on the subject so widely propagated and accepted in modern times. Obtainable from Mr J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, or Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand. Price 2/–, postage extra.—R. H. Vette.

The Paganism of Cremation: This is a 3 page pamphlet, price 2d, and to be had from Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand. It deals with the fact that cremation is of pagan origin, then exposes the excuses for cremation; and then the largest part explains that burial can be scripturally defended. When cremation is being increasingly resorted to, even by many who profess the Christian faith, this pamphlet will be helpful to readers to preserve a scriptural attitude against it.

Christ or Free Masonry: This is a 4 page pamphlet: price 3d, and to be had from Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand. It is being printed in the Young People’s Magazine at present. A great deal of information is provided in this pamphlet regarding the character, views and practices of this prominent secret society. Young men should buy it and read it carefully, and others should make a point of obtaining authentic information regarding this Society. Membership of this Society prevents men from obtaining church privileges in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. There are other Presbyterian denominations who allow church privileges to active members of this secret Society, although this Society is anti-Christian in the light of God’s Word.

Instruction in Christianity: This is a summary of Calvin’s “Institutes” by Mr Joseph P. Wiles, M.A., of Devizes, England: translated from the Latin in 1920: and republished now as a “paper-back” by The Sovereign Grace Union, 6 Linkfield Corner, Redhill, Surrey. Price 12/6. Mr Wiles states in explaining his summary: “I must either write a kind of analysis, a list of the various subjects touched upon: or else I must make a fairly full

version of certain passages, and omit altogether many pages of excellent matter. I chose the latter alternative and also simplified my task by omitting the whole of Book IV, which deals with ecclesiastical government and external ordinances." The book is printed in good clear type and extends to about 200 pages. It will certainly be a great advantage to those interested in Calvin's writings, and yet do not possess the large work of his Institutes nor the time for extended reading. It is said to be a faithful precis of Calvin's exposition of doctrine, prepared with the "average" Christian in mind. The serious reader will find in this book clear spiritual instruction in "The Knowledge of God the Creator," "The Knowledge of God the Redeemer" and "The manner in which the Grace of Christ is received."

The Triune God: by G. E. Lane, M.A., and published by the Sovereign Grace Union, at 1/- per copy. This is the second of a series of booklets dealing with the principal Christian truths. The writer deals with this profound subject by a study of 2nd Corinthians, chapter xiii: v. 14, where the Three Persons in the Godhead are mentioned. The writer seeks to explain in understandable terms and by reference to the Scriptures, some truths the Christian believes by faith and in measure apprehends by divine teaching, respecting the adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, one God.

Large Type Scriptures. In the Quarterly Record for January-March, 1967, of The Trinitarian Bible Society, there is an interesting note regarding Large Type Scriptures. This refers to a sixteen page booklet containing a *selection* from the Holy Scriptures under the title "Confidence," and printed in very large black type, which was produced first of all in 1961. It was thought by the Society at first that two or three thousand copies for the year would be sufficient. But several editions have been printed amounting to 100,000 copies, and editions in other languages have been published. This booklet is excellent for handing to others, those in hospital and the aged for example.

COS-CHEUMABH IONGANTACH AR RIGH

Leis an Urr. Domhnall Corbet, Ceann Loch Buirbhidh

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 283)

Caib. IV

Orduighean aig Inbher-pheotharain.—Chaidh na bliadhnachan thairis. Bha Màiri a fàs gu soilleir ann an gràs. Thuair l dachaidh agus cosnadh ann an tigh na té a ghabh truas dhith, agus lean i 'n a seirbhis gus an do chaochail a bhean uasal. An

sin dh'fhag i Inbhernis agus thuair i àite còmhnuidh ann an Sgìr Chroidh, far am b'urrain i bhì mealltuinn ministeirealachd a fear-teagaisg spioradail—Maighsteir Seumas Calldair. Cha robh i fad an deigh dol do'n sgìr sin, 'n uair a bha Màiri air a gairm gu bhì deanamh ri creutair bochd eil as an Eilean Sgitheanach, an dearbh nì a rinn a bhean uasal a choinnich i air an drochaid ann an Inbhernis rithe fein. Faodaidh gu'n cuala sibh mu uisgeachan leighis Srath-pheothair, a thà dlùth air Inbher-pheotharain, agus a bhì smuainteachadh air na h-uisgeachan sin mar nì a thuaradh a mach bho cheann ghoirid. Is ro-fhada sin bho'n a chùis, agus gu'm bheil e coltach bho linnibh air nach eil cuimhne, gu'n robh cuid de dhaoine easlainte a tighinn dha'n ionnsuidh. Ghabh saobh-chràbhadh cothrom air son ùine fhada air buaidh leighis nan uisgeachan so. 'N uair a bha'n riaghaldh aig Pàpanachd anns an tìr, agus eadhon a dh'ionnsuidh an am mu'm bheil sinn a labhairt, nan rachadh neach a dh'ionnsuidh tobar air bith mar a tha'n fheadhon a thà aig Srath-pheothair, gheibheadh e air na preasan mu'n cuairt, luideagan, na neapaigeanan, na stiallan de thrusgain, air fhagail leis a mhuinntir a bha air an leigheas mar thabhartas buidheachais gu bhì cur an ceill an taingealachd do'n naomh a bha iad a creidsinn a bha coimhead thairis air cumhachd leighis nan tobraichean so. Is ann bho cheann ùine ghoirid a chaidh na cleachdaidhean so a chur sìos le cumhachd an t-soisgeil.

A dh'ionnsuidh an uisge leighis so aig Srath-pheothair thainig bean tuathanaich a Cille Mo Lothag, ann an Sgìr Chille Mhoire, 's an Eilean Sgitheanach, ann an dòchas gu'm bithidh i air a leigheas bho thrioblaid àraidh a bhà oirre. Comhla rithe thainig nighean dhith agus dh'fhan iad beagan sheachduinean. Aig an àm so bha trì sgìreachdan 's a choimhearsnachd aig an robh sochairean mòr. Bhà na ministeirean a bhà anns gach aon dhiubh na'n daoine Dhé, agus nan luchd-ùrnuigh, pailt ann an oibribh creidimh agus ann an saothair gràidh. Bha mòran aca r'a dheanamh ann a bhì spionadh a nios cleachdaidhean a bha 'n an toradh air linntinn de shaobh chràbhadh agus de mhl-dhiadhachd. Am measg nan sgìrean sona so bha Inbher-pheotharain, agus ann an làithean seann Mhaighsteir Rose diadhaidh, agus am fear a bh'ann air thoiseach air, Maighsteir Mac Coinnich, bha cruinneachadh do'n a bhaile, gu h-àraidh aig am frithealadh Suipeir an Tighearna, àireamh mhòr sluaigh. Bha mòran dhiubh nan daoine diadhaidh, am feadh 's a bha àireamh nach bu bheag air an tarruig le neonachas. Am measg na muinntir mu dheireadh, aig an àm ris am bheil ar sgeul a deanamh gnothuich, bha an nighean a Cille Mo Lothag. Chunnaic i sàcramaid na Suipeir air a frithealadh 's an Eilean Sgitheanach; chuala i searmonachadh

mar an ceudna, araon aig amibh cumanta agus aig amaibh sàcramaid, ach chuala i nis nì nach cuala i riamh roimhe. Bha i air a bualadh le uamhas. Thòisich i air faotainn a mach ciod a bha i ann an sealladh an Tì Naomh. Phill i dhachaidh a dh'ionnsuidh a màthar fodh dhearbhadh domhain air peacadh, ga meas fein caillte, agus fodh mhallachd Dhé. Ach bha nì àraidh folaichte an taobh a stigh dhith a bha ga treorachadh gu bhì 'g iarraidh an tuilleadh agus an tuilleadh dhe'n fhirinn, a dh' aindeoin cho uamhasach 's a bha a mothuchadh air a truaigh. Cha'n e mhàin sin, ach, ged a bha i fein fodh mhothuchadh air diteadh, bu mhiann leatha a màthair a dhol comhla rithe air an latha màireach gu Inbher-pheotharain agus a chluinntinn air a son fein na nithean a thug a leithid de bhuaidh oirre-se.

Shaoileadh tù gu'm beannaicheadh a màthair an Tighearn air son nì bu chòr dhith mheas mar nì bha misneachadh dòchais gu'n cuireadh a leanabh a nis luach air Lighiche nan anamaibh. An àite sin, bho nach b'aithne dhì fein ciod e bh'ann a bhì na peacadh, mheas i'n t-eagal a bh'air an nighinn gu'n bhunait air bith; a thuilleadh air so bha eagal oirre na'n rachadh a nighean a ris do dh'Inbher-pheotharain a dh'eisdeachd searmoin gu'm biodh i air a call dh'ise, na theagamh gu'n rachadh i as a ciall. Uime sin, rinn i ullachadh gu tilleadh air ais do'n Eilean Sgitheanach gu grad; agus leis an rùn so, fhreagair i iarratasan a h-ighinn le a ràdh, "Sheonaid, cha teid thù dh'Inbher-pheotharain a' màireach. Fanaidh tus agus mise aig an tigh air son nigheadaireachd agus ullachadh air son an turais dhachaidh Di-luain." "A dhol a nigheadaireachd a' màireach," thubhairt Seonaid; "cha teid, cha teid. 'S e màireach Latha na Sàbaid. Cha bhuin dhuibh-se na dhòmh-sa dhol a mhi-naomhachadh an latha sin, agus mar sin a dhol a bhriseadh a cheathramh aithne." Ach cha do ghabh màthair Seonaid suim air bith de'n earail so. Thuair Latha na Sàbaid i ga cleachdadh fein mar a rùnaich i, agus a co-eigneachadh a h-ighinn gu tòiseachadh comhla rithe air mì-naomhachadh Latha an Tighearna. Thagair Seonaid an toiseach gu dùrachdach ri màthair air son sgur dheth h-obair, ach cha robh feum air bith ann. Dh'iarr i'n sin cead a dhol gu Inbher-pheotharain, ach bha so gu smachdail air a dhiultadh dhith. Thubhairt an nighean an sin r'a màthair, ge b'e ciod e chosgadh e dhith gu'm feumadh ise a dhol a dh' eisdeachd Focal Dhé, agus chaidh i air adhart gu bhì sgioblachadh a tonnag uimpe air son an aobhair sin. 'N uair a chunnaic a mathair aingidh so thog i a dà làimh agus le mionnanaibh uamhasach, ghuidh i mallachdan air ceann na h-ighinn. Gu sòlaimte thug i seachad do'n t-Sàtan i, agus dh'òrduich i dhith falbh agus gu'n a bhì air a faicinn leatha-se tuilleadh.

Ghuil Seonaid gu searbh agus ruith i mach an an àite 's an robh iad a tàmh. Bha a nis an sluagh uile a bha anns a choimhearsnachd air a dhol gu Inbher-pheotharain. B'e a ceud thogradh a dhol nan deigh, ach an deigh dhith dol astar math, dh'fhairich si i fein cho mòr air a claidh le luchd de dh'uamhas agus gu'm b'eiginn dhith suidhe a leigeil a h-anail. " Ciod e'm feum dhòmhsa dhol gu Inbher-pheotharain? " thubhairt i. " Cha'n eil dòchas dhomh. Tha mi fodh mhallachd Dhé, agus thug mo mhàthair fein seachad do'n nàmhaid mi. Cha'n fhaigh mi saorsa gu bràth, agus is ceart cho math dhomh pilleadh agus mo cheuman a threorachadh taobh air chor-eiginn eile." Agus 's e pilleadh a rinn i. Ach chuir an Tighearn, nach fac i 's nach b'aithne dhith, ach aig an robh a shùil oirre, le a Spiorad fein, 'n a cuimhne focal a chuala i—oir cha b' aithne dhith leughadh. Phill i a ris rathad Inbher-pheotharain, agus chàidh i beagan cheumanan air adhart, 'n uair a thàinig a' nàmhaid, ged a chaidh a bheul a dhùnadh roimhe, le buaireadh eile. Thainig na teagamhan a bha aice roimhe le cumhachd dùbailte, agus phill i air a h-ais a ris, gus an d'thàinig ni eile ri aghaidh a h-inntinn a thug oirre ann an aghaidh dòchais a bhi'g altrum dòchas. Agus mar sin chaidh i ris air adhart rathad an àite 's an robh'n soisgeul air a shearmonachadh. Bha gnothuichean a dol air adhart mar so a chuid a bu mhotha de'n mhaduinn—Seonaid air uairibh a dol air adhart, agus air uairibh a pilleadh. Ràinig i mu dheireadh iomall a choithional. Cha'n eil fhios againn cò a ministeir a bha aig an am àraidh sin a labhairt, ach chuala Seonaid e a moladh fuil Chrìosd dha'n a luchd-eisdeachd, a cumail fodh'n comhair eifeachd co-chur na fala gu bhi toirt air falbh cionta, agus mothachadh air dìteadh. Mar gu'm bitheadh e gu sònraichte air a sheoladh gu bhi labhairt ri Seonaid gu pearsanta, chual i e ag ràdh, " Ged a bhitheadh tu mothachail air eallach do-ghiulain mallachd Dhé, agus mallachd do mhàthar comhla ris a sin, gheibh thu gu leoir anns an fhuil so gu bhi ga'n toirt air falbh le cheile agus do dheanamh fireanta ann an sealladh Dhé. Chuala Seonaid so agus b'fhocal ann an deigh àm dhith e, oir chiuinich e'n stoirm a bha stigh. Shuidh i aig casan Chrìosd agus dh'eisd i le ro-aire. (R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Professor Leaves Roman Catholic Church

Father Charles Davis, aged 43, Professor of Theology at Heythrop Roman Catholic College, Oxford, has left the Roman Catholic Church, in which he had been a priest for 20 years. The press report of an interview with the Professor records quite a

number of statements which indicate why he left the Roman Catholic Church. Two statements at least, appear to be clear and specific. These are: "He made it clear that he now disputes papal infallibility." "The Church in its existing form seems to me to be a pseudo-political structure from the past." The dogma of infallibility was only declared in 1870, by the Vatican Council of that year, and their definition of the same includes the following words: "... the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*—that is, when discharging the office of Pastor and Teacher . . . he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the whole Church—he, by the Divine assistance promised to him . . . possesses that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding Faith or Morals . . . " This dogma was concocted by the 1870 Vatican Council and attached to the Pope from then onwards, without a shred of Scriptural basis. And what about the Popes who existed before the 19th century? And Professor Davis must of necessity leave the Roman Catholic Church when he disputes Papal infallibility. We read some time ago that it is difficult to obtain the record of an asserted infallible pronouncement by any Pope. It may be that no Pope, as yet, has dared to make a professed and public *infallible* declaration on Faith or Morals. But Roman Catholics, although informed by their theologians—if they read theology—that the Pope can err in his private capacity, are left with the impression that what the Pope says is without error. Then Professor Davis has discovered, what informed Protestants have known all along, that the Roman Church is largely a political organisation, using its influence in this realm all over the world for centuries and as much as ever to-day. Whatever Professor Davis understands by the term 'institution,' he states: "I had to ask myself bluntly whether I still believed in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution, I found that the answer was 'No'." He did not consider the claim the Church made as an institution rested upon any adequate biblical and historical basis. The Church, he said, had concern for authority at the expense of truth. We would like to know what aspects of truth are here referred to. Although he has left the Roman Catholic Church, the Professor has stated that he remains a Christian. Of course we are well aware of the fact that there have been prominent men who became 'converts' to the Roman Catholic Church. But in these days when there is so much propaganda and 'religious' pressure to influence people of all Churches to look favourably upon the Roman Catholic Church, it is a decided rebuff to all this activity that an intellectual and a theologian should calmly, and with reasons take his departure from the said Church. It would be interesting to

hear a conversation between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Professor Davis. The Archbishop would no doubt receive some much needed light upon some of the facts which should influence him to give up his "journey" toward Rome.

Christians Imprisoned in Russia

Official atheism is a terrible part of Russian Communism and permeates communism ideology the world over. It was reported last November that three women in Russia were sentenced to three years hard labour. They belonged to the Baptist persuasion. Their 'crime' was said to be, organising classes to teach Christianity to young children. They were also charged with taking children to other cities to join their fellow Christians in joint worship. These women were indeed careful to maintain good works and were not satisfied with their own personal interest in the hope of the gospel of Christ. They had an active, gracious, interest in the poor Russian children, before they would go out into the World, and that the Word of God would be made known to their young hearts and minds, before coming face to face with atheistical teaching. The conduct of these women was considered as one of the most serious offences against the diabolical laws obtaining in Russia. They are now suffering for Christ and the Word of God and for their works of faith and labours of love. We have no doubt that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ will be made sufficient for them in their time of affliction. These items of news should cause us in this country to appreciate more deeply than ever, our precious freedom and religious privileges. And Christians here may well examine themselves as to whether they are shining as lights in the world in that measure and in those ways, which the Lord requires of them.

Speech by Lord Reith

In the autumn of last year Lord Reith, as the new Rector of Glasgow University, made the customary speech; but in these days it was an unusual speech. This has been noted in different quarters already. He gave excellent advice to the students as to their studies and future life's work. And he concluded thus: "Many of us were under earnest Christian influence and instruction in childhood. But we haven't begun—or the Churches either—to comprehend the mystery and magic of the indwelling Christ. I know this to be true: and I long for you to discover early what I have come to realise so late." These surely were words to gladden the heart of any true Christian, in a day when so seldom one hears from persons in high places in the land, a word which honours Christ and contains gracious, gospel advice to our young men and women. From reports, we learn that Lord Reith's

speech before an assembled University, made a solemn impact upon his audience.

Russian Communism and Roman Catholicism

President Podgorny of the Soviet Union and Pope Paul were to meet on 29th January, while the President visited the Italian Government in Rome. Last April the Russian Prime Minister also visited the Pope. It seems unusual that such meetings could take place when the world was told in recent years that the Roman Catholic Church was the main bulwark against Communism. Roman Catholic prelates have been imprisoned or harassed in countries behind the Iron Curtain, and the Russian Communists are as anti-God as ever they were. The meeting may well be of a purely political nature as to peace in Vietnam or merely a courtesy visit. It will not, in our opinion, contribute to the peace of the world.

CHURCH NOTES

Communions

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, Lochinver; fourth, Kinlochbervie, London and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Breasclete, Portnalong and Fort-William; second, Fearn, Gisborne, N.Z.; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow; fifth, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross and Auckland; second, Shildaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaulay; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, 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, Breasclete; 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.

A Reminder to Subscribers

It has come to our notice that a number of the readers of the Magazines did not receive with their Magazines at the end of last year the usual form for subscribers to fill up with their order. Will these readers, or intending readers, send their name and address and a note of their order for one or both Magazines, with the money, to Mr John Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

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

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On behalf of the Trinitarian Bible Society.—Friend, £3; Anon, Ireland, per Mr W. D. F., £3; Inverness postmark, £1 10/-; Raasay Friend, £5; Mr A. M., Kiltarlity, £2; Miss M. S., Edinbane, £1; Anon, Argyll, £5; the following congregations: Raasay £19, Kinlochbervie £8, Lairg £18 1/-.

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The following lists sent in for publication :—

St. Jude's Congregation.—Mr J. Gillies acknowledges with thanks : Anon, Glasgow, £5 ; Friend, per A. G., Glasgow, £2 ; Anon, Glasgow, £5 ; Anon, £5, all for College and Library Fund ; MacKenzie Family, Airdrie, £7 ; Mr and Mrs C. MacK., Glasgow, £5, both for Sustentation Fund ; Capt. Sinclair, 10/- ; Mrs Forsyth, £1 ; D. MacL., Glasgow, £1, all for Foreign Mission Fund ; Miss J. M., £5 ; I. T., £1 ; Mrs A. W., £1 ; D. MacL., 10/- ; N. MacL., £2, all of Glasgow and for Home Mission Fund ; Anon, Glasgow, £12 for Fabric Fund ; Anon, Pollokshields, £5 for Mbuma Hospital.

Greenock Congregation.—Mr A. Y. Cameron acknowledges with sincere thanks, £5 for Manse Purchase Fund from Mr M. MacFarlane, Port-Glasgow.

Gairloch Congregation.—Mr H. MacLeod acknowledges with thanks : Well-wisher, per Rev. A. MacD. £10 ; Mrs Duncan, Boston, U.S.A., £5 ; Anon, £2, all for Sustentation Fund ; Mrs Duncan, Boston, £2 for Home Mission Fund ; In loving memory of a brother, £50 ; Anon, £5 ; Anon, £1, all for congregational purposes.

Ullapool Congregation.—Mr D. Beattie acknowledges with thanks, £1 from Anon, London, per A. Corbett, for College Fund.

Stornoway Congregation.—Mr D. J. MacLeod acknowledges with thanks : K. A. Murray, Glasgow, £5 ; Anon (further donation), £5 ; Breasclete congregation, £20, all for Hall Fund ; £3 from A Friend, Song 2, v. 17, for Sustentation Fund.

Inverness Ladies Rhodesian Mission Fund.—Mrs MacKay, F.P. Manse, Inverness, acknowledges with thanks : An Interested Friend, £5 ; Mrs Watt, Inverness, £5, "In memory of a loving husband."

Lochcarron Congregation Correction.—In December, issue Mrs MacLeod, Strome, should read Mrs MacLean.

Lairg Congregation.—Mr Wm. Sim acknowledges with sincere thanks, £1 from "Europa Helvetia," for Foreign Mission (envelope in church plate).

Mbuma Mission Hospital.—Mr J. Van Woerden acknowledges with thanks the following : July, Toronto Ladies per Mrs Campbell, 50 dollars ; from Mission Friends in Holland, per Mrs Mynders-Van Woerden, 14/7/66, £2,000 ; 20/7/66, £2,000 ; 31/8/66, £1,000 ; 8/10/66, £1,000 ; 4/11/66, £1,000 ; 1/12/66, £1,000.

Fort William Congregation.—Mr J. Matheson acknowledges with thanks the following for Church Extension Fund : "Anon," £5, per P. Anderson ; M. M. F. W., £10 ; Two Applecross Friends, £1 ; Friends, £3 ; Friend, £2 ; Friend, £1 ; Friend, £5 ; A. McL., Glasgow, £1, all per Rev. J. A. McDonald ; Friend, £1, per Mr I. M. ; N. McDonald, Mallaig, £5 ; Anon, Inverness postmark, £5 ; Mrs McDonald, Tyndrum, £1 ; Mrs Zeigler, Texas, £5 6/- ; Friends of Cause, £6 ; Retiring Collection F.W., £51 3/- ; K. L. D., £5.

Kinlochbervie and Scourie Manse Building Fund.—Mr D. A. MacLeod, Treasurer, acknowledges with sincere thanks, £5 from W. W., Inverness postmark.

North Tolsta Congregation.—Mr A. Nicolson acknowledges with thanks, £5 for Car Park from J. M. A., "Shiondudh," Achmore.

Shieldaig Congregation.—Mr N. MacPherson acknowledges with thanks, £5 from a Friend, Inverness, for Sustentation Fund.

Uig Congregation.—Mr M. Matheson acknowledges with thanks, £5 from A Stornoway Friend for congregational purposes, per Rev. D. J. MacA.

Kinlochbervie Congregation.—Mr D. N. MacLeod acknowledges with sincere thanks, £10 from Mr C. MacLeod, Kingston, Ontario, for congregational purposes.

Staffin Congregation.—Mr D. Gordon acknowledges with thanks : Friend, Toronto, 30 dollars ; F. M. A., £5, both for Sustentation Fund and per M. M. ; F. M. A., £10 for congregational expenses, per M. M.