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SYNOD SERMON

**preached by Rev. D. A. MacLean, M.A., Halkirk, Retiring
Moderator of Synod, at Glasgow, on 21st May, 1968.**

Text : Esther, Chapter 4, v. 13, 14.

"Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed : and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this ? "

To begin with we may say that the Lord's dealings in providence are wonderful and His Kingship ought never to be ignored. We find here the wicked Haman in the court while Godly Mordecai is in the gate. The same situation arises with innocent Joseph in the prison, David in the wilderness, and Elijah in the cave, while their enemies are living in the lap of luxury.

Now this has been a temptation to many. It was a temptation to the Psalmist as we find that brought before us in Psalm 73. He could not understand for a time why the righteous were chastened every morning while the wicked prospered. But he did understand it when he went into the sanctuary of God and saw their end.

More particularly what is brought before us here is the book of Esther. It has been argued that this book is not canonical. However, the Jews always regarded it to be on the same level as the rest of the Old Testament writings and so should we. The great objection that was found to this book was that the name of God was omitted, and also that there is no mention of Palestine, or Jerusalem or the temple or any allusions to the law or any previous Jewish history except two.

The first of these concerns the captivity under King Nebuchadnezzar. In chapter 2, v. 6, we read: "Who had been carried away

from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away."

The second reference is the subsequent dispersion of the Jews over all the various provinces of the Persian empire and there in chapter 3, v. 8, we read: "And Haman said unto king Ahasueras, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them." So we conclude that the history referred to in this book concerns the dispersal of the Jews, and Haman showed throughout his bitterness to them.

As we already noticed the name of God is absent from the book, but we can say that the Almighty has no need to write His name to let us know that His wisdom and power are controlling the march of human events. He is God Himself alone and the name of God may be absent but His power is everywhere visible.

Throughout the book and in His providential dealings with His people we can see God's special providence in bringing His chosen instrument to this kingdom for a purpose. At this time (at such a time as this) Esther appeared and was His chosen instrument. Friends, the Lord can use the weakest of weapons and the Lord can advance the weakest of weapons in order to be of use to His cause and help His people. This is exactly what He did here.

We have seen that Haman received a decree to destroy the Jews. The Jews have had their enemies and they still have them and it seems that they will continue to have them until they will turn to the Lord, the Lord whom they crucified, the Lord whom they rejected, the Lord whom they would not have to rule over them.

This decree which Haman had obtained to destroy the Jews gave Mordecai and the other Jews reason to mourn bitterly. We read that Mordecai was clothed in sackcloth in the king's gate and even Queen Esther was in a very delicate position, as we read in the text. In chapter 4, v. 11, we read that she had not been called to come into the king for thirty days. How could the Queen feel sure of her position? We think that she could not feel sure of her position when she was not called into the king for that period of time.

When we come to Mordecai's address to the Queen, we see that Mordecai does not only reproach her for being indifferent to the fate of her fellow country men, but he calls her attention to the fact that her own life was in danger.

How can we apply what is before us here to our own day? I may say that the Lord has not left himself without witness as we see in the difficult circumstances brought before us in this book.

The Lord has His remnant in every generation, and not only has the Lord His remnant in every generation but in every generation we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The quotation before us here is not only a direct message to Queen Esther but it is a direct message to every God fearing person in every age. May we be brought by the word and Spirit of the Lord to consider our duty "in such a time as this".

We live in perilous times and what are we called upon to do in these perilous times? We are called upon not only to witness but also to labour while the opportunity is before us 'at such a time as this'.

Now we may consider a few matters more particularly :

- (1) The time.
- (2) The providence of God.
- (3) The opportunity that Queen Esther had.
- (4) The privilege that Queen Esther had.
- (5) The outcome.

1. The Time

For the Jews it was a time of mourning. Their life was in danger. Their very existence as a people was at stake and this happened before in the history of the Jews, but the Jews are still a nation, and the Jews are beloved for their father's sake. We were thinking of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 83, when the language of the enemies was : "Cut him off from being a nation". We can say that the language of wicked Haman was "Cut him off from being a nation". Yes, his language was in his very heart.

What about Mordecai ? We read his words with interest. He feared the Lord and he watched every movement of the enemy. To Queen Esther, he says "and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this ?"

It was a most difficult time for the Jews. Haman had obtained a decree to put the Jews to death and letters were sent out to this effect to destroy the Jews, both young and old. Could we not say that Haman was just another Pharaoh seeking to blot this people out of existence altogether, but was this possible ?

In view of the time and circumstances it was very clear that the Jews required someone to help them, but what we must remember is this, that the Jews were God's people and the question is this : would the Lord forsake them ? What did Haman know of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 94, "For sure the Lord will not cast off those that His people be, neither His own inheritance quit and forsake will He." God was not going to forsake His heritage and the Godly were among the Jews and Mordecai was one of them.

There is also a remnant of the Lord's people left and thankful to the Lord for that. Not only should we but we should praise the Lord for leaving the remnant. He has a remnant and He will use them to the glory of His name. I was thinking of the words of the prophet in chapter 5, v. 7, 8: "And the remnant of Jacob shall be as a lion among the Gentiles, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces and none can deliver." This passage shows us how the Lord will use the remnant for His own glory.

We should look upon these words as if they were directly addressed to ourselves. What are we doing in these perilous times? Remember, friends, the heathen are on our very doorsteps, and thousands in this land, so called Christian, are ignorant of the truth. Those who go out into the world know this from experience. They know the appalling ignorance that is prevailing. Are we seeking to bring the word of God to them 'in such a time as this'? Nothing, friends, but the word and Spirit of the Lord will change the hearts of men and women. Nothing but the word and power of the Third Person of the Godhead will change the hearts of men and women, old and young, in this nation and other nations. It was said of another that she did what she could. Can that be said of us? Are we, 'at such a time as this' commending Christ to others as the only Saviour? Remember, what the Church said in the Song of Solomon when the daughters of Jerusalem said: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?" (Song of Solomon 5, v. 9). What was the Church's answer? It was this: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." (Song of Solomon 5, v. 10).

Friends, Christ Jesus is the only Saviour. He is white, He is ruddy, He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely one. He is a most suitable Saviour, and in passing I would say that it is a mark of the Lord's people that they are satisfied with Christ, and they want others to take His yoke and learn of it. When we were the servants of sinners may be converted.

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but unrest and crime! Coming nearer home
ority of parents in the home, and you find that parent
is not what it was.
What about the church? In the church you have error and
What can you expect of the rising generation, when they
not being instructed at home or in the church?
Now, friends, I ask you this question — Who is suffering today?
The cause of Christ is suffering. How can it be otherwise when so
much false doctrine is declared and when there is so little discipli-
ne in the churches of our land today? They have not the truth
and they know not the truth experimentally. How can they have
anything to offer the people 'at such a time as this'?

Our day is a time when the Church of God is in danger. Is this
matter giving us any concern? What do you think of what is
needed in our day? We are on the path of the backslider as a
generation, and you cannot close your eyes to it. What is the
remedy? The remedy is to turn to the law and to the testimony.

The question 'at such a time as this' is who is on the Lord's
side? If you are a praying person you will soon show where you
stand. Others had a name to live and were dead. What we need
is the Spirit of God to revive and quicken. The whole world is the
field and there is much need of taking a practical and active part
in the cause of truth.

We may ask the question at this time — Who is grieving for
the afflictions of Joseph? Friends, your own conscience will
answer but what I am going to say tonight is this, — Fathers and
brethren we are faced with great difficulties but we are also faced
with a great opportunity. Our duty is to go out and in going out
to have the prayer of Godly Jabez: "Oh that thou would
enlarge my coasts".

It was a time of trouble and perplexity for the Jews but a
time when the Queen could use her position for their deliverance.

2. The Providence of God

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom
at such a time as this".

As we mentioned at the outset it is difficult for us to understand
the book of God's providence. "His ways are in the deep"
He does not give an account of any of His matters.
Mordecai sees very clearly how events are shaping
place. The man of God has his trust in the God of Israel.
We know friends what is true of the person who has his
name of the Lord. That person is a safe and joyfu

FREE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE

Mordecai believes in the providence of God and he watches the gradual grouping of events and knows that they have not taken place by chance. He believes in an over-ruling providence.

It might be amazing that a Jewess should sit on the throne of Persia but we can say truly that there was one higher than Mordecai present and working not according to human plan. The hand of God is here.

There had been a great crisis in the history of this kingdom. The events in providence show this and we believe that Queen Esther came to the kingdom by divine appointment. What we have to say, friends, is that the Lord God of Israel is ruling in providence in the kingdom of Heaven.

The Lord in His dealings in providence can turn men (the heart strings of all men are in His hand) and can use them for His own purpose. This is exactly what He was doing here.

There is much also in the case of Cyrus. The covenant God of Jacob calls Cyrus his servant and makes use of him. Esther was ready when Haman's plot was culminated. David and the armies of Israel were ready when they were threatened by the uncircumcised Philistine and coming nearer our own time Luther was ready when the time was ripe to expose heresy. I was also thinking of our own nation, how so far it has been kept back from entering the Common Market. I was thinking that the Lord in his providence was making use of De Gaulle even although our leaders are too blind to see it.

In each generation the Lord has his servants, and even today the Lord has his servants. We pointed out already that he has his remnant and he will use his remnant and he will use them to the glory of his Great Name, in this land and in other lands.

You have the example of the Roman Empire which threatened the whole world. They did not succeed but they made much progress and the progress that they made was of benefit to the missionaries who went forth to carry the glad tidings of great joy to others.

The world today is threatened but the Church and believers are threatened to a much greater extent. What is the Church of God threatened by? They are threatened by the errors of communism, Romanism and materialism. That is true, but let us take comfort from the fact that a triune God is ruling and "he sits upon the throne". The Lord is working and the government cannot cast off. He is working in things spiritual but also

The opportunity the Queen had

Esther was Queen. As we noticed already she was a Jewess. Her life was, therefore, likely to perish with the rest because of the decree that Haman received. Mordecai saw very clearly that the only hope of escape was Esther, as we have in the words of the text: "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time."

Was there a danger that Esther would hold her peace? Esther could be tempted. Was Esther likely to hold her peace at a time when to speak was necessary to save her countrymen out of destruction?

There is a time to be silent and a time to speak for the profit and progress of the cause of Christ. The Psalmist was saying "Set, Lord, a watch before my mouth, keep of my lips the door". (Psalm 141 v. 3). These words show how we can sin in speech, but we can also sin by remaining silent.

Compromise is dangerous. Was there a danger that Queen Esther would compromise? Would there be a danger that Queen Esther would be tempted to remain silent when it was so necessary for her to speak. The silence to which Queen Esther would be tempted, would be the silence of complacency.

She knew how greatly the Jews needed help, but she could be afraid that her own position as Queen might be in danger. This silence is very common. We dread to speak lest we offend others, lest our ease, comfort or enjoyment suffer thereby. Nothing is so painful as being silent in the face of wrong. There is need to speak at such a time.

The Jews at this time would require courage and conviction and the Lord will give courage and conviction. In the narrative we see that the Lord gave Queen Esther courage and conviction and she went in to the king although it was against the laws of the king to do so.

The safest path for any believer to be in is the path of duty. Let us remember, moreover, that the work and progress of the work of God will not suffer through a particular man's disability. We are but mortal. Even although this treasure, which is the gospel, is in the earthen vessels, the Lord when he calls on a servant to his Eternal rest, will raise up another to take his place. The case is different here. If one person fails to do his duty relief will arise from some other direction. This is exactly what Mordecai pointed out to Queen Esther. It is certain that God from all eternity purposed that the gospel be preached to all nations. He will see to it.

As Queen Esther had an opportunity, so have we, and we need to consider that. Because we have this opportunity, let us go forth in faith at home and abroad, remembering that the Lord will bless the word that he has given to us to declare. "His

as we read in the prophecy of Isaiah, "will not return unto him void." Think not that we can fight against the purposes of God and remain uninjured. Such a thing would be impossible. Mordecai reminds Esther that the palace of the king would not protect her, and the palace of the king will not protect those who will not stand in the path of duty. Such are waging a war against the king of Heaven and you know how dangerous that can be. If the Lord makes known to you through his word the path of duty, it is your duty to follow that way. This way is very often the way that he is opening up for you in his providence. We see clearly that those who go against the purposes of God, do so to their own hurt.

Just as the Queen had an opportunity so have we. We as a church have the word of truth as the Apostolic Church had it. Our fathers laboured and we are entered into their labours. Our fathers handed down the pure word of God to us. In our church we can serve the Lord with a good conscience, because the people in the Free Presbyterian Church are in full sympathy with the doctrines we declare, and we ought to be very thankful for that.

What are we doing with the truth? Those who are true believers among us have come like Esther to a kingdom. The kingdom to which we have come is a kingdom which cannot be moved. What is our duty then? Our duty is to seek grace and to have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear. We ought to take every opportunity which presents itself so that we as a church may prove equal to the times in which we live.

Christianity is continually presenting two aspects, the defending and proclaiming of the truth. Are we to rest satisfied with doing one? We ought not. We are living in a day when the doctrines of God's word are attacked and we must guard them, and we are under vows to guard them, and not only to guard them but to do everything in our power to proclaim these precious doctrines and thus further the kingdom of Christ world wide.

The duty of the church is to preach the gospel to every creature. That is to go out into the world. We mentioned already the prayer of Jabez: "Oh, that thou wouldest enlarge my coasts". We should have that prayer in going forth into the wide field that is before us. We believe that when the Spirit of God is poured forth the people will flock to where the whole counsel of God's word is declared.

It is our duty to be watchful and to resist attack, but at the same time to be watchful to make progress. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." When you think how diligent the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses are, how diligent we ought to be in seeking to bring the word of truth to our fellow men.

4. The privilege

She was once a poor orphan when Queen Vashti had the royal crown but now the poor orphan has a place of honour and it was the wonderful providence of God that brought about this change. God worked for her and she was advanced to a place of honour. Now it was her privilege to work for Him in delivering his people, and we believe it was because the Lord loved his people that he made Esther Queen in Persia.

What about us who were once without grace and without God and without salvation? Now we confess openly that we know the way of salvation through the great Mediator, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The truth has brought a blessing to us and are we to keep back from making it a blessing to others? Remember your neighbour! Remember him in your prayers! Remember he has a soul! For that reason it is our duty to speak to him in the spirit of the gospel and to pray. It is our duty to hand out a simple gospel tract which brings the way of salvation to the recipient. When you think of the millions who are on the broad way, how can we remain unconcerned!

Our privileges are great, but, fathers and brethren, our responsibilities are great. Do we realise how great our responsibilities are, when the Gospel in all its riches and fullness is in our hands? Let us, therefore, go forth in the strength of divine grace and declare the unsearchable riches of Christ in the highways and byways, and compel people to come in that his house may be full.

You will say there are so many things to discourage. I agree there are many things to discourage, but remember the words of the Apostle Paul when he said: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, in as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Our duty is to labour and to leave the results with the Lord. He will bless his own word. We believe that, and the greatest honour a person could have in this world is to engage in Gospel duties or be occupied in any way with the furtherance of the Gospel or in bringing it to others. Those who will be instruments in the hand of God to bring sinners to Christ will shine as the stars for ever and ever. The reward will be eternal. We may not look for the reward in this world, but the reward will be sure. Remember the words of the blessed Head of the Church, who said concerning himself in the Gospel according to John chapter 8 v. 4: "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

This is our time and it is our duty, privilege and opportunity to labour in the gospel for the cause of Christ.

5. The Outcome

It was a dark day for the Jews. Their enemy Haman was promoted above all the princes of the king. Godly Mordecai was forgotten for the time being and he was covered with sackcloth in the gate, even although he had been instrumental in times past in saving the life of the king. Friends, what we have to learn is that God's purposes cannot be done away with nor frustrated. The Lord will redeem his people even supposing the whole world be overthrown.

We look ahead and see nothing but darkness. That is true in our day. We see nothing but social unrest, we see immorality, crime and indifference to law and gospel. This is true, but as we see it we hope and pray for better days. As we said already, the government is upon his shoulders.

But we should be thankful to the Lord, for there are tokens to encourage us. We must not always be looking at the dark side. The Lord has not left Himself without witness. Samuel Rutherford was saying if one soul from Anwoth would meet him at God's right hand, his Heaven would be two Heavens. Here and there throughout the congregations in our own church, there are some coming forward to witness on the Lord's side. What makes it so encouraging to us is to see so many of the young interested. We believe that this is the work of the Lord. What I am going to say is, may they be blessed and made a blessing.

Mordecai bowed not nor did reverence to Haman. The wheels of providence never stop. We have this in Psalm 75, v. 7: "God is judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another." That is what happened here. In the prophecy of Isaiah 14, v. 27, we read: "For the Lord of Hosts has purposed and who can disannul it? and His hand is stretched out and who shall turn it back?"

The Queen obtained favour in the sight of the king. She touched the top of the sceptre and she was received, and the king was willing to give her to the half of the kingdom. The Queen, however, was more concerned about her people. Haman, in the midst of all this, was invited to the Queen's banquet, and the gallows were prepared for Mordecai, but on that important night God again is working in providence.

The king could not sleep. He commanded to bring to him the records of the chronicles and there he found that there was nothing done to honour Mordecai for saving his life. The result was that Mordecai was honoured and Haman not only lost favour but he began to fall and it was said to him in chapter 6 v. 13: "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." Haman fell to his death. He was hung on the gallows prepared by him for Mordecai.

To the Lord we turn and say: "Thy ways are in the deep."

Mordecai was saved and the Jews were preserved. Here we see what will become of those who will be enemies to God and to his people.

There is one other example coming before my mind. It is not in connection with this at all. It concerns Joseph in prison in the land of Egypt. How could his dreams be fulfilled? "The word and purpose of the Lord did him in prison try." (Psalm 105 v. 19). In God's own time Joseph was taken out of prison and advanced to a place of honour, so that the Lord's promises were fulfilled.

We have the same situation in the book of Esther, which proved that the purposes of God cannot be overcome or frustrated. It is our duty to wonder at the Lord's works of providence. His purposes will be fulfilled and his people and cause will benefit and prosper. It is our duty at all times to wait upon the Lord. May the Lord add his blessing.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY ITS WORDS AND ACTIONS CONTRASTED

by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

The Constitutional Party appeared in the Free Church during the Union controversy (1863-1873) and was revived when the Declaratory Act of 1892 was brought forward. They warned their congregations of what this Act meant, and had protests inserted in the Minutes of several of the inferior Courts. These protests were brought up to the Assembly by way of dissent and complaint, as was also the action of the Synod of Glenelg in allowing these protests. While we have no copies of these protests at our disposal, the statement of Principal Rainy, in speaking against them, gives an idea as to their nature, when he says, "But to protest against this Act was a protest that denied it all force and all validity in any sense whatever. It was a claim to suspend the operation of the Act in all respects. It sought to avoid the effect it was intended to have, namely, that of relief. The Act was not to claim any regard from them in any of the operations it was intended to have, and for the sake of which it was passed . . . It was quite a new thing for an inferior court to place upon its records a protest which really claimed to suspend and annul, so far as that Presbytery was concerned, the Act the Assembly had passed, with the consent of Presbyteries." **Proceedings of the Assembly of 1893, p. 63.** Assuming that Principal Rainy had given a correct description of these protests, and there is no reason to suspect the contrary, the only course open to the Presbyteries concerned, and to the Synod of Glenelg which allowed them, was to remain outside the Church which passed the Declaratory Act, and to take up the position of

the Free Church of 1843. Such an action would confirm their words in recording these protests.

We now come to consider the words of the men who supported these protests. The Rev. Angus Galbraith, in supporting these protests at the bar of the Assembly, said that they could very well see the distinction between the Free Church of 1843 and the Declaratory Act Church of 1893. They were quite willing to admit that their course was unusual, but at the same time they had scruples and difficulties, and, as they were not unfaithful to their ordination vows, they ought to have some consideration at the hands of the Assembly in this Jubilee year. They knew very well that the law was not likely to be altered by quiet submission to it. They regretted it as a bad law and did not intend to submit to it. **Proceeding of the Assembly of 1893, p. 61.**

Rev. Murdo MacAskill, Dingwall, a Constitutionalist, still more vehement than Mr Galbraith, said, in opposing the Declaratory Act, that there seemed to be a tendency just simply to trample upon their convictions and disregard them because they seemed a small and insignificant party, but if one or two of them were to raise the fiery cross in the Highlands, insignificant as they were, the Free Church would have cause to regret that they trampled upon them, and gave so little regard to their convictions. **Free Church Assembly Proceedings, 1893, p. 175.** These were goodly words indeed, coming from one who, by friend and foe, was the acknowledged leader of those who refused to depart from the Constitution of the Free Church of Scotland.

Of the same nature is the language of Rev. William Fraser, Sleat, Skye, in supporting the protest of the Presbytery of Skye, as read from the Assembly papers by Principal Rainy, that he would not in any capacity acknowledge any terms of office in the Free Church but those on which I have been admitted, viz., adherence to the Confession of Faith, *simpliciter*, and my firm determination to adopt all lawful steps for the repeal of said Act, and, further, for himself and his brethren, "their firm resolution to continue, in humble dependence of Divine Grace, to discharge their solemn duties in accordance with the doctrines, principles, constitution and standards of the Free Church, as heretofore understood, from the Disruption until the passing of the Declaratory Act of last Assembly." There was here an express repudiation of what the Assembly had done, and the carrying out of it to its logical conclusion could only be effected outside the jurisdiction of that Assembly. That this seemed to be the view of the Constitution-
alists on the day the Declaratory Act was passed in May 1892 is evident from a report of a meeting held by some of them in the New College, Edinburgh, on the evening of that day. Dr William Balfour acted as Chairman, and in his opening remarks he made

the following statement:— “It has come to this pass now in the Free Church that only two alternatives are left us. (1) We must separate from those who were responsible for passing the Declaratory Act immediately and declare ourselves the Free Church as this Church was settled in 1843; or (2) if we remain in this Church, and, if we continue to fight for the Creed and Constitution of the original Free Church we shall be kicked out one by one.” Evidently Dr Balfour and others, at this time, were contemplating separation from the Declaratory Act Free Church.

We now come to consider the actions of the Constitutional Party and see how inconsistent they were with their brave words. After the close of the Assembly a meeting was held by them in Edinburgh, at which Rev. D. Macfarlane was present. On being asked what he intended to do, he replied that he intended to form a Presbytery, and proceed to licence those students who adhered to them when they would complete their theological course. Rev. Murdo MacKenzie, Inverness, who asked the question, replied, “You will compromise us.” That Mr Macfarlane’s action in separating from the Declaratory Act Church and forming a Presbytery, was countenanced by the Lord is abundantly clear, but these matters do not come within the scope of this paper. Our business is to consider the subsequent actions of the Constitutional Party, which actions were the opposite of being friendly to the Free Presbyterian movement.

Anyone who knows even a modicum of church history and church law knows very well that the Declaratory Act, having been passed in a constitutional manner through the Barrier Act of 1697, became a binding law of the Church, and, from its very nature, caused the Constitution of the Free Church to be understood in a manner which was vastly different from the manner in which it was understood from 1843 to 1892, or in other words, the Constitution was now to be understood in the light of the Declaratory Act. Thus if one was to adhere to the Constitution of the Free Church, as understood in 1843, he had no alternative but to go out from the jurisdiction of the Declaratory Act Free Church. Did the Constitutional Party act on this principle? They did not. In spite of their condemnation of the Declaratory Act, their resolutions never to submit to it, and Principal Rainy’s statement that “they were not going to admit the Declaratory Act had no effect at all, and that it was inoperative either in one Presbytery or in all the Presbyteries,” they remained in the Church which passed it, and had to submit to it in their Church courts. None of them could claim exemption to the authority of the Declaratory Act in any matter where a minister, a student, or even a member claimed its protection. If that was all that could be said, as to their actions, it was their own business, but they went further. They

showed a bitter and hostile spirit toward those who formed the Free Presbyterian Church.

Many instances of this spirit could be cited but, in the interests of space, a few will suffice. Rev. Murdo MacAskill, who so vehemently denounced the Declaratory Act, characterised the Free Presbyterian movement "as the most mischievous movement of modern times and calculated only to do the most serious harm to the cause of truth and godliness in our beloved Highlands." This was going even further than Principal Rainy himself when he expressed his thankfulness that one effect of the movement was to disembarass a number of Free Church congregations of impracticable elements — those elements which from conscientious conviction led men to set themselves against everything like the active and vigorous developments of Christian life in modern times. This language of Mr MacAskill was but an indication of subsequent steps he was to take on the down-grade, for he ended by joining the Union in 1900, and giving plenty of trouble to the Anti-Unionists. He was not alone, however, in his opposition to the Free Presbyterian movement. Ministers, elders, and adherents, who go into the School Boards, in some cases mainly through the Free Presbyterian vote, did their utmost to deprive them of the use of schools in which to conduct the public worship of God, when they had no alternative but to worship under the canopy of heaven, or take the sheltered side of a rock to protect them from the inclemency of the weather.

The Constitutionalists took their share, along with the Unionists, in seeing to it that they had no churches to worship in. After the stand made and the formation of the Free Presbytery of Scotland, as it was then called, the Free Church Presbytery of Skye and that of Lochcarron, asked advice of the Commission of Assembly as to how to deal with the situation. The answer to this was to take legal action to dispossess Mr Macfarlane and Mr MacDonald of their churches and manses, and to the shame of the Constitutionalists in these Presbyteries, who were so loud in their opposition to the Declaratory Act, not a word was said against this proposal, and, therefore, both Constitutionalists and Voluntaries must equally share the responsibility and the odium. An action was raised in the civil courts, but these ministers did not appear, and so they were dispossessed of the property, and, in many cases, in order to preach the gospel, they had to resort to the hillside or the sea shore.

One of the strangest actions on the part of the Constitutional Party after they took to themselves the name **The Free Church**, and one which shows a marked contrast between their words against the Higher Criticism of the Declaratory Act and their subsequent actions was their appointment of Dr W. M. Alexander,

as Professor of Theology and Principal of the New College in October 1904. A few months before he was received into the Free Church he published a book entitled **Demonic Possession in the New Testament**, which showed him to be unsound on the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, and in other ways it was clear that he belonged to the Higher Critical school. Was Dr Alexander disciplined because of this book? No. He continued at his post in the Free Church College. At the Free Church Presbytery of Inverness on 7th March 1905 the matter was taken up, and one member thought the book should be withdrawn. Another said that he read the book but "that there was not a word, except, perhaps, a slight expression used in one place, which went to show that Dr Alexander in any way doubted the infallibility of the Bible." Others expressed themselves as satisfied with Dr Alexander's disclaimer, and so the matter dropped. Dr Alexander sometime afterwards withdrew the book from circulation, not because of its Higher Critical views, but "in deference to Highland opinion."

The decision of the House of Lords put the Constitutional Party in a dilemma. Their ministers being few they had recourse to receiving ministers from every Protestant denomination in the country, and in many cases these ministers were far from the orthodoxy publicly professed by the Free Church. They had no hesitation in answering the questions and signing the formula required of them, and nothing more was required of them except to conform to the outward form of worship practised in the Free Church. These, no doubt, did untold harm in congregations over which they were settled, and, in the case of many of them, when the opportunity offered, went to other spheres of labour where the remuneration was more tempting. It was done in order to retain as much of the property as possible. This evidently was of paramount importance, but it caused the Constitutional Party to forget their brave words against the Declaratory Act.

GOD'S LOVE TO HIS PEOPLE

Sermon by the late Rev. D. Macfarlane, Dingwall

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto Thy people." — Psalm 106, 4.

Here we have one of the prayers of the Psalmist. It is a very large prayer; the largest which a mere man ever offered up to God for himself. Some may ask for some particular blessing, such as reconciliation with God, pardon of sin, or other such blessings. But the Psalmist, taking a wide view of the favour, or love, of

God, opens his mouth wide, to drink in of the infinite ocean of that love. The love of God is compared to a fire, that hath a most vehement flame. (Song. 8, 6). When you come home cold, how are you to get warm? By sitting near a big fire? The love of God is such a big fire that although you would be shivering and freezing with cold, if you get near it, you will soon get warm. It was when the Psalmist drew near to the love of God that he prayed: "Remember me, Lord, with that love which Thou bearest to Thine own." In speaking from these words, as the Lord may enable me, I shall call your attention to four things:—

- (i). The love of God.
- (ii). The objects of His love.
- (iii). The fruits of His love, and
- (iv). The Prayer: "Remember me, with that love which Thou bearest to Thine own."

(i). The Love of God

(1). We note that the love of God is everlasting. Without a break from eternity to eternity. As it is infinite we cannot get at the beginning of it; nor shall we see the end of it. It is like God Himself, from everlasting to everlasting; from the past eternity it runs on without a break through time and continues to all eternity. It cannot be broken. Did not the sin of man break it? If anything could break the love of God, sin would do it; but sin did not break it. God still loved His people, notwithstanding that they sinned; but, although sin did not break the love of God, it put a stop, for a short time, to its flowing forth to its objects. Before it could flow forth, a new way would require to be opened up, and that way was the way of blood — that is, the Blood of Christ. The blood sacrifice which Abel offered up was a type of the blood of Christ, and, as soon as this way by blood was opened, the love of God began to flow forth, and it continues to flow to its objects ever since, and shall continue to flow for ever and ever.

(2). The love of God is unchangeable. The love of His people to Him is, during their time in this world, changeable. It is like the sea that flows and ebbs; but the love of God is like Himself, who says: "I am Jehovah, I change not." Did He love His people with unchangeable love, when they were unconverted? Yes, it was His love that surrounded them in their unconverted state, and protected them from death coming near them, till they were changed by His grace. There is such a thing in God as a love of complacency, and He did not then love His people with that kind of love; but He loved them with the love which is the source of salvation. The love which is the source of salvation sees nothing in sinners why God should love them. But, in the case of believers, there is something in them to draw forth a love of complacency, and that is His own image in them. With regard to this

love of complacency, God loves some of His people more than others of them. Amongst men, parents love some of their children more than others of them, and although they love all their children, they love with a greater love those of them that are obedient to them, while they cannot love so much those that are disobedient.

(3). God loves freely. That is, you cannot buy or merit His love. Love is of such a nature that it cannot be bought. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned" (Song. 8, 7). Did not Christ's death buy God's love? No. Christ's death was not the cause of God's love, but the effect of it, as Christ Himself told us: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3, 16). If Christ did not buy God's love, how can we expect to buy it? Although Christ did not buy the Father's love, He, as already stated, opened up a way for it to flow forth to its objects.

(4). God's love is sovereign. He loved some of the human race, and did not love the rest of them. This is a solemn thought, but it is a fact. He was not under any obligation to love any of the human race. He might have left them all to perish, as He left the angels that kept not their first estate. It depended upon His own sovereign will, and those whom He loved shall be under unspeakable obligations to Him for loving them, while He left others of their fellow creatures to perish in their sins.

(ii). The Objects of His Love

These, before their conversion, are known to God alone. They are unknown to men, and to angels, until they are effectually called, and, when they are effectually called, they are known not only by God's people, but by the unconverted. "All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." (Isaiah 61, 9). In a certain parish in the Highlands there was a Godly man of the name, Little Lauchlan. A minister met a boy from the district in which that man lived. The minister asked the boy, "Are there good people in your district?" The boy said, "There is one good man there." The minister asked, "Who is that man?" The boy answered, "Little Lauchlan." (He was little in stature, but great in grace). The minister asked the boy, "How do you know that Little Lauchlan is a good man?" The boy said, "I see every morning, when he sends his cattle to the hill, kneeling down to pray beside a dyke, before he returns home." Then the minister asked him: "Are there good women in the district?" The boy said: "No." The minister asked how he knew. The boy said that almost every day he heard them quarrelling among themselves. That boy, though not converted himself, could make a distinction between good and bad people. By their fruits they shall be known. Another mark by which they are known is

that they love God, and their love to Him is the effect of His love to them; as they themselves declare: "We love Him because He first loved us," and as God manifested His love to them in such a wonderful manner as to give His Son to be the propitiation for their sins, so they manifest their love to Him in keeping His Commandments. They are called, justified, adopted, and sanctified in this world. They love God's word; His people, with brotherly love; and they love their fellow sinners, with compassionate love.

(iii). The Fruits of His Love

(1). One great fruit of God's love is His eternal purpose of salvation. Although His purpose of salvation is as eternal as His love, we deem it proper to give the precedence to His love, because it is the great source from which salvation flows.

(2). Another great fruit of God's love is the revelation which He has given us of His purpose. We have that revelation in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Although God purposed to save sinners of the human race, we would be ignorant of it, if He had not revealed it.

(3). Another great fruit — the greatest — is His sending His only begotten Son to the world, in our nature, to execute the Fathers' purpose, and especially to work out everlasting redemption by his obedience unto death.

(4). The preaching of the Gospel, by means of which sinners are saved, is another precious fruit. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, whether Jew or Gentile.

(5). The gift of the Holy Spirit to convince and convert sinners, is another great fruit. The Gospel is a means, but the spirit is an agent that works effectually by means of the word of the Gospel.

(6). Ministers of the Gospel are another fruit of God's love. They are spoken of as gifts from God. The Psalmist, addressing Christ, regarding His ascension to heaven, says: "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men: yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." (Ps. 68, 18). The Apostle Paul speaks of ministers as a gift from God. He gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Eph. 4, 11-13). Gospel ministers are a gift from God, and a fruit of His love, howsoever much they are despised and persecuted in an evil age. The greatest preacher was

despised and rejected of men. And he told the Apostles: "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John 15, 20). But they count the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world.

(7) Divine chastisements are another fruit of God's love, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth . . . but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons." (Heb. 12, 6-8).

(8). The means of grace are a fruit of His love. In New Testament times these means are few — the word, the two sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual unto salvation to the elect.

(9). The fellowship of saints on earth is a fruit of God's love, together with their fellowship and felicity throughout eternity.

(iv). The Prayer

"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour [or love] that Thou bearest unto Thy people." The Psalmist would be quite content if God remembered him with the love which He bears to His people, for he was sure that that love would bring him to heaven. He would have nothing to do with the love of God, according to the Arminian view. According to that view some, yea many, whom God loved are lost in hell. Even Arminians admit this. According to their view the love of God is not everlasting, yet Scripture says it is. The Psalmist was made a partaker of God's love before he uttered this prayer. But he felt his need of being remembered with that love again. For he was still imperfect, and poor and needy as all the Lord's people are, during their time on earth, and, as all spiritual blessings flowed from that great love, there was room for this prayer.

In conclusion, some of you, who are the Lord's people, may be in doubt as to whether God loved you or not; but if you cannot say that God loved you, you may say with the Psalmist: "Remember me with the favour [or love] that Thou bearest to Thy people." And, even the unconverted may pray the same prayer, and, if you are sincere in uttering this prayer, you will use the next petition: "O visit me with Thy salvation." The two petitions are intimately connected. God's love is the efficient cause of salvation, and salvation is the effect of God's love. As God is rich in mercy, so is He rich in love. The late Rev Donald Macdonald, Shieldaig, used to say, when speaking of God's love: "There are many tons of it in heaven." He experienced what he said, for the Lord poured down into his soul a large quantity of that love from heaven. He often fainted under its weight, but, now in glory, he is full of it, and there is no room or need for this prayer in the place of perfect felicity. Although many professing people, and

even ministers, speak of God's love to the exclusion of His other attributes, they are as ignorant of it in their own experience as the moles which live under the earth. The Apostle John was so full of God's love that he exclaimed in admiration: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (1 John iii, 1). The love of God, shed abroad in the heart, is the motive power which actuates His people to obey Him, and to serve Him, and to serve Him with their bodies, and spirits, which are His. (1 Cor. vi. 20). Amen.

THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS

by Rev. Alex. McPherson

Psalm Fifty-one

Verse 8. "Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

Having confessed his sin at length, David begins now to plead for deliverance from it. He had first had to seek the cleansing from its guilt which must precede all other benefits. God can bestow no other favours until sin has been pardoned through the application of the merits of the death of Christ to the soul. Only after seeking pardon does David plead for relief from the distress of mind into which conviction of sin had plunged him. In this verse he craves relief in the only way that it can come, namely, through the joyful sound of the Gospel. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." (Ps. 89 v. 15). When the miserable sinner will hear God say to him: "Son be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," then he will rejoice like a man whose every bone had been crushed and broken, and then restored to soundness, ease and liberty of movement. David had attempted to drink deeply at the fountain of unholy delight. The draught brought his whole being into agony. Then he remembered that the only true gladness is that produced by the experience of God's pardoning mercy and sovereign grace. Do we also know this?

Verses 9 and 10. "Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

It would seem however that the thought of the greatness of the divine favour made David again think of his great guilt and defilement and his need of a complete saving work to rid him of all that was offensive to the Most High. Verses 1, 2, 7, 9, 10 and 14 all reveal how dominant was his desire for salvation from sin, and

his conception of God's holiness is so high that nothing will do but the treatment of both sin's guilt and inward power.

"Hide thy face" he pleads. "As long as thou dost see my sin, thine anger must burn against me." But how can God turn away his face from our sins? Only by looking upon us in Christ, or united to Christ. What David is really doing is taking shelter in Christ the promised Saviour. If God will view him as trusting entirely in the promised Redeemer, He will see nothing but the merits of the Saviour who by his one sacrifice was to completely put away his people's sins. "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." (Ps. 84 v. 9). Thus will sin be blotted out as if it had never been, and it shall not meet us at the day of judgment. God's mercy extends to this: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isaiah 43 v. 25).

David's next petition concerns the cleansing of his heart, for salvation would be incomplete without that. He uses two expressions to convey his desire for spiritual transformation. "Create a clean heart," just as if the Holy Spirit's regenerating work had not been done already. His present sense of depravity is so great that he must be certain that this great change of heart be accomplished. He also says: "Renew a right spirit," that is, "Bring the faculties of my soul to a right condition and exercise. Bring my will to choose Thee and all good; let my affections be engaged with proper objects, Thyself principally; let my mind be taken up with wholesome thoughts, and my conscience be made sensitive to all sin." Here then is a desire not only to be forgiven, but to be made good at the very root of his nature. Unless we too have this desire, we shall not see heaven.

Verses 11 and 12. "Cast me not from thy presence; and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

A new heart is vitally important; lacking that he will be cast away. But if the Holy Spirit will graciously come to dwell in him, that blessed Spirit will never be taken away. So, once again David asks for a joyful heart, and for the constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit to preserve him from further falls.

Verse 13. "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

Deep repentance has had the salutary effect of turning David back to God. The word "converted" could describe his experience. Although generally it applies to the initial turning of a sinner to God after being born again, it is also used in the Bible to describe a turning from backsliding, as in David's case and also Peter's mentioned in Luke 22 v. 33. "But I have prayed for thee that thy

faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

David hopes that others may benefit from his experience. No doubt he spoke to many personally. It is certain however, that this Psalm has been the means of turning back many a backslider in penitence and faith. They have learned from it that there is forgiveness with God in order that He may be feared. The words also remind us that it is converted sinners whom God uses to make known his salvation to others. That kind of religion which confines its teachings to moral duties, and to benefits supposed to be derived from the universal fatherhood of God can be taught by natural men. But the Scripture religion which deals with sin and salvation can only be taught intelligently and feelingly by men who themselves have been taught by the Holy Spirit. Indeed most saved sinners will wish to tell others what God has done for their souls, and will be glad to speak of the righteous, wise and merciful ways of God in dealing with them. And even if they have little ability to put their thoughts into words, they can let their actions speak by partaking of the Lord's Supper thus confessing that they have been saved by God's grace.

NOTES FROM A FELLOWSHIP MEETING

These notes were taken down by a hearer at a Fellowship Meeting at Dingwall Communion in February 1962. The "question" given out was from Matthew 28:5, "And the Angel answered and said unto the woman, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." Marks were asked of those who seek Jesus and Him crucified, as distinguished from those who profess to do so and yet by their walk and conversation make void their profession and clearly show that they do not fear the Lord.

Edward Morrison, Harris:— It is because we hope that Jesus will meet with us that we came to the Communion in Dingwall. The women came to the sepulchre because they had a knowledge of the Lord previous to this, and because their souls were united to Him. A mark of these people is that they fear that He will not meet with them. Their eye is on Him, and they have the promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." There were two parties at the sepulchre, the women and the enemies of His Glory. The Angel gave a demonstration of his power in order to open the way for the women to fulfill their desire. We believe there are a few present who fear that the Saviour who was crucified for them, and who went to the grave for them, and who

ascended up on high for them, will not meet with them. Yet should it not please him to meet with them today they have the promise, "And thou, in time convenient, bestow'st on them their food." They long for His coming, that they may hear His voice in their soul. They know His voice when they hear it. They are a people who wait on the Lord for deliverance. Their prayer today is, "Cause me to hear thy loving kindness in the morning." Their eye is to Him who hideth not His face from the house of Jacob. The Lord fulfills his promise, "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." (Isaiah 40 : 29). They find themselves weak and slow in seeking, and their prayer is, "Hold up my goings, Lord, me guide in those thy paths divine, So that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine." They oft times have darkness in going through the wilderness of this world, but, "Unto the upright light doth rise, though he in darkness be." They desire His coming so that they may hear His words of greeting. He died for them; He rose from the dead for them, and ascended upon high for them. "Simon, son of Jones, lovest thou me?" When their hearts burn within them, they are prepared to give their oath that they do, and to say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." They feel ashamed of how little they do for Him, who went through the furnace, and unto the grave for them, in their room and stead. They love to hear of His righteousness, "And thine own righteousness, ev'n thine, alone I will record." They delight to wait upon Him and so go from strength to strength. They commit their body and soul to Him. They hear Him say, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God." They feel themselves very unlike those who fear the Lord. They say with Ruth, "Though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens." They marvel that He loves such as they, and say, "What shall I render to the Lord, for all His gifts to me?" They love to be in the company of the flock, for they love to see the image of God in them. Christ, even now, is not without friends, whom He will love unto the end.

Robert Watt, Inverness — The Angel of the Lord knew that the women had come to seek Jesus. Those who seek Jesus will find Him. His people seek Him in the hope of finding Him, but they have no hope apart from God's Word. They are not ignorant of Satan's devices. They know they **must** be born again. They are certain they must be regenerated, that the power of the Holy Spirit must take possession of them. They wonder at the mercy of God to them while they were on the broad way. The power of the Holy Spirit led them to seek Jesus, and when they found Him they were not pleased with themselves, but they were pleased with Him. "Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, there-

fore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." They could sing of the Lord's mercy in that day. That day was a special day for them. They are different from the world. They fear what is in their own hearts, but they fear the Lord, and "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another." They fear because they do not fear Him enough, for they are a strange mixture. They believe that Christ was nailed to the tree for them. He is the propitiation for their sins. "He took them from a fearful pit, and from the miry clay" and they will sing a song of praise to Him throughout the endless ages of Eternity. They fear Him because they love Him, and hate sin. They can say "By the grace of God I am what I am." It is true that every believer meets with Christ, who sends His Holy Spirit to reveal to them the awfulness of sin. The good seed is sown in their hearts and they become new creatures. They seek a heavenly inheritance. They seek the way to Zion with their faces thitherward. They spread their troubles before the Lord, and not before men. Tell the Lord your troubles. They love the brethren, and they love the ministers of Christ. They love either a good law sermon or a good gospel sermon. They rejoice because there are still left with us those who preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. They know that He is risen to give repentance to Israel. They know something of Christ as they have seen Him by faith — faith which is the gift of God and appropriates Christ. A child of God is a converted sinner, who exercises faith on the finished work of Christ. They hope for a better resurrection. The anchor of their soul is entered within the veil. They are ashamed of themselves, yet they know the hope of His people — "My hope is placed in thee."

NOTE — Edward Morrison, Harris, and Robert Watt, Inverness, were dear men of God who indeed sought Jesus; and are now with Jesus beholding His glory, in heaven. — Editor.

POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD

Leis an Urr Eideard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 60)

VII. Am bheil sibh air son neach a tha fodh mhòr-mheas, aon air am bheil luach mòr agus a tha gràdaichte? Dh'iarradh anam onarach so; agus air son so cha'n eil aon coltach ri Criosd. Mar nach eil aon ann cho caoibhneil agus cho gràdhach Ris, cha'n eil aon air am bheil uibhir de luach agus a thà cha gràdach Ris. Tha E air a ghràdhachadh leo-san uile is fhiach an gràdh a bhi aig neach. Tha E àrd ann an luach agus air a ghràdhachadh le a naoimh, araon air neamh agus air an talamh. Tha na naoimh air

neamh dha ghràdhachadh agus a deanamh aoradh Dhà; is e roinn dhe'n sonas a bhi dha ghràdhachadh, agus a bhi gabhail tlachd Ann gu siorruidh; agus tha na naoimh air thalamh dha ghràdhachadh agus a cur luadh Air os ceann gach cuspair eile; Is E Aon-ghràdhaichte an anama. Cia cho tric 's a their a cheile Ris, Fear mo ghràidh; agus a h-aon-ghràdhach! agus an tràth so 's a rithisd, tha i cur an ceill gu'm bheil i tinn le gràdh Dhà; tha a tlachd Ann; is E da-rìreadh "miann nan uile chinneach." Hag. ii. 7. 'S e sin r'a ràdh, "Dhuibhse uime sin a chraideas tha e luachmhor." I. Pead. ii. 7. Tha na naoimh a gràdhachadh agus a cur luach air Criosd os ceann gach solas nàdurra a tha bho'n chreutair, os ceann athair 'us màthair, fear na bean, agus clann, tighean agus fearuinn, agus an leithidean sin; an uibhir so tha air a thoirt fodh'r comhair ann a' Mata x. 37, agus xix. 29. Tha iad dha ghràdhachadh agus a cur luach Air os ceann gach nì air an d'ràinig iad ann an nithibh spioradail, dha meas mar aolach air son Chriosd. Phil. iii. 8. Tha iad dha ghràdhachadh agus a cur luach Air os ceann am beatha, air dhoibh a bhi ullamh gu bàsachadh air a shon, Gniomh. xxi. 13. Tais xii. 11. O cia cho luachmhor 's a tha Chriosd do no naoimh? Tha E mar an ceudna ann an luach agus air a ghràdhachadh leis na h-ainglean naomh: is E cuspair mòr an gràidh agus an tlachd, ar sin tha e air a ràdh gu'm bheil E air fhaicinn le ainglean, 's a sin, a bhi air a ghràdhachadh agus tlachd a bhi air a ghabhail ann le ainglean. I Tim. iii. 16. Tha na h-ainglean beannaichte a faicinn ann an Criosd na tha dha'n lionadh le gràdh Dhà agus tlachd Ann, Tais. v. 12, seadh, nì a tha nì's motha na so uile, tha E gu neo-chrionnach luachmhor agus air a ghràdhachadh is Dia an t-Athair mar an ceudna: tha'n Dia beannaichte a faicinn ann an Criosd, nì a tha Dha dheanamh gu neo-chrionnach ghràdhach agus luachmhor agus tlachdmhor agus ion-mhiannaichte 'n a shùil, agus dha anam: araon mar Mhac, agus mar an ceudna mar Eadar-mheadh onair, tha E gu neo-chrionnach gràdhach agus tlachdmhor dha'n Athair. Agus mar is E Mac Dhé, Mac an Athar, mar a tha'n t-Abstol dha chur, mar sin is E tlachd anama an Athar, agus mar sin bha E bho'n uile shiorruidheachd; an uibhir so tha E Fein ag innse dhuinn. Gnàth. viii. 30. Mar sin is E dlùth-chompanach neo-chrionnach agus shiorruidh an Athar neo-chrionnach agus shiorruidh. Mar sin tha e air a ràdh gu'm bheil E ann an uchd an Athar, agus mar a Mhac bha E bho shiorruidheachd, Eoin i. 16. Nis is e'n t-uchd àite taimh a ghràidh; agus tha bhi ann an uchd an Athar, a cur an ceill an gràdh làidir, teth, agus dlùth a th'aig an Athair Dhà: seadh, mar an t-eadar-mheadhonair, tha gràdh an Athar Dhà, Eoin iii. 35. Seadh tha E dha ghràdhachadh le gràdh taghta, agus àrd, le gràdh a tha toirt barrachd air na h-uile nì, ann an oirdheirceas

thaghta, agus a bhuaidh is mìlse; gràdh air am bheil dearbh iomhaigh glòir shònraichte: uime sin tha E air ainmeachadh am Fear-gràidh, Ephes. i. 6, "Rinn e sinn taitneach ann a Mhac gràdhach:" 's e sin, an Crìosd, a tha ro-ghràdhach do Dhia. Uime sin tha Dia Dha ghairm a Mhac gràdhach, "Is e so mo Mhac Gràdhach, anns am bheil mo mhòr thlachd." Mata iii. 17. Seadh, tha E air a ghairm Mac a Ghràidh, Col. i. 13. Seadh, tha'n t-Athair dha ghairm an Tì anns am bheil tlachd anama; "Feuch m'oglach, a chumas mi suas; m'aon taghta, anns am bheil tlachd aig m'anam." Isaiah xlii. 1. Ciod a their mi? Tha gràdh aig Dia Dhà Fein gu neo-chrìochnach, agus 'n a dheigh Fein tha gràdh Aige do Chrìosd, agus tha E gabhail tlachd Ann. Tha e fìor, gu'm bheil gràdh Aige do oibre a làmh uile mar a tha iad 'n an oibre a làimhe; gu h-àraidh do chreutairean reusanta; agus 'n am measg tha gràdh sònraichte Aige da naoimh agus do na h-ainglibh naomh; ach tha gràdh Aige do Chrìosd ann an tomhas do-labhairt os an ceann uile. Is E dha-rìreadh a Neach is e a cheud ghràdh, a neach is motha a th'air a ghràdhachadh, agus a neach is doimhne a tha air a ghràdhachadh dhiubh uile. Tha Dia, mar a tha na sgoileirean ag ràdh, a gràdhachadh dearbh fheoil, na nàdur daonnachd Chrìosd, ni's motha na'n a h-ainglean uile. Ann am focal, tha E dha ghràdhachadh air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'm bheil E air eigneachadh Leis, agus cha'n urrain E ach a bhi gràdhachadh na h-uile neach a th'Ann, na ann an daimh Ris ann an cùmhnanta; agus sin ged a tha iad uile gu leir duaichnidh annta fein. Nis fhearaibh, nach gràdhaich sibh agus nach gabh sibh Ris-san an Aon ghràdhach so, aon a tha mar so luachmhor agus gràdhaichte le naoimh, le ainglibh, agus le Dia an t-Athair? Agus leigibh dhomh a ràdh, Aon nach eil air fhuathachadh agus air a dhìmeas ach le diabhuill agus daoineibh diabhlaidh? Anam ma dhiùltas tù Esan a tha na naoimh uile agus na h-ainglibh a gràdhachadh, a moladh, agus a deanamh aoraidh Dhà, an sin na biodh sùil agad còmhnuidh a ghabhail maille riutha ann a bhi dha shealbhachadh, ach cùntais a bhi còmhnuidh maille ri diabhuill agus spioradan caillte ann an ifrinn gu sìorruidh. Ma dhiùltas tu Esan a tha'n t-Athair a gràdhachadh agus a gabhail tlachd Ann, an sin biodh sùil agad a bhi air do dhiùltadh Leis-san agus leis an Athair gu sìorruidh; ach anam, bi air do cho-eigneachadh a bhi dha ghràdhachadh mar an ceudna.

VIII. Am bheil thu air-son neo-bhàsmhorachd, air son neach a dh'fheumas a bhi ann a' bith gu sìorruidh? Tha so, air a chur ris a chuid eile, ion-mhiannaichte; agus air son so, cha'n eil aon cosmhuil ri Crìosd. Seadh, cha'n eil aon ach Crìosd; is Esan, agus Esan a mhàin, am Fear-pòsda nach bàsuich gu bràth; tha'm fear-pòsda is fearr anns an t-saoghal so bàsmhor, agus faodaidh e t-fhàgail aig am air bith; ach tha Crìosd neo-bhàsmhor, is E'n

Rìgh neo-bhàsmhor agus sìorruidh, I Tim. i. 17, agus is ann Aige-san a mhàin a tha neo-bhàsmhorachd, I Tim. vi. 16. Is Esan a mhàin a tha beo gu bràth; “Agus, feuch, tha mì beo gu saoghal nan saoghal, Amen.” tha E’g ràdh. Tais. i. 18. Cha’n fhàg E gu bràth thù ann an suidheachadh aonaranach bannnt rachais; seadh, cha’n e mhàin gu’m bheil E Fein beo gu bràth, ach a thùilleadh air sin tha E toirt orra-san uile a tha’n an céile Aige a bhi beo gu bràth mar an ceudna. Mar so tha sibh a faotainn an an Eoin xi. 25, 26, “Is mise an aiseirigh, agus a bheatha,” agus tha E’g ràdh, mar an ceudna, “Agus ge b’e neach a tha beo, agus a creidsinn annam-sa, cha’n fhaigh e bàs am feasda.” O ciod e’m Fear-pòsda a tha beo gu bràth E Fein, agus a bheir dha chéile a bhi beo gu bràth mar an ceudna; bheir E dha chéile uile a leithid de bheatha agus nach bàsaich i gu bràth, beatha neo-bhàsmhor. Ann am focal, duin a stigh Ris, agus bithidh E beo gu bràth mar t-Fhear-pòsda, mar sin bithidh tusa beo gu bràth mar a chéile-san. O co nach gabhadh r’a leithid sin de neach? Anam, ma ghabhas tù Ris, biodh fhios agad, tha E beo gu bràth gu bhi dha do ghràdhachadh, gu bhi dha do chomhfhurtachadh, gu bhi toirt tlachd dhuit, gu bhi dha do dheanamh sona Ann Fein agus maille Ris Fein; ach ma dhiùltas tù E, biodh fhios agad, gu’m bheil E beo gu bràth gu bhi dha do pheanasachadh, gu bhi leagadh fearg agus dioghaltas ort, agus gu bhi dha do dheanamh iomlan truagh; ach O na diùlt E.

Mar so nochd mi beagan dheth ciod e’n gné Fear-pòsda a tha ann an Criosd do chéile; agus air na h-uile a labhair mi, theirinn ribh, mar a thuirt a chéile ri nigheanan Ierusalem, “Is e so fear mo ghràidh sa, agus is e so mo charaid.” Dan v. 16. Is e so Esan a tha dha thairgse Fein dha bhur gràdh; is cìnnteach nach e neach iosal na tàireil a th’ ann, ach aon a tha gu neo-chrìochnach ion-mhiannaichte. Nis, ciod a tha sibh ag ràdh? An gabh sibh Ris na nach gabh? Faodaidh a bhi gur e so an tairgse mu dheireadh a ni E gu bràth air Fein dhuibh; faodaidh e bhi gu’m feum an t-aonadh a bhi air a dheanamh a nis, na nach bi gu bràth; uime sin dùinibh a stigh Ris a nis, gabhaibh Ris a nis air a chumhachan Fein, Aon a tha gu cìnnteach airidh air gabhail Ris air gach aon chor.

(R’a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Women in the Ministry Approved

The Church of Scotland General Assembly has had before it the question of admitting women to the office of the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, again and again in recent years. The

question was sent down to Presbyteries last year through the Barrier Act and the result as announced this year at the Assembly in May was, that 42 Presbyteries approved of women ministers and 17 disapproved. It is at the same time significant that as to the members of Presbyteries, 1,817 voted for approval and 1,030 voted against. As Rev. Eric Alexander, Newmilns, pointed out in moving against approval, the Church was divided. He stated that what was being decided was their attitude to the Word of God. He said: "The New Testament is crystal clear on the function of women in the Church of God. It is not the same as that of men to whom the teaching ministry belongs." Mr Shaw, an elder, said in support of Mr Alexander that all the available Scriptural evidence was against the idea of ordaining women to the ministry." After a debate lasting only half an hour, a decision was called for by the Moderator of Assembly. When the vote was taken by members standing, more than half the Assembly stood in favour of women ministers and few stood for outright rejection of the proposal. And so women will now be able to enter the office of the Ministry in the Church of Scotland. Without our repeating the Scriptures which clearly condemn this decision; it appears that the majority of ministers and elders in the aforesaid Assembly were not prepared to be guided by the Word of God. They declare by their action that they consider themselves wiser than the Word of God and those who have gone before them since apostolic days and times of Reformation. Of course the fact is, that many who voted in favour of women ministers were quite indifferent to divine guidance. One supporter of this unscriptural action commented that congregations had still the right to decide whether to call a woman minister or not. This was surely common knowledge to anyone come of age, interested in their congregation. And this comment was beside the point as the issue now is that congregations can call a woman minister if they so desire. And so the trend proceeds apace of Church government without regard to the teaching of the Word of God. The Moderator declared that it was an historic decision. Yes! pointing to a phase of a back-sliding Church.

France

Not long ago President De Gaulle of France thought fit to tell Britain to put her house in order economically in the context of the Common Market business. And he has also acted in several ways to indicate his desire to divest France of American influence. In all this he appeared to show the recovered greatness of France politically and economically. Thereafter, during the recent riots, strikes and industrial revolts, France was at one point thought to be on the verge of civil war. God reigns and He reigns in

providence in the Kingdom of men. And He can wound the pride of self-sufficient and mighty men in their own estimation. God speaks at times to nations and rulers by dark providences and says, "Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it." "Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

Assassination of American Senator

The world knows all the details of the shooting of Senator Robert Kennedy, in a Los Angeles hotel, on 5th June, by a 23-year-old Jordanian, and of his death some hours later. This terrible act has shocked people everywhere as much as the assassination of his late brother, President John Kennedy of America. Words fail to express the enormity of this diabolical act and crime and the sympathy felt for the Kennedy family under the grief of this second calamity which has overtaken them. We wrote of violence in our last issue as a present day outstanding manifestation of the wickedness of men's hearts in a godless generation. Murders are being committed frequently in Britain and a day or two before Senator Kennedy was shot, a man in the South of England was found in his car shot dead through the head. Why we mention the case of the man in the car, is to indicate that violence and murder are rife and deliberate forms of active wickedness. Disturbed social background and mental instability will not explain away the most of such cases today. Much is now being said in the United States and Britain regarding the need to eliminate violence and to return to the "rule of law". The professing Christian Church exists in the United States and Britain. Is there, as we firmly believe, a deplorable lack of teaching and witness as to the divine character and claims of the moral law, the law of God, throughout the Churches? It is all very well for the Archbishop of Canterbury to deplore the death of Senator Kennedy by the murderer's bullet; yet he supported a Bill in the House of Lords condoning immoral acts of men. We cannot expect such leaders in the Church to teach the truth as to the nature of sin as transgression of the law of God and that the wages of sin is death, even eternal death. Men outside and inside the professing Christian Church may reject the doctrine of the Word of God and the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ as to the depravity and sinfulness of man's heart; but men are demonstrating by their wilful and evil conduct that the Word of God is the truth. The United States, Britain and other nations need to be confronted with the law and the Gospel of God and a day of the power of the Holy Spirit to bring men under the searching light of the righteous law of God and the saving influence of the gospel of God's dear Son.

Roman Catholic Advertising

The issue of the **Scottish Daily Express** for 4th June, 1968, carries a large advertisement, with a message for Roman Catholics. The word "Roman" is, of course, omitted in all references to that Church. It is a call to continue the work of the Apostles carried on after Pentecost. The message states that the R.C. bishops are asking Roman Catholics to accept a New Pentecost, and to devote themselves to the work of their Church, to make the voice of the Church heard clearly. The message states "We must ask for money". The appeal is for £200,000. The full message was read by a layman in every pulpit of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. To carry on the work of the Apostles, the R.C. Church will require to see to it that the exact and full gospel which the Apostles preached, is declared to their people; that the Lord's Supper is observed and not the superstitious Mass; that there be no Pope to dictate to the Church; that the Confessional box be done away with as the Apostles had none and that their people be exhorted to confess their sins to God Himself through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and sinful men, and to look for forgiveness through Christ's shed blood alone; that Cardinals, Archbishops, 'bishops' and Jesuits, etc., be done away with as foreign to the Apostolic Church; and that the dogma that none can be saved outside the pale of the Roman Catholic Church be blotted out, as sinners have been, and are saved through the preaching of the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified being applied to their souls by the power of the Holy Spirit within the realm of the Churches following faithfully in the footsteps of the Apostles and Reformers. The Pentecost that Britain needs is not the increased activities of Roman Catholic laymen, but the real Pentecost; an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all the people of our nation, and connected with the preaching of the whole counsel of God, as preached by the Apostles.

CHURCH NOTES

Church Day of Prayer

Will ministers please take note of the following Synod motion: "That a day of prayer and humiliation be held on Wednesday, 16th October, 1968, or Thursday, the 17th October, in view of increased incidence of violence, and the passing of demoralising legislation in Parliament, and the low state of religion in the Nation." — Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk of Synod.

Deputy for Canada and the U.S.A.

The Rev. D. B. Macleod, M.A., London, has agreed to go as the Church's Deputy to Canada and the U.S.A. and left for these parts at the beginning of June. Mr Macleod will be away for at least five months and will be most of that time in Canada. As we have a Congregation and Church in Winnipeg, Mr Macleod will be making it his headquarters. His address will in due course appear in the Free Presbyterian Magazine so that friends, in places where the Church has no place of worship, and who would like Mr Macleod to give them services may be able to contact him.

The Committee is grateful to Mr Macleod for undertaking this urgent mission and to his Presbytery for granting him leave of absence from his Congregation.

On behalf of the Deputy, we ask for the prayers of the whole Church that his services may be blessed to our kith and kin in Canada and the U.S.A., where his late father and grandfather served the Church on several occasions as Deputies.

We wish our friend the Lord's favour and desire to commit him and his family, whom he leaves behind, to the care of Him, Who says: "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye".

— D. Campbell, Convener of Dominions and Overseas Committee.

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