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SOME PARTICULAR SINS

Sin is to be found in the heart of man, where the root of every sin resides. The heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and out of his heart there proceedeth all that defileth the man, even adultery, fornication, theft, murder and all other evils. Sin is the transgression of the law of God and is to be seen also in the rejection by men of the divine Redeemer, revealed in the gospel. Paul refers to those who were enemies of the Cross of Christ; and earlier the Jews were charged with the sin of killing the Prince of life.

Throughout the Bible, sins of many and varied kinds committed by sinners and saints, are made known for our learning and warning. Some of these are peculiar to the persons guilty of them and are not **generally** committed in actual practice by others.

Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus Christ for money and with a kiss. The Council of the Jews under the high priest charged the Son of God with blasphemy because he claimed to be who He was. Men reviled the Lord while He hung on the Cross, after, instrumentally, obtaining His crucifixion. Men stoned godly Stephen to death because he declared to them the truth regarding themselves as being the murderers of the Lord. Elymas, the sorcerer, sought to turn away Sergius Paulus from instruction respecting the Christian faith being given him by Paul and Barnabas. Men persecuted the apostles because they preached Jesus and the resurrection; and the witnesses of the Lord have been persecuted down through the ages of the Church's history. Others have professed to know God and yet did not keep His commandments; and the Apostle John, in his First Epistle, declares that such were liars.

The aforesaid sins make a formidable list indicating what man is capable of, and yet it is a limited list. Each sin mentioned

possesses a peculiar and distinctive character of its own. Those who committed them had their own special and personal reasons and motives for acting as they did and reveal how varied, many and distinctive are the evils that can proceed from the heart of man.

On the question of the particular nature or rather the peculiar, unusual nature of some sins, the exposure of a certain sin by the Apostle John in his First Epistle is of interest. He writes: "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him". Now the moral law states, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour". In the above case a man is proved to be a liar in bearing false witness in relation to **himself** and involving God's name. This liar's sin, of course, comes within the scope of the prohibition of the moral law as quoted above. Yet this lie is a special type of sin, as apart from bearing false witness against another.

Again, we may select another sin which may not ordinarily be met with by individuals nor be so commonly committed. That is, the evil action and conduct on the part of Elymas, in seeking to turn away Sergius Paulus from the faith, in which he was being instructed by the apostles. Certainly there are some, even today, who have been brought by the Lord to entertain a real, serious interest in the gospel and spiritual things; and on this being evident, they have encountered opposition by one or more of their fellow sinners to the fact of their having such an interest in the Gospel of Christ. This sin was such, that it was punished immediately by God, in that Elymas was rendered blind for a season, after being told that he was a "child of the devil". This sin may not be thought to be sin at all by some. It may not be considered out of place by ignorant persons, to be critical of a member of their family or of an acquaintance who begins to show a serious interest in the things which concern the salvation of the soul and eternity. The fact is, that the conduct of such, by word or deed, constitutes a particular type of sin, in seeking to come between such a one and the gospel and salvation. It may well expose those guilty of it to an immediate manifestation of the divine displeasure against them. Another distinctive sin, not mentioned above, is that which the Apostle Paul deals with in connection with the conduct of Hymenæus and Philetus (see 2 Tim.: chapter 2). These men apparently had a place in the Church. First of all, they erred concerning the truth and were maintaining that the resurrection was past already, that is, the general resurrection of the dead which Christ taught would take place at the last day, when they that are in their graves would hear the voice of the Son of God and rise, some to the resurrection of life and others to the resurrection of damnation. We give as

a likely background to the error of those men, what is recorded in Matthew, chapter 27, verses 51 and 52. Following immediately upon the death of the Lord Jesus, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the earth did quake and the rocks rent. Then we are told that "The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves **after His resurrection**, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many". Now this was a limited number who arose on this remarkable occasion and included only saints. The doctrine of Christ clearly asserted that the full resurrection would involve **all** that were in their graves and include also they that had done evil, that is, the wicked. So if Hymenæus and Philetus were basing their view of the resurrection as past already because some saints rose after Christ's resurrection, they were in conflict with Christ's teaching and were in serious error. But their particular sin did not merely consist in holding error; but in teaching their erroneous view to others with the deplorable effect that they overthrew the faith of some. So they, in effect, influenced others to cease believing in the essential and fundamental reality of a future resurrection at the last day. This conduct in their case, and in every case of a like character, constitutes outstanding and heinous sin. This particular sin is being committed today by men in the professed Christian Church, who hold erroneous and rationalistic views in their "treatment" of the Bible. Such men teach others in Colleges and Congregations and overthrow any belief in the mysteries of the Christian faith in the minds of many. We repeat, that this conduct constitutes a particularly heinous sin, of which men are not ashamed nor afraid as they might well be of adultery or murder.

In turning briefly to the Biblical record of sins committed by some of the people of God, we immediately remember David's sin in relation to Bethsheba or earlier on, Aaron's involvement in the worship of the golden calf. And in the New Testament, we read of Peter's denial of his Lord. These were obvious and serious cases of backsliding.

Yet there are other types of conduct on the part of believers, of which we read, and which were inconsistent with the practice which is according to godliness and dishonouring to God. We will do little more than mention some of such cases. David insisted upon numbering Israel and Judah. After doing so his heart smote him, and he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly . . ." Likely confidence in the great number of valiant men in Israel and Judah, and forgetfulness of God as his strength, were inherent in this sin. Pestilence slew seventy thousand of his people as a punishment from the Lord. Then again, there is the

conduct of godly King Jehoshaphat of Judah, who went to assist wicked King Ahab of Israel to regain Ramath-gilead. Jehoshaphat nearly lost his life in the battle which ensued. Later he was severely reproved by Hanani the seer thus : "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?" And he was warned that the Lord was angry with him.

In the New Testament the eleven disciples are solemnly reproved by their risen Lord, because they believed not them which had seen him after He was risen. Jesus "... upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart". Then we read in the Epistle to the Galatians, how the Apostle Peter was discovered to be blameworthy by the Apostle Paul, who writes : "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed". Paul relates that "before that certain came from James, he (Peter) did eat with the Gentiles : but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews likewise dissembled with him : insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissemulation". Paul further describes this conduct thus "... I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel . . ." This is a serious charge arising out of an unusual and particular sinful line of conduct having its source in fear of man.

Readers may wonder as to the purpose in view in reciting all these sins of sinners and saints. We all need to be reminded once and again, not only by a repetition of the truth that, "Sin is the transgression of the law"; but by an application to Biblical records of the sins of men, that man is wholly depraved and wicked in his nature. Surely we live in a day when evil is called good, and good evil and the Scriptural doctrine of man's total depravity discounted. Then it is well, that it should be made known from the Word of God, that certain motives, words and actions considered more or less harmless, are in reality evil and very sinful. It is as believers themselves will examine and study the Scriptures of truth, that they will come under the guidance and light of the Holy Spirit, to discern and discover in their own hearts and conduct, sins that they were not clearly aware of before. The malady of sin must never be relegated to the background, but must be faced and exposed by the Church of Christ in its teaching, preaching and writing in an adequate measure and in a faithful manner. The remedy in the Son of God and through His Cross and shed blood, then becomes, as it is, glad tidings of great joy for the church to proclaim to sinners and also to believers.

A SERMON

(preached by Rev. A. Ndebele to pupils and staff at Ingwenya,
Sabbath evening, 30th June, 1968)

Isaiah 66, v. 2. "... And to this man will I look even to him that is of a humble and contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word".

1. All things belong unto the Lord.

It would appear that Israel was concerned with those things which could be seen by the eye of man; offerings, etc., which they could bring to be acceptable unto the Lord, diligently applying themselves unto this duty, sacrificing cattle and other animals unto the Lord and trusting in these for salvation. Their hope and confidence was on what they had done. If ever they thought of eternal rest at all they thought on what they had done, how great a gift they had offered.

But the Lord said this "All things are made by My hand"; "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool" (vs. 1, 2). Heaven and earth belong unto the Lord and that includes humans, animals, trees, etc., even precious stones were created by the Lord. No-one gives new things to Him. Our gifts of gold and silver, even these were created by God. Our offerings are not anything new to Him. These offerings were not pleasing in His sight. There was no room for pride. Some of the Jews were filled with pride because out of the whole world Jerusalem was chosen in which to have a house for the worship of God. Israel prides herself in this. Israel saw different nations coming — the Queen of Sheba on coming to see Solomon was impressed by the temple, by his palace, etc. All nations knew that God was worshipped in Israel. All these things were made by the Lord — "If I needed a temple I could have made one". The Lord does not dwell in a house made by hands. Such a great God! the incomprehensible, vast, eternal God, gloriously transcending all, far above our thoughts, how could a small house comprehend this God? "Heaven is my throne, etc. Where is the house that ye will build me?" (v. 1). Everything is His by right, by creation. These things are very external and yet how often our minds are taken up with this and we rest for our salvation on this. People rest for their salvation on things done, their prayers for example. "I have prayed. I am not like other children who disobey Thy laws. I have done things pleasing in Thy sight and therefore I ought to be safe and my soul received into heaven". This was the Jews' delusion. They were dependent on their sacrifices and were therefore "certain" of salvation. It is the thought of many today and many churches believe this. Criticism is not our aim. We should study what we

stand for. It is not our aim to belittle but we must maintain the truth in Christ Jesus and uphold the faith received through the apostles and prophets, "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone". Christ must be glorified not man. Those whose delight is in what they have done, are guilty of the sin of Israel. They looked on the skin of their animals — "Look, this is my beast!" — and expected salvation because of this. This was an abomination to the Lord (v. 3). Human sacrifice typified heathendom and a sacrifice like this was an abomination and not a fit basis for human salvation. These only typified One to come, they were types and shadows of Jesus and had done their service when Jesus came.

2. "But to this man will I look".

What kind of man is this? A wise man? A philosopher? Who draws the eyes of Jehovah? With whom is the Lord concerned in the heavens? Who makes the angels admire? — "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God" — among the hosts of "angels and the spirits of just men made perfect around the throne, who cry 'Holy, holy, holy'." They look and are surprised at what has taken place. There is the joy with Him who liveth for ever and ever. It is "a man of poor and of a contrite spirit".

This man is poor. How poor? Has he no clothes, no food in his barn, few blankets? What is the poverty with which the Lord is concerned? He has nothing to bring before the Lord. "When they had nothing to pay He frankly forgave them both". A sinner has nothing of his own making when approaching the throne of God. He goes dependent on what is in the Lord, on His bounty who has "all things in the hollow of His hands". He goes because he has nothing and knows himself to be devoid of faith. Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief". This man had no faith and was coming as one naked, miserable, blind and with nothing to recommend him. This is the man who is poor in the sight of God and the Lord will look upon this one. He has no goodness in himself, no good works, not even prayers. e.g. the Publican and the Pharisee. The Pharisee thanked God he was not a liar, etc. "I thank the Lord I am so good!" That man had plenty in his own eyes before God, but went away empty.

The man who goes depending upon what the Lord has — "Lord thou hast all, I have nothing". What has the Lord got for him — (1) a garment to cover his soul, i.e. the righteousness of Christ; (2) the Spirit to fill his heart. He is an empty vessel but rivers of waters will flow out of him. If we have plenty, with what will we receive the Lord's gifts? — faith, salvation, the righteous garment — if we are already "clothed" how can we receive it?

This man also has a contrite spirit. He is repentant, sorry,

disappointed in himself, ashamed, turning to the Lord. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned" (Psalm 51). He is sorry he has sinned against the Lord. He goes to the Lord — "He against whom we have sinned" — not to a priest nor anyone else, but to Him against whom he has sinned and asks for pardon and confesses his sins. The Lord will not pass him by.

"To this man will I look . . ."; "Blessed are the poor in spirit", for they shall be filled! (Matt. 5). The Lord will give to those who are needy not full. This man also trembleth at God's word.

(a) What does this mean? Two words brought before man; the word of the Church, of man, of parents against the word of God. The word of God means more than the word of anyone else to him. "The word of God is the only rule to direct us . . ." The Lord will not pass by such as tremble. Have you done this? What makes you tremble? The word of a human being? When confronted with two opinions do you please man by committing sin? Which speaks in a more solemn manner to you — the word of God or man? A Christian's all is governed by the word of God. The Lord says "to him will I look, not on sacrifices, not on what man eats (some still keep the ceremonial law, e.g. S.D.A.'s not eating pigs, etc.). Some are concerned with these things but the new birth, holiness and turning from darkness to light, these points are not emphasised. All this is abomination to the Lord. The man with a poor and contrite spirit, that boy or girl or man or woman will attract the eye of heaven. The Lord will bless that one with a knowledge of himself.

(b) Are there any here who tremble at God's word? Those who study God's word to see what God commands; to repent, to cast away all they had; to cease building upon sand, their own works, their parents' works and not on Christ. They have now learned that if they are saved at all it is of His kindness, of His doing, and marvellous in their eyes. Poor people! nothing to recommend them; ashamed of themselves, knowing they have come short, where could they find anything to be proud of? They have their heads bowed to the ground — saved only through Jehovah. "I will make mention of thy righteousness, of thine only". Not "we have Abraham to our father", but they have nothing save Christ alone. "Save me out of thy mercy. Wash away all my sins. Thou art compassionate, righteous, merciful". This is their hope — not even their prayers. Only hypocrites say their prayers are very good. The righteousness of the Lord alone is their only confidence. "Thou hast subdued hell and death and the grave therefore we are saved". It is because of what Jesus has done. Our all is found in Him. We go to Him with nothing — of sinfulness we have plenty, of righteousness none. We depend on the holiness of the Lord for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord".

They are satisfied with Christ, with His holiness, His righteousness.

(c) They tremble at God's word, in that it rules in their hearts. A person who does not care about the Bible, who goes his own way is a heathen no matter what his profession. If he does not care about what God says he is a man without God or hope, despite his profession, whether he is the Bishop of the whole place or a man of great learning. Those who tremble do things because God says so even if it seems foolish to man. They are satisfied with God's word and that is what a Christian is. Judge yourselves therefore by this ruler! Do you tremble at God's word? Do you obey God rather than people? What does the word of God say? e.g. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. We ought to care if it is in God's word.

3 God sees the marks He Himself has planted — poverty of spirit, contrite heart — and He will come to reveal Himself to them. He will strengthen them and give His Holy Spirit to them and give them the spirit of adoption "whereby they cry 'Abba father'." The Holy Spirit understands their desires, their "groanings that cannot be uttered". He will reveal the things of Christ to them and comfort them, build them up in the faith and encourage them. "He that endures to the end shall be saved". Those who have these marks are saved. If we do not have them we must seek until we know that these marks belong to us. Do we tremble at His word? Are we poor? Do we condemn ourselves? Are we dependent on God? If not we are not His.

REV. PROFESSOR JOHN DUNCAN, LL.D.

by the late Rev. James S. Sinclair*

* This biographical sketch of Dr Duncan was delivered as a Lecture to The Blythwood Literary Society, Glasgow, and published in the Free Presbyterian Magazine in October and November, 1921, after Mr Sinclair's death.—Editor.

The spiritual firmament of the Free Protestant Church in 1843 was, by the gracious blessing of God, adorned with a galaxy of stars of the first magnitude — men of eminent grace, commanding gifts, and untiring energy in the service of Christ. There were burning and shining lights in those days, in the enjoyment of whose bright, warm, and holy radiance thousands of God's people delighted to walk. Glory then dwelt in marked degrees in our land, and not until the Spirit is poured again from on high will the present wilderness blossom anew as the rose. One of these bright, shining stars in the spiritual firmament of the past forms the subject of the present lecture. Not that Dr Duncan occupied

so prominent a place before the eyes of the Church as some other men of renown who might be mentioned — Drs Chalmers, Cunningham, Candlish, Begg, Macdonald, and others — who were outstanding and active leaders in Church Courts and on platforms in all practical efforts for the advancement of the evangelical cause. The star to which our attention is presently directed may be said to have been less conspicuous to general view, not because he was of less magnitude, but because he moved, for most part, in a more select and exalted orbit than others — more among the infinities and eternities than among the ordinary things of time and sense. His biographer (Dr Brown) justly said of him that he was “one of the most remarkable men of this or of any age”, remarkable for profound and varied thoughts, vast learning, deep humility, intense spirituality, and exclusive devotedness to the service of the Lord Jesus.

True, he was also remarkable for a certain absence of mind and irregularity in the ordinary habits of life, as well as for an incurable aversion to the pen — (almost all his discourses and striking sayings were taken down by others) — but possibly all this was divinely ordered so as to prevent hero-worship and glorying in men on the part of admiring friends, dispositions to which fallen human nature, even in the best regulated persons, is exceedingly prone.

So much, briefly, by way of introduction; now to the narrative. I shall begin at the beginning of his life's history.

John Duncan was born of humble and pious parentage in the year 1796 at Gilcomston, in the parish of Old Machar, Aberdeen. His father, whose Christian name also was John, was “a plain working shoemaker” to trade, and a member of the Original Secession Church to religious profession. His mother, Ann Mutch, was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer and blacksmith, who lived in the country outside of Aberdeen. Originally of the Established Church, she became a member of the Secession Church before she married. Being on a visit to some relatives in Aberdeen she was persuaded by an acquaintance to go to the Secession Church, where she heard the Rev. James Templeton, a worthy minister of the Gospel. “From that day,” Dr Brown tells us, “she worshipped nowhere else; the grace of God took possession of her heart; her whole character was changed. By her Christian influence, a brother and sister joined her; and all three, being received into full communion with the Secession Church, walked every Lord's Day from Belhelvie (their native place) to Aberdeen and back, a distance of twelve miles, to church.” Mr Duncan, senior, was a member of this congregation, and it was to all appearance, here that Ann Mutch and he made their first acquaintance.

There were several children by the marriage; but all died in infancy except John, who was the eldest, and he was at best a weakly boy. It is related that an attack of small-pox at a very early age "brought him to the gates of death". One of his mother's sisters came to see him die, but as she stood and looked upon the poor infant, those words from the 118th Psalm (metrical version) strongly entered her mind: "I shall not die but live, and shall the works of God discover". This a message of hope concerning the recovery of the apparently dying child, proved also a prediction of future experience and usefulness, as after years verified, to the very full. The terrible disease of small-pox, however, left him with one serious physical defect, it deprived him of the total sight of an eye. In after life he used playfully to boast to his friend, Dr Brown, that he could see better with his one eye than most people could do with their two — a feature, indeed, in the sphere of mental perception that was abundantly demonstrated.

His mother died when he was five or six years of age. This was to him a great loss. As her only surviving child, he was the subject of many prayers. Her warm, loving, and prayerful breath was withdrawn from him, and he was left to the care of his father, who, though a good man, was exceptionally hard of temperament. His maternal uncle, and aunt, who now dwell in Old Aberdeen, showed him, however, the greatest sympathy and kindness; and a wonderful boy they thought him. From his very earliest years he exhibited a predilection for the work of preaching. He would often mount a chair and imitate the minister, and when sent to school he might be observed getting up on a cart and giving a harangue in preaching fashion to his companions who assembled. Dr Brown also relates that one day "his Aunt went to dig potatoes in a field which they had near the sea, taking John with her on her back. On reaching the spot he descried over her shoulder a ship in the distance, and directing her attention to it, exclaimed, "That's the ship that's to take me to preach to the heathen." "But what if they winna hear you?" "Then I'll gang to some other place," cried the quick little fellow. Alongside this desire for the ministry there sprang up an intense passion for learning. Even when very young he longed for the day when he would enter the University. On one occasion when very ill, he was heard to exclaim several times "O that God would spare me till I get on the red cloakie!" the red gown worn by the Aberdeen University students.

I cannot omit to notice here that Mr Duncan, Senior, married a second time, when the boy was about eight years of age. His wife, whose name was Sophia Sutherland, was, at the time of their union, an Episcopalian, but she afterwards became a staunch

Seceder. Step-mothers have often the reputation of being cold and unsympathetic towards the children who are not their own offspring, but it was far from being so in the present case. She stepped into the relationship in the most affectionate and motherly spirit and proved a noble substitute for the tender parent he had lost. Dr Duncan regarded his step-mother to the day of her death with the deepest "gratitude, affection, and reverence". She was truly an excellent Christian woman, who loved him all the more when he became, in after years, a monument of divine grace and a humble follower of the Lamb. In his boyhood days she perceived that there was something uncommon about him, and that education was the life he was fitted for. His father insisted that he should become a shoemaker like himself, and put him on a stool in their little kitchen, which served as a workshop, but he was a failure in acquiring the art of shoemaking. "In his awkward fingers," says his biographer, "everything went wrong; threads were badly waxed; soles were spoiled, and patches were botched," until at length his tears and sobs aroused all the sympathies of his devoted step-mother, and she prevailed upon his father to take him off the working stool. As I have already hinted, his father was severe to a fault, as many parents were in those olden days — in our time the pendulum has largely swung to the opposite pole of indulgence — and the result was that the boyish resentment would sometimes show itself in almost amusing ways. Being displeased with his father's severity on one occasion, when he was probably learning Latin at the Aberdeen Grammar School, he made his last will and testament in these brief but comprehensive and rhythmical terms: "omne matri, nihil patri" (to mother all, to father nothing).

The City of Aberdeen is famous for its Grammar School, an educational institution of great value, which has had a succession of distinguished masters from almost time immemorial. John Duncan entered this school in the year 1805-6 when he was nine years old. Here he spent five years, and had the reputation of being a clever scholar. His passion for languages then began to show itself, and also his passion for a subject at the time apparently beyond his years, Metaphysics. Long after he said to Professor Knight, "When at the Grammar School of Aberdeen I got hold of a volume of George Campbell (a Principal and Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen) in which he ridicules as lamentable folly the notion that to God there is no past, present or future — to Him all are one. I remember well how I **abhorred** George Campbell for that." It must not be concluded, however, that the budding metaphysician and profound linguist was a mere dreamy bookworm and recluse. He was as full of fun and frolic as any other boy, and went for his holidays to an uncle's farm

some miles north of Aberdeen, where he tended the cattle and played with a cousin during the vacation season.

At the age of 14 years he matriculated at the University for the first time, and so at last got on the red cloakie, which had been the object of his earnest longing even on a sick bed years before. One would have naturally expected that a youth of his uncommon ability and passionate devotion to books would have won a brilliant place in his University classes, but the result was not so. The irregularity in study and the absent-mindedness that characterised him all through life began to manifest themselves. He was probably reading far more than any student there in various departments of literature, but to stick to the methodical routine of class study was by no means his forte, and so he failed to take any place of distinction in his classes. Books, however, were his constant companions in all circumstances whether he was sitting at home or walking by the way, and though mental absent-mindedness was one side of his character, mental absorption was another side. Whatever subject he was interested in at the moment, it absorbed all his attention to the forgetfulness of everything else. On one occasion he was walking along on the south turnpike road of Aberdeen intensely reading a book. He became so absorbed in it that not till "his weary limbs" began to fail did he look up to find himself well-nigh at Stonehaven, a distance of nearly sixteen miles. He finished his course at the University, and took his degree of M.A. in the Spring of 1814.

By this time Mr Duncan had also become a student of divinity. It was customary for young men who were going forward to the ministry in connection with the Constitutional Associate Presbytery (Anti-Burgher) to begin their divinity studies between the third and fourth years of their Arts course. He was admitted as a divinity student by the Presbytery on 27th July, 1813, and attended a short session in divinity, beginning on the 1st of September. He was orthodox in his views at this period, but he was far from being spiritually prepared for the ministerial office. In 1816 he left the Secession and joined the Established Church of Scotland. He became a member in the congregation of the famous Dr James Kidd, minister of Gilcomston Chapel of Ease, and Professor of Oriental Languages in Marischal College, Aberdeen. Dr Kidd was a man of marked individuality and a powerful preacher of the gospel, whose wholesome influence was felt over all the city of Aberdeen, but his faithful ministry did not produce any beneficial impression at this stage on the mind of young Duncan, as he himself bore testimony years afterwards. In January, 1817, he presented himself for enrolment as a student of divinity in the Established Church of Scotland. His father, not too pleased already that he had left his own (the Secession)

Church, and knowing the spiritual unfitness of his son for the ministry, was nearly distracted, and went to Dr Brown, the Professor of Divinity, with "heavy complaints" against him, so as, if possible, to prevent his admission. But it would appear that the complaints were not of such a definite nature as could be handled to found proceedings upon in a concrete way, and so Dr Brown, after consultation with Dr Kidd, who had given a certificate in Duncan's favour, could not refuse to enrol him. He was, therefore, enrolled in regular form.

But the worst has not yet been told. It was his own startling confession, uttered at different times to intimate friends during his future history, with expressions of deep sorrow, that he was an Atheist when he first entered the Divinity Hall of the Established Church. Referring in particular to the class of Dr Mearns, one of the professors, he said, "I was an Atheist when I entered his class." Again, "I had a good upbringing, but I broke off from it. I had three years of dreary Atheism, and during the time I made a doctrinal atheist of a pupil of mine who died." And still again he said, "I was much indebted to Dr Mearns . . . it was under him that I gave up Atheism." To another friend (Mr Knight) he expressed himself to the effect that he was three years a Spinozist or Pantheist, and to others, still, that he fell into materialistic Atheism, denying the existence of God, of Angelic spirit and of human soul. Putting these testimonies together, he concluded that he fell for a short season, to begin with, into complete materialism, and that he afterwards rose to the slightly more elevated platform of Pantheism, but regarded it as no better than Atheism in effect. Having lost all definite belief in a personal Deity, and esteeming the all of the universe to be God and God to be all, without conscious existence, there is no doubt he was only a shade in intellectual belief above black and unmitigated Atheism, and he manifestly esteemed himself to be without any God, in the strict sense of the word, to look to, or exercise confidence in. One hopeful sign was that he was not happy in this condition. The years of Pantheistic Atheism were "dreary years", years of darkness and misery.

Dr Mearns, the distinguished professor, was, by God's blessing, his deliverer out of this horrible pit, although for years afterwards he was Christless. Dr Mearns' impressive prayers and "severely rational and convincing" lectures combined to produce this favourable result. He came now to a definite belief in a personal God, transcendent above the universe, although immersed in it, and this intellectual conviction (which he never afterwards lost) appears to have been followed and backed by a ray of divine light, for he said in one of his accustomed talks to his friend, Miss Robertson, "When I was convinced that there was a God,

I danced on the Brig o' Dee with delight, though I had a fear that He would damn me. Atheism would have been better than the certainty of damnation, but there was not that (certainly)." Pantheistic Atheism had only been a philosophy of desolation, darkness, and despair, and freedom from its awful bondage was a joyful deliverance. "But," as his biographer says, "Mr Duncan's joy at this stage was the joy of an intellectual rather than a spiritual repose, a joy chequered by the vivid consciousness that he neither was nor at that time was willing to be at peace with God . . . Hence he had the fear that God would damn him!" From this time we learn that for a period of nine years he was little troubled with theological difficulties, and concerned himself but little about his spiritual state. As to matters of faith, "he entrenched himself in a loose Sabellianism concerning the Trinity, untroubled by any questions about the Divinity of Christ, the Atonement and other great doctrines of the Gospel."

The daily "round of teaching, reading, deep thinking, company and attendance during the session at the Divinity Hall made up his life now for long years." And yet this period was not unfruitful — very far from it. In fact, it was during those years that he acquired a large measure of that vast knowledge which he afterwards displayed of the classical and oriental languages, of the literature of philosophy and theology, and of the poetry, history, and general literature of his own country. He became known among his fellow-students as one distinguished for his acquirements in classical literature. During one of the sessions he was prizeman for a Latin essay, and the Professor said that his was the only essay that was thought out in the language in which it was written. He also attached himself to some of the Highland students that he might acquire some knowledge of Gaelic, and this he actually attained.

Dr Duncan came to the close of his divinity course in 1821, but for four years thereafter he hesitated to take license, unable as he then was honestly to subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith. At last, in 1825, he presented himself for license, not because he had changed his views of subscription to articles of faith, regarding them now only as peace articles, in subscribing which licentiates only pledge themselves not to preach against them. In looking back upon this step he always spoke of it with abhorrence and grief. To Miss Robertson he said, less than a year before he died, "I took license in unbelief, in ungodliness and in doctrinal unbelief and heresy." "How did they let you pass?" she asked. "Because I was a hypocrite," was his reply, "not willingly, for I kept back for long; but at last people were upon me, and out of very shame I acted the hypocrite; I did not choose to tell others why I was not taking license." The words

contain a solemn message, I fear, to many who are entering the office of the ministry in the several Churches of today. He was licensed by the Presbytery to preach the gospel on the 24th of June, 1825, and his first sermon was preached in the West Church, Aberdeen, from 1 John iii, i — "Behold what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God". He called it in later years a tremendously bad sermon — a sermon of the most artful theology that perhaps ever was spoken, explaining away every evangelical doctrine and phrase. Dr Brown, who was present, reports that "apart from its vital defects, there was a calm, contemplative, high, half-poetic, half-mystic strain about it, which had a most fascinating effect upon the hearer; accordingly all was still attention, and a sort of wonder pervaded the audience."

But I must hasten on to notice the great change which took place in the character and life of this remarkable man. The instrument in the hand of God of that change was Dr Césor Malan, of Geneva, an eminent preacher of the everlasting gospel. Malan, who was persecuted in Geneva for his faithful proclamation of the evangelical faith, paid his first visit to England and Scotland in the year 1822. He was gladly welcomed by all who loved the true gospel. In 1826 he came to this country for the first time as an expressed "missionary character", and it was while on this tour that he visited Aberdeen, and was the guest of a brother of Dr Brown (Dr Duncan's biographer). Brown, who himself had but recently entered into gospel light and liberty, was intensely desirous to get Mr Duncan to meet Malan with a view to spiritual benefit, and had two days beforehand long and intensely interesting conversations with Dr Duncan on his soul's case, which undoubtedly prepared the way for his listening to Malan. Mr Duncan came to the house of Dr Brown's brother, among other guests, and had a long private conversation with Malan, who plied him with the text, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God". It is impossible for me to give the details of this striking interview, but when Mr Duncan happened to quote a text in the course of the conversation, Dr Malan started forward and said, "See! you have the Word of God in your mouth," to which Mr Duncan gave the memorable reply, "And may He not utterly take it out of my mouth." Mr Duncan said in later days that Malan's utterance "passed through him like a shock of electricity — the great thought that God meant man to know His mind; God — His word — in my very mouth." It was, I believe, he added, "the seed of perhaps all I have, if I have anything, to this hour." The proud scholar was completely changed, and became as a little child at the feet of Jesus. As he sat down to study a day or two after he "became

suddenly (according to his own words) the passive recipient of all the truths he had heard and been taught from childhood. I sat there wondering for hours, and they came and preached themselves to me." And night after night — God was now speaking home to his mind and heart the whole plan of salvation — he laid himself down to rest with the child's prayer on his lips, as the genuine outflow of his heart :—

"This night when I lie down to sleep,
I give my soul to Christ to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take."

Dr Duncan's conversion — by the way like the Apostle Paul's and the great John Calvin's — was a sudden one, but it was none the less genuine on that account. Its suddenness and its thoroughness gave a vigorous proof of the almighty, wonderworking power of God, who can turn in a single moment the shadow of death into the morning. He saw revealed truth in a new light, and he began to walk with a tender conscience in the fear of God. The very temptation to daily sin was for the time being gone, and he contended for the truth in the person of Christ as God manifest in the flesh with an earnestness and zeal born of a new vision of the glory of God as revealed in His Son, treading with intense vehemence on his former views, which were practically Socinian and Unitarian. His reverence now for the word of God, with all his natural suspicion of temperament, and keen critical powers, was profound in the extreme. Dr Moody Stuart bears testimony: "More than any man I ever knew, he trusted every word, revered every word, and loved every word in the book of God." His preaching at this time took its colour from the teaching of his spiritual father, Dr Malan. He insisted on an immediate belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Redeemer and Saviour and without defining too particularly the nature of saving faith as the gift of God, he assured his hearers of their possession of acceptance with God and eternal life, if they but believed. He took a high line on the subject of the assurance and joy of faith, and did not bring out sufficiently the place and necessity of the Holy Spirit's work. Still it was the time of his "first love", and while his preaching had its defects, not slight, yet coming as it did from one who was really anointed with the Spirit, it had its excellencies and its power. It may be mentioned here, by the way, that although the spiritual change in Mr Duncan was complete and manifest, his special peculiarities of character remained. His absentmindedness continued as a permanent feature

An amusing illustration of it is often repeated. He was walking to Maryculter, seven miles from Aberdeen, on a Sacramental Fast Day, to preach, and when he had gone a considerable way

he drew out his snuff-box to take a pinch. The wind being in his face, he turned about to perform the operation; but when he accomplished this he did not turn round again; he moved on in the direction of Aberdeen, from which he had come, until eventually he was brought to his senses by the enquiry of a man who was going to the church at Maryculter, and who recognised him as the expected preacher for the day.

(to be continued)

THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS

by Rev. Alex. McPherson

(continued from page 113)

Psalm One Hundred and One

This Psalm bears the marks of having been composed at the beginning of a period of new or increased responsibility. It could have been at the time that David began to reign over Judah in Hebron. Or, perhaps, seven years later when he became king of all Israel. Or after that even, when he brought up the ark from the house of Obed-edon, and felt awed at having the symbol of God's presence so near him. At anyrate, whenever it was, the good king felt the need for a firm resolve to act in a way becoming the ruler of God's covenant people. No doubt he also had Saul's sad reign in mind.

But how shall we apply the Psalm to ourselves? If verses one and two had been omitted, the Psalm might easily represent the resolve of any good-principled, well-intentioned person who wished to do what was good and right. The two opening verses, however, reveal that it was a humble believer in Jehovah who determined in the strength of divine grace to act wisely and well.

Here, therefore, is a Psalm suited to the case of the godfearing person who feels his need for walking circumspectly and well towards God and his fellow men. The need for this will be felt very specially when publicly professing one's faith in Christ, or at marriage, or when taking up a new post or employment, or when taking office in the Church. Yet this need may be felt just as keenly at any time that the believer is strongly impressed by the obligation which God has laid upon him to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called. (Eph. 4, v. 1-3).

Verse 1. "I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing".

David's song of holy resolve begins with a reference to the ruling principle of his life as a regenerate soul, namely, mercy and judgment. The latter term denotes the administration of a just sentence, and in particular, God's dealing with sinners as they deserve. Mercy and judgment might be called the keynote

of God's dealings with sinful man. He is able to mingle them in perfect proportion because of the covenant of grace which He made with his Son from eternity, and which was ratified when his Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross. The righteous God can show mercy to sinners because only judgment was meted out to Jesus Christ, the sinner's substitute. Because no mercy was shown to Him when He became the sin-bearer, it was proper for God to show mercy to those whose sins He bore.

It is to that death that we must look for an explanation of the leniency shown to Adam and Eve, our first parents. Instead of stark, dreadful judgment, woes much less were visited upon them, together with a promise of grace and the institution of religious ordinances suited to their sinful condition. Similarly, when the whole world became corrupted, God did not destroy all men but saved one family from the flood, and through them preserved the race. In the biblical record of God's dealings with nations and individuals we repeatedly find judgment mingled with mercy, and that is still God's way. In this world the wicked are not punished as they deserve, and the godly, on the other hand, are not treated with unvarying benevolence but are often chastised for their soul's health.

David had learned something of this in his life previously. Much mercy had been shown him, and many judgments (for so his chastisements can also be called, e.g. Psalm 119, v. 75) had restrained him from evil and disciplined him to follow the Lord faithfully. Therefore, as king of Israel, he will strive to temper judgment with mercy, and mercy with judgment. He will seek to mingle leniency and severity in such a way that God will be glorified and benefits accrue to individuals and the nation alike. We may well ask ourselves whether we also have a deep regard for this holy combination of judgment and mercy, a regard implanted by grace, and whether we desire to apply it to all our dealings with our fellow-creatures. In our day this is greatly lacking. From the previous tendency towards undue severity there has been a swing towards extreme leniency in all human relationships; in the home, at work, in law-making and enforcement, and in the Church. But let us determine to make judgment and mercy the matter of our praise all our days, and thus keep in mind what we owe to them and how diligently we should apply them to all the affairs of life.

Verse 2. "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart".

In accordance with the principle just stated, he intends to act in wisdom and in holiness. His wisdom is to be a holy wisdom; not a manœuvring of people and things to suit his purpose. His

holiness is to be a wise holiness; not the sort of spirituality which pays scant regard to the timeliness and fitness of works and deeds, and which is so impractical as to cause trouble and annoyance to others.

But who is sufficient for these things? He expresses his need of divine help. "O when wilt thou come unto me?" He longs for God's enlightening and sanctifying presence as Moses did when he thought of the wilderness lying between himself and Canaan.. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence". Under the influence of God's Spirit, graciously bestowed, David will show piety at home first of all. A perfect or holy heart is the same at home and abroad. What a man is at home he will also be outside. See the order of his thoughts! He will behave himself wisely and holily. Yet how can he unless God's Spirit dwells within him? But if He will do that and purify David's heart, he will live a righteous and godly life within his own house, and that will be the foundation of his public activities. That, friend, is the line of thought, desire and intention of a gracious person. Is it yours?

THE CHURCH IN THY HOUSE

by Rev. Malcolm MacInnes, M.A., Ullapool

In writing to Philemon, Paul sent greetings to "the church in thy house". The Saviour had said "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them", and, evidently there were such with Philemon. The Word of the Lord shall prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it, "for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few". In the hope of such truths I left Scotland on the first of August to spread the Gospel of free and sovereign grace in Fornaci di Barga, Italy. In a country which is predominantly Roman Catholic, but where "All religious confessions are equally free before the law", this was a wonderful opportunity of declaring the Truth as it is in Jesus. At Pisa airport I was met by the Marchi family, with whom I stayed during my time in Italy.

Forty miles north-east of Pisa, in a tree-clad valley, there lies a small town — this is Fornaci di Barga. The population, of about five thousand, live in a scattered area, and a large number of them work in the local metallurgical factory. The remainder of the working population are engaged in the ordinary employments common to any small town, or in private business, which they run in their homes.

As might be expected the vast majority of the population are of Roman Catholic persuasion. A small percentage profess Communism, but, of these, some still attend the services in the Roman

Catholic chapel. In the midst of such darkness there is a small group of people who meet together to worship God and to study the Scriptures. This is "the church in thy house" in Fornaci di Barga. Of this group, some, I am fully persuaded, are new creatures in Christ Jesus; some are seekers after Truth; while others, having seen the inconsistency and deceit of the Church of Rome, are seeking a refuge. It was to minister to this group that I went to Fornaci de Barga.

During my time in Italy I held two services each Lord's Day, and a prayer-meeting during the week. At these services I delivered an exposition of some portion of Scripture, after which there followed a discussion on the subject raised, or on one kindred to it. On other evenings worship was held in one of the houses, and, as was customary after the services, a discussion followed. During these discussions, I not only endeavoured to expose the errors of the Papal system, but also received an insight to the pressing needs of the people. The subjects of discussion included these — Christ, the One Foundation of His Church; Christ, the One Mediator; Christ, the One Intercessor within the Veil; Christ, the sufficient righteousness of every believer; salvation "without money, and without price"; the two sacraments of the Scripture as opposed to the seven of the Church of Rome; and "the non-existence of purgatory". During my second week in Italy we started a study of the Epistle to the Romans, but as the time was limited we discussed selected passages only. There were also some practical, domestic, and social problems, but in all these there was the encouraging element that the inquirers were seeking guidance from the Word of God. The teaching and traditions of Rome have prevailed for so long that all are expected to remain within its fold. Such is the darkness and the false teaching which have prevailed, that many are literally afraid of the "Protestant Bible". It is pathetic to see the homage done to pieces of marble, of wood, and of stone; and in many places the only "light" is that of "the candle"! In many houses which I visited there were "madonnas" and the crucifix, but some householders agreed to remove these, and I hope to arrange that wall-plaques with a text of scripture in Italian be sent to them. These will take the place of the crucifix. It was spiritually refreshing and encouraging to meet, in such a priest-ridden land, souls which rejoiced in Christ their Saviour, and which desire the sincere milk of the Word of God.

The hope of those who have severed their connection with the Church of Rome is that they shall one day have a "public place of worship", to which they feel, more people would come. They deserve our encouragement; they request our prayers. We read that "the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for

his friends". We are, in Britain, under the shadow of a threatening bondage because of a false sense of charity on the part of many professed Protestants of liberal persuasion. Pray, not only that our own liberty be preserved, but that others may come to enjoy such Gospel blessings. The Lord may turn our captivity when we "pray for our friends".

REPORT BY DEPUTY TO U.S.A. AND CANADA

Rev. D. B. Macleod, M.A.

I left Detroit on 25th June, 1968, accompanied by Mr and Mrs Lawson. We crossed from the United States into Canada by driving through the tunnel which connects the city of Detroit with the city of Windsor on the Canadian side. On our way to the Niagra Falls, where we had arranged to meet Mr James Fraser, Toronto, we passed near the cities of London and Hamilton, the names of which could not fail to remind us of the British origin of a considerable proportion of the Canadian people. At Niagra, Mr James Fraser was patiently waiting our arrival, our car journey having taken longer than we had anticipated. It was indeed a pleasure to meet him again, the last time having been, strangely enough, in the Manse in London during the late Rev. J. P. MacQueen's ministry there.

This was my first visit to the Falls and it was an experience not soon to be forgotten. The Falls were a tremendous and awe-inspiring sight. The impression of irresistible power conveyed to the mind as the flood of water flows over the ridge of the falls and plunges into the gorge so far below is altogether overwhelming. How fitted is such a sight to lead our mind out to consider higher things. If this whisper of God's power displayed in the work of creation is so great, how much more tremendous and overwhelming must be, on the one hand, the revelation of the saving power of His grace in delivering from eternal death, and on the other hand, the revelation of the crushing weight of His destroying power against those who die in their sins.

Mr Fraser proved a most interesting and helpful guide to us, taking us over the places of interest at the Falls and we were very indebted to him for his kindness. Here I parted company with the kind friends from Detroit, they to spend the night at Hamilton before journeying home the next day, while I continued my journey to Toronto with Mr Fraser. We reached there late at night. The next two or three days were spent in this city during

which time I had the opportunity of meeting many of the friends who attend the Bloor Street Church as well as other friends from Scotland. I also had the privilege of being entertained by a number of the friends in the city. I was very glad to have the opportunity again of meeting the pastor of the Bloor Street congregation, Rev. Hamstra, and on the Wednesday evening I had the weekly meeting in his church. It was a privilege also to meet Mrs Fraser (a sister of Mrs Grant, Inverness) who is well known to the Deputies who have visited Toronto. My time very quickly passed, and before long I was getting ready to continue my journey. Mr James Fraser and his wife (who is a sister of Mrs Murray, Applecross) showed me much kindness and it was indeed pleasant to be with them and to meet their lovely children.

My next stop was Winnipeg. The two hours and twenty minutes flight there from Toronto was pleasant and during the flight I had a good view of Fort William and Port Arthur, two great grain ports of Canada, nestling at the head of Lake Superior. Flying at 30,000 feet it was possible to see for very many miles all around. As we approached Winnipeg at a low altitude the city stood out quite clearly in the middle of the surrounding prairie land. Meeting me at the airport were four of the Winnipeg friends who drove me to Mrs Fraser's house where I was to stay during my time in Winnipeg.

During the six weeks I have spent in Winnipeg I have held the services on Sabbath and the prayer-meetings on Wednesday, except one Wednesday when I paid a visit to a new town, Thompson, far north in Manitoba, where I held a service in a Mission Hall. The congregation here in Winnipeg is small and most of the people are elderly but there are among them those who truly fear the Lord. Were it not for this, Winnipeg would be a very desolate place, although we do not doubt but that the Lord has some of His own in the city who are unknown to us. What need there is in Winnipeg, as elsewhere, that the Lord would come in the power and blessing of His Spirit to awaken the dead and to revive the living. It is only in this way that His Cause in Winnipeg, connected with us as a Church, can be built up or even maintained. And that He is able to do it, of that we have no doubt. His Word to us in connection with such a time of reviving is — "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." (Ezek. 36, 37). May the Lord grant to His people everywhere the Spirit of grace and supplications that they might plead for the prosperity of the Lord's Cause in Canada and America, in Africa and Australia, at home and throughout the whole world. "And let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen and Amen." (Psalm 72, 19).

POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD

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

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 155)

IV. Giulainidh E'n uallaichean uile. Tha e air àithne dhuinn uallaichean aon a cheile a ghiulain; gu h'àraidh bu chòr do'n a fir uallaichean a mnathan a ghiulain, agus so a nì a tha Criosd a deanamh tha E giulain uile uallaichean a cheile. Fhearaibh, tha againn uile ar 'n uallaichean fodh'm bheil sinn a saothrachadh, uallaichean an taobh a stigh, agus uallaichean an taobh a muigh; uallaichean anns an fheoil, agus uallaichean anns an spiorad; uallaichean a tha toirt oirne a bhi'g osnaich fodhpa: "Oir tha sinn anns a phàilliu ri osnaich, air dhuinn a bhi fodh uallaich". tha'n t-Abstol ag ràdh, II. Cor. v. 4. Uallaichean a tha tuilleadh 'us trom air ar son, mar a tha Daibhidh a' gearain gu'n robh uallaichean-san mar sin, Salm xxxviii. 4. Uallaichean a tha aig amaibh dha'r deanamh 'n ar 'n uallaichean dhuinn fein, mar a tha Iob a gearain dha thaobh fein, Iob vii. 20. Uallaichean a tha deanamh ar beatha 'n uallach dhuinn. "Tha m'anam sgìth de m' beatha; fàgaidh mì mo ghearain orm fein; labhraidh mì ann an seirbhe m'anama." Iob x. 1. Nis, cia mar a bhitheas na h-uallaichean so air an giulain? C'ar son, giulainidh Criosd iad uile, tha E giulain uile uallaichean a cheile; agus ma dhùinneas sinn Ris ann an co-cheangal pòsaidh, cha luidh an t-uallach sin oirne nach giulain E air ar son. Tha E giulain uile uallaichean a shluaigh ann an dà rathad.

1. Ann an rathad co-fhaireachadh agus truais. Tha E gul maille r'an uile dheoir, agus ag osnaich maille r'an uile ghearaichean. Ma tha iad fodh thrioblaid tha E air a chràdh; ma tha iad air an leon, tha E sìleadh; anns 'n a h-uile nì tha E giulain ceann eile an uallaich; "N an uile àmhghair bha esan fodh àmhghair; agus rinn aingeal a làthaireachd an tearnadh." Isaiah lxiii. 9. Tha E fulung maille ruinn; na, mar a tha'n t-Abstol dha chur, tha co-fhulungas aige ruinn, Eabh. iv. 15. Tha mothachadh domhain Aige air ar n' uallaichean, agus ar 'n uile bhròin. 'S e so aig amaibh suidheachadh 'n a naomh, nach eile aca measg dhaoine aon a ghabhas truas dhiubh, agus a nochdas an co-fhaireachadh riutha, fodh an uallaichean, mar a bha suidheachadh Dhaibhidh, Salm lxix. 20. Ach eadhon an sin tha Criosd a giulain ceann eile an uallaich, tha E gabhail truais dhuibh, agus a nochdadh co-fhaireachadh riubha, agus sin a reir cudthrom an uallaich. Agus O cia cho milis 's a tha sin! "Cha'n eil e gu mugha," a deir duine naomh, "ciod e cho tròm 's a'n t-uallach, cho fad 's a tha Criosd a giulain a chinn eile dheth."

2. Ann an rathad cuideachaidh. Cha'n e mhàin gu'm bheil E

giulain leo, ach tha E mar an ceudna a toirt neart gu bhi giulain, agus a seasamh suas fodh'n uallach. Tha E cur a ghàirdeanan siorruidh fodhpa, Deut. xxxiii. 27. Agus leis a ghealladh so tha E dha misneachadh gu bhi tilgeadh an uallaichean Air-san; "Tilg air an Tighearna do chùram, agus cumaidh esan suas thu," Salm lv. 22. Tha E dha' neartachadh agus dha'n cuideachadh, agus sin a reir cudthrom an uallaich. Bheir E neart mòr dhoibh air son uallaichean mòr, cuideachaidhean mòr air son buairidhean mòr, agus mar sin tha E co-lionadh a gheallaidh dhoibh nach leig E dhoibh a bhi air am feuchainn thar an comas. I. Cor. x. 13. Glaodhaidh an t-anam bochd iomadh uair a mach, O, theid mì fodha fodh'n eallach; tha e tuilleadh 'us tròm air mo shon-sa dha ghiulain. Ach, anam, ged a tha e tuilleadh 'us tròm air do shon-sa dha ghiulain; gidheadh cha'n eil e tuilleadh 'us tròm air son Chrìosd dha ghiulain, agus tha E giulain maille riut, agus air do shon. Seadh, cha'n e mhàin gu'n giulain E, ach gu'n giulain E air falbh ann an am iomchuidh an uallaichean uile air an son. Cha'n eil an t-ealach sin air aon dhe cheile nach eil E dha ghiulain air a leithid de dhòigh agus mu dheireadh gu'n giulain E air falbh e gu h-iomlan bh'uatha, air chor agus nach feum iad gu bràth a bhi'g osnaich fodha. Ghiulain E a cheana an t-ealach is motha uile air an son, eadhon cionta agus peanas am peacaidhean; "Neach a ghiulain ar peacaidhean e fein 'n a chorp fein air a chrann, chum air dhuinn a bhi marbh do'n pheacadh, gu'm bitheamaid beo do fhìreantachd: neach le a bhuillean a tha sibh air bhur tearnadh," I. Pead. ii. 24. Agus a ris, "Ghiuluain e peacadh mhòran, agus rinn e eadar-ghuidhe air son nan ciontach." Isaiah liii. 12. Agus tha e gu maith dhuinne gu'n do ghiulain e'n t-ealach so; oir a dh'easbhuidh so dh' fheumadh e sinne a chur fodha agus a bhruthadh gu siorruidh; cha b' urrain sinn gu bràth seasamh fodha. Agus mar a ghiulain E so, mar sin tha E giulain, agus ann an am iomchuidh giulainidh E air falbh iad uile air an sona. Am bheil am peacaidhean, aingidheachd a' nitheamh naomh, 'n a ealach dhoibh? Iad so giulainidh E air falbh bh'uatha, Ecsodus xxviii. 38. Am bheil fuigheal truailidheachd nàduir 'n a ealach dhoibh? bheir iad so orra a bhi'g osnaich da rìreadh; iad so ann an am iomchuidh giulainidh E air falbh bh'uatha, Rom. vii. 24, 25. Am bheil an còmhragan agus am buairidhean 'n an ealach dhoibh? Tha iad so a luidh tròm air cuid, ann an am iomchuidh bheir E air falbh mar an ceudna; tionndaidh E'n còmhragan gu buaidhean. O cia mar a bu chòr dha so a bhi toirt comhfhurtachd do chridhe 'n a naomh! Agus cia mar a bu chòr dha so a bhi tarraig agus a tàladh pheacach dha ionnsuidh! O fhearaibh, an teid sibh fodha fodh 'ur 'n uallaichean a roghainn air Crìosd a bhi agaibh

gu bhi dha'n giulain dhuibh? O na bitheamh cho an-ìochdmhor da 'ur 'n anamaibh fein! Ni E milis an àmhghairean uile dhoibh; àmhghairean faodaidh iad, agus gu tric coinnichidh iad riutha; àmhghairean lionmhor agus mòr. Tha Criosd ag innse dhuinn gu'm bi anns an t-saoghal so àmhghairean againn, Eoin xvi. 33. Ach ni E'n h-uile ni milis dhoibh; tionndaidh E'n deoch-shearbh gu fion, agus uime sin aig an aon am, agus leis an aon anail, tha E'g ràdh, "Biodh sìth agaibh annam-sa." Mar gu'n abradh E, Ni mì milis 'ur trioblaidean uile dhuibh. Tha Criosd a deanamh milis àmhghairean a shluaigh ann an dà rathad.

1. Le a làthaireachd maille riutha agus le bhi comhphàrtachadh a ghràidh riutha 'n uair a tha iad fodh'n àmhghairean; gheall Criosd a bhi maille r'a shluagh, agus a bhi frithealadh comhfhurtachdan dhoibh 'n an àmhghairean; "An uair a shiubhleas tu troimh na h-uisgeachaibh, bidh mise maille riut; agus troimh na h-aibhnichean, cha tig iad tharad; an uair a dh'ìmicheas tu troimh an teine, cha loisgeir thu, agus cha dean an lasair greim ort." Isaiah xliii. 2, 's e sin, Bi mise maille riut anns na h-àmghairean is geire a choinnicheas riut. Tha iad a coinneachadh ri iomadh àmhghair, tinneas, bochdainn, masladh, geurleanmhuinn, agus nithean de'n t-seorsa sin, ach tha Criosd maille riutha annta uile, agus tha E nochdadh dhoibh a ghràidh, agus dha'n deanamh uile milis dhoibh. Is fìor e nach eil Criosd nì's motha maille r'a shluagh, aig am air bith, agus nach eil E nì's motha gu h-àbhaisteach a comhphàrtachadh a ghràidh agus a chomhfhurtachdan riutha, nì's motha na 'n uair a tha iad ann an àmhghair. An sin, gu h-àbhaisteach is ann a tha na foillseachidhean is mìlse air a ghràdh; an sin tha aca na seallaidhean is soilleire, na blasadan is làine, na seulaichidhean is taghta agus is àirde air a ghràdh dhoibh; an sin tha E dha'n treorachadh do thigh-fiona, agus a foillseachadh a bhratach-gràidh thairis orra, Dàn. ii. 4-6. An sin tha E frithealadh a chomhfhurtachdan is treise dhoibh, dha'n comhfhurtachadh 'n an uile àmhghairean. II. Cor. i. 4, 5. Is firinn e, cha'n eile 'n an àmhghairean is geire ach nithean gu bhi dha'n ullachadh air son nan comhfhurtachdan is mìlse; agus, da-rìreadh, tha E mar sin gu bitheanta a toirt àmhghair dhoibh, a chùm gu'm foillsich E a ghràdh, agus gu'm fritheil E a chomhfhurtachdan dhoibh; mar a th'againn ann an Hosea ii. 14, "Gidheadh feuch, bheir mise oirre mo leantuinn, agus bheir mì ì do'n fhàsach, agus labhraidh mì rithe gu càirdeil." Agus, da-rìreadh, mar a tha comhfhurtachdan làidir bitheanta ag ullachadh air son àmhghairean mòr, mar sin gu bitheanta tha àmhghairean mòr a deanamh slighe air son comhfhurtachdan làidir." Is e àmhghair, "a deir diadhair urramach," an iarmailte anns am bheil gràdh Chriosd gu sònraichte ag analachadh; agus 's e companaich mhilis a th'ann an Criosd agus an crann ceus

aidh." Tha gràdh Chrìosd agus a làthaireachd maille r'a shluagh 'n an àmhghair, a tionndadh an oidhche gu latha, an dorchadas gu solus, am pianntaibh gu faochadh, am bròn gu aoibhneas, an calltaibh gu buannachd; seadh, am bàs fein gu beatha. "Seadh, ged shiubhail mì troimh ghleann sgaile a' bhàis, cha bhi eagal orm; oir tha thusa maille rium; bheir do shlat agus do lorg comhfhurtachd dhomh." Salm xxiii. 4. Tionndaidh e prìosan gu bhi'n a luchairt thaitnich; mar a rinn e thaobh an triur ghilleann ann am Babilon; agus so, tha anamaibh aig am bheil fein-fhiosrachadh a faigheal a mach. O cia cho milis 's a tha àmhghairean 'n uair a thig Crìosd agus a ghràdh maille riutha.

(R'a leantuinn)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Invasion of Czechoslovakia

The world was shocked by the most callous and wicked invasion of Czechoslovakia by troops from Russia, assisted by other Communist countries. Our readers are aware of the facts of this oppression of a small nation. The godless Russians appear to be exceedingly afraid even of other Communist countries who desire some freedom from the hard yoke and bondage of extreme Communistic rule. The denial of God and enmity to Christianity has not brought the mighty Russian rulers freedom from fear. What are they afraid of? The boast on their part is that they possess and spread the greatest ideology in the world today. Can it be destroyed if not supported by tanks and guns? Once the peace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, enters the heart of a sinner, it is not preserved by military weapons, but by the power of God and fellowship with God. There was no assault upon Russia by the army of a neighbouring nation; but what did affect Russian leaders was the emergence of desires and aspirations for freedom from the oppression of an evil system. Their philosophy of life could not stand up against an increase of this. If men and nations would only embrace the truths of the gospel of Christ, the Prince of life and the Prince of peace, there would be freedom from oppression, fear and suspicion and love to one's neighbour. In respect of this calamity by aggression, the United Nations Organisation consists of a helpless body of men, capable only of talk at the expense of the American and British taxpayers. There is, of course, no thought of prayer to God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in this time of trouble. It is a Christless, prayerless and impotent organisation.

An Explanation

We have agreed to note the following explanation:— In the August issue of the F.P. Magazine it was observed that the Free Church minister of Brora had conducted a Watchnight Service. To avoid misunderstanding it must be noted that this was not a Christmas Watchnight Service: but an effort to bring the gospel and solemnity of eternity to the community in a special way before wordly revellings began. Although an innovation, it was also an evangelical effort and thus perhaps unfair to interpret it as a deviation from the spirit of the Reformed Church.

The Inhumanity of Communism

The inhuman conduct of extreme Communistic rule is referred to by Miss Renee Krausova, editor of a woman's magazine in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, in a special article in **The Scotsman** of August 10th, 1968. She refers to this aspect of the government of her country before the recent liberalisation in the following terms: "The people of the country lived in fear, they were afraid to express the truth, became phlegmatic and passive. Thousands of them were thrown into jail though they were innocent, and suffering also overtook members of their families . . . We have new laws regarding the rehabilitation of thousands of those who have been unjustly convicted, even though we know that no rehabilitation, no public honours, can make up for three, five or ten years of life spent in prison for no cause whatsoever." These revelations are not heresay but facts, and provide one other witness against the evil spirit which actuates and pervades the Russian type of Communism. This is the ideology which affects to bring satisfaction and prosperity to the human race. It is a system without God and based on the denial of a Supreme Being and the Christian religion. We need as a nation, that God would open our eyes to the terrible danger of casting away respect for the Word of God and the Christian gospel. Without these, we are exposed to evil "isms" of many kinds, including Communism.

Australian Minister resigns in defence of the Bible

A paper cutting sent us from Australia tells of the resignation from his Church, of a Rev. Amis C. Shelton, Presbyterian minister at Warren in Central, New South Wales. He says his church no longer implicitly believes in the Bible. He avers that some sections of the church, to which he belonged, were teaching that Jesus Christ was not God. This state of affairs obtains also in certain sections of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. What these present-day rationalists in the professing Christian Church hope to achieve by their God-dishonouring teaching is difficult to

understand in one sense. On the other hand, it is clear that they are accomplishing the overthrowing of confidence in the Word of God, as such, in the minds of many of their fellow-men. This is the work of servants of the devil and will bring its own terrible reward, if such do not deeply repent of their special sin.

The Roman Church — Autocratic

As an aftermath of the Pope's ruling on birth control, a Roman Catholic clergyman, Paul Weir, of St. Cecilia's Church, North Cheam, Surrey, has been suspended from all his ecclesiastical duties. He disagreed with the Pope's ruling and refused to give even "external" obedience to it. The Vicar General in the Cheam area stated that the Roman Catholic Church was an **autocratic** society, and any who did not like this, must get out. It will not be amiss to refer to the dictionary meaning of the word "autocratic", viz., An **autocrat** is one who rules by his own power; an absolute sovereign. **Autocracy**, an absolute government by one man: despotism. And the adjective is, **autocratic**, as used by the aforesaid R.C. ecclesiastic. We claim that the Presbyterian form of government from the congregation's Kirk-Session to the Presbytery, then to the Synod and finally to a General Assembly, is scriptural and **democratic**. We wonder what effect such dogmatic assertions by R.C. clergy have upon the minds of men in the Church of Scotland, who have agreed to invite a Roman Catholic representative to their 1969 General Assembly. There is another matter we see in the case of this suspended R.C. clergyman: and it is the fact of an "iron" ecclesiastical discipline exercised by the Roman Church towards its clergy and members. We are not against, but very much for the exercising of a discipline consistent with the guidance of the New Testament Scriptures, in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Some Anglicans and Presbyterians who, today, are actively engaged in courting the official friendship of the Roman Church have little or no heart for the exercising of church discipline. An "autocratic society" would not suit many of them.

Gambling Casino for Inverness turned down

An Aberdeen businessman planned to establish a gambling casino in the town of Inverness. The press reports stated that the sub-committee of Inverness Planning Committee decided to recommend that approval be refused, after representatives of the applicant and objectors had been heard. The applicant intended to convert an empty supermarket into a casino, which would therefore be sited in the Kessock area of Inverness. A petition was signed by residents in this district objecting not to the casino as a centre of the vice of gambling, but on the choice

of the site, particularly from the point of view of noise and traffic hazard. This was the case put up for the objectors by Councillor Mrs M. Skinner and Bailie James Cameron. Further, Mrs Skinner said that the town centre is the place for such a venture, not the middle of a housing scheme. It seems that the objectors and the two Town Councillors were more opposed to noise from traffic (quite a trying nuisance) than afraid of the spread of the plague of gambling among young and old in the Capital of the Highlands. All that the people of our country have heard and read lately about the "gambling world", from government and police sources, does not seem to have come to the knowledge of the objectors, or at anyrate has had no good effect upon them. Why did those Councillors not take the opportunity to condemn gambling as a moral and social evil? Of course the law of the land permits the granting of licenses for the establishment of such evil places as gambling casinos. A gambling casino in Inverness would deprive many of much money and leave such with nothing in return; and in cases bring debt and misery and slavery to this vice.

Knife Attack Obtains Money

Many are the headlines in the press reporting the use of the knife by drunken toughs, by irresponsible youths and organised criminals. Lately, we read a brief item of news which reported that an attendant was held at knife-point during a raid on an all-night garage in Aberdeen, early one morning. Men arrived in a car and burst into his office and one held a knife at his chest, while the other rifled the till. That's the story. No doubt the ruling factor in the attack was that the men were desperate for money. They use a knife as they did and obtain cash. Like many others today, they were desperately wicked men in heart and practice. If apprehended, would a fine or term of imprisonment be suitable punishment for threatening to plunge a knife into a man's heart if he dared to act in preservation of his master's property? Certainly not! Such dastardly conduct in the quiet of the night should expose men to the imposition of the birch and imprisonment. It is time the birch was brought back to deal with criminal cowards. Even in regard to the parent-child relationship, the Bible stipulates, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him": and "He that spareth his rod hateth his son . . ." (Proverbs).

CHURCH NOTES

Late Rev. D. M. MacDonald, London

We are indeed sorry to have to report the death of Rev. Donald M. MacDonald, formerly the minister of Portree con-

gregation, Isle of Skye. Our friend was two years pastor of Uist congregation and twenty-nine years at Portree, from where he retired in 1948. He passed away in his sleep on the Sabbath morning, 1st September, 1968. The previous evening, Saturday, he took part in family worship, at which all his family were present, in the kind providence of God. He was almost eighty-six years of age. This note would be incomplete if we did not mention that Mr MacDonald lived in his latter years, after his wife's death, with his son-in-law, Mr John Campbell, Worcester Park, London; and Mr and Mrs Campbell were exemplary in their devotion to and care of Mrs Campbell's father. We remember the late Mr MacDonald since our boyhood. He came often to Glasgow at communion seasons. He was a gracious man and a lively preacher of the gospel of Christ. Few in our day, among the godly, possessed such a tranquil spirit which was manifest in his whole bearing and character. He continued all his life in unswerving and faithful adherence to the faith of the gospel and the testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. As Editor, we had great pleasure in getting our late friend to write once and again, most interesting and edifying articles for this magazine. In this, he took great delight. He has left behind preaching and the pen and has entered into his rest — with the Saviour he truly loved, while here many friends will mourn his death. We extend our deep sympathy to all the members of his family and other relations, including the Rev. W. Grant, Dingwall, a brother-in-law. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord".

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.

Induction of the Rev. D. M. Macleod to Auckland, New Zealand

The Southern Presbytery met in the Vestry of St Jude's Church, Glasgow, at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28th, 1968, and was constituted.

At the Service, which began about 7 p.m. in St Jude's Church, the Rev. D. Campbell, M.A., Edinburgh, Moderator of the Southern Presbytery, preached and presided. His Text was Mark, chapter 16, verses 15 and 16: "And He said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned'." From this portion the Moderator delivered

a most appropriate discourse on the gospel, the preaching of the gospel, and the extent of the duty laid on the preachers of the gospel.

The Sermon being ended, the Clerk read a narrative of the steps leading up to this Induction. He then set the usual Questions, to all of which the Rev. D. M. MacLeod returned satisfactory answers. He then read out the Formula, which Rev. D. M. MacLeod signed in the presence of the congregation. The Moderator then engaged in solemn prayer and, prayer being ended, did Solemnly Induct and Admit the Rev. D. M. MacLeod to the pastoral charge of Auckland, New Zealand. The newly-inducted minister was then given the right hand of fellowship by the Moderator and Members of Presbytery and associated Members. The Clerk then addressed a few suitable words to Rev. D. M. MacLeod; and the Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow, addressed the congregation in appropriate terms. After the conclusion of the Service with the singing of the last three verses of Psalm 122 and the benediction, the Rev. D. M. MacLeod shook hands with the congregation as they left the church.

The prayers and good wishes of the Southern Presbytery and of the Church follow the Rev. D. M. MacLeod to his new sphere of labour in the Lord's vineyard. May he and the Auckland congregation have the blessing of the Lord, which maketh rich, and may the congregation he has now left be similarly favoured.

"He in thy borders maketh peace; with fine wheat filleth thee.

He sends forth His command on earth, His word runs speedily."
Psalms, 147, verses 14,15.

Malcolm MacSween, Clerk to the Southern Presbytery.

Synod Proceedings — Correction

The following corrections regarding speeches made at last Synod and reported in Synod Proceedings have been submitted by Rev. A. F. Mackay.

"In presenting the Report of my recent visit to Rhodesia this year, I am represented as speaking of "This Mis-Government" on page 53, obviously in reference to the "Smith Government", which should have been immediately noticed and corrected. I have paid particular regard in my Report and throughout my stay in Rhodesia to the obligation of avoiding all unnecessary criticism of the Government whose country I was visiting. Further down on the same page, the words "The Bembesi valley to the north along the Border of the Chambay tribal Trosslands" should read: "The Manguisi Valley to the north, along the Border of the Zhombe Tribal Trust Lands" — as a glance at the actual Report presented to the Synod shows, on page 87. On page 54, "Saka" should read "Luanda", the coastal town of Angola in West Africa, and

on page 52, the minister of Zenka is Mr Campbell, not Mr Mzamo whose congregation is at Mbuma.

"Turning to the remarks accompanying the presentation of the Home of Rest Report, there occurs some confusion near the top of page 36 of the Proceedings, where a line is missed out and the previous line repeated. Instead of the line which is repeated, the passage should read: "the surrounding in which the Home is situated. An aspect of our work which is gratifying to us as a Committee is the financial side of the Home."

We regret any errors and trust that these corrections will be noted by readers. — Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk of Synod.

New Clerk to Outer Isles Presbytery

The name of new Clerk to the Outer Isles Presbytery of the Church has been omitted from list of Clerks in this year's Synod Proceedings. The new Clerk is, Rev. A. M. Cattanach, M.A., Free Presbyterian Manse, Finsbay, Harris, Inverness-shire.

— Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk of Synod.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvin-dale, Glasgow, W.2., acknowledges with sincere thanks :

Sustentation Fund — Mrs MacL., Brora, £3; Isaiah 52 vv. 7, 8, \$25.

Foreign Mission Fund — Anon., Ullapool, per A. MacL., £2; Wellwisher, Edinburgh postmark, £2; M. MacKay, Fiscary, £2; Mrs MacL., Brora, £2; Isaiah 52 vv. 7, 8, \$25.

Dominions and Overseas Fund — Isaiah 52, vv. 7, 8, \$25.

Home of Rest Fund — P. Wood, £1; "Aliquis" per Rev. W.G., £10; "Old Friend", per R. MacK., £2; Isaiah 52 vv. 7, 8, \$25.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie, C.A., 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Free Distribution Magazine Fund — J.C., Glendale, 7/-; "Interested", Sutherland, £2.18/-; Isaiah 52: 7, 8, £9; Anon., per Rev. Mr W. F., 5/-; Mr Neil MacL., Lochmaddy, £1; A Friend, 5/-; Mr MacA., Tain, £2.16/-.

Publications Fund — Mr John MacKenzie, Bridgend, Islay, 12/-; Isaiah 52: 7, 8, £9.

Welfare of Youth Fund — Isaiah 52: 7, 8, £9.

On behalf of Trinitarian Bible Society — C.F., £1.4.11.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks :

Dunoon — Miss C.B., Dunoon, £20; M.S., Campsie, £50; Mrs L., Dunoon, £3; all for Church Building Fund.

Mbuma Hospital — Holland, per Mrs Mijnders, £3,444.5.5 on 7/6/68; Toronto Ladies, Canada, £10.18.9 on 29/4/68.

Winnipeg — "Passers-by" £100, per Rev. R. MacD., Vancouver.

Portree — R. D. Nicolson, Penefeler, Portree, £1 for Foreign Mission, £1 for Home Mission, £1 for Trinitarian Bible Society, 10/- for Blythswood Tract Society; "Interested" for Church bus, £3, per M. Gillies; Wellwisher, £3 for Home Mission, £4 for Foreign Mission.

Inverness Ladies' Rhodesian Mission Fund — "Friend of the Mission", £20; Mr and Mrs A. Ross, Scourie, £2; Mrs Munro, Glenmoriston, £1.

Stratherrick — Mr and Mrs D. MacKintosh, 1919 19th Avenue, South Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, £2 for Communion expenses.

Glendale — Envelope in Plate, £5 for Car Park.