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The General Assemblies

The Church of Scotland Assembly

At the Church of Scotland Assembly the new Moderator was the Rev. James Matheson, Portree. (Mr Matheson's father, the late Rev. Norman Matheson, was at one time Free Presbyterian minister of Halkirk and afterwards Free Church minister of Beaulieu). Mr Matheson's pro-ecumenical sentiments show that he has gone far away from the outlook in which he was brought up. It is sad to think that it was this particular Moderator who welcomed to the Assembly Thomas Winning, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow and who invited the representative of Anti-Christ to address the Assembly. This was the first occasion since the Reformation on which a Roman Catholic addressed the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It is not surprising that, on this occasion, a man of Archbishop Winning's ecumenical bent would deliver a speech brimful of the ecumenical spirit and expressing good-will for his estranged brethren in the Church of Scotland. By this action the Church of Scotland has turned the clock back many centuries. While congratulating itself on its charitable attitude to the Roman Catholic Church, it has in reality been guilty of a gross betrayal of its Protestant heritage.

The issue was presented in a more realistic light on the previous day when the Assembly discussed an overture from the Presbytery of Dunkeld and a petition from the Grand Grange Lodge of Scotland. The overture asked that a concise statement of the different fundamental beliefs of the two churches be prepared. Rev. George Dale said: "We only have to see the Roman Catholic demands to appreciate that the differences between our churches are as crucial today as they were in the Reformation of the 16th century." Mr Thos. Orr for the Grand Lodge maintained that it was improper to receive such a representative of the Roman Catholic Church before opportunity had been given to compare the distinctive doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome where they were at variance with the Scriptural standards of the Reformed Churches. The

preparation of the Statement of Differences was referred to the Panel on Doctrine but the reception of Archbishop Winning went on as planned.

The Convener of the Committee on Education for the Ministry made an earnest appeal to presbyteries and congregations to seek out suitable recruits to the ministry because there were not enough candidates coming forward. If the result of this appeal is only to produce additional unconverted candidates for the ministry, the Church of Scotland would be better without them for she has already far too many of that variety. If, on the other hand, the Lord was to raise up soundly converted preachers of the Gospel within the Church of Scotland, that is a development which we could not but welcome. If such men were able successfully to run the gauntlet of the modernistic Divinity Halls and not imbibe the poison so freely administered there, it might well herald better days for the Church of Scotland. The rejection of that false teaching would soon result in a turning to the true doctrines of God's grace and a turning from the present ecumenical alignment with the anti-Christian Church of Rome.

Rev. Hugh Douglas spoke of the £10 average annual givings of the members of the Church of Scotland as disgraceful, and told of three old age pensioners in his congregation who each gave that amount. He thought that if that was possible for pensioners then others could do much better. When it was proposed that congregations would be asked to make an effort to raise extra money for the Mission and Service Fund, the Rev. Paul Sewell tried to have ministers excused this task. He said that he was ordained as a minister of the Word and sacraments and not as a professional fund-raiser.

Prof. James Whyte, Convener of the Inter-Church Relations Committee said his Committee were recommending a temporary suspension of conversations with the Episcopal Church to which that Church, with some reluctance, had agreed. Contact would be continued through the multilateral conversations which involve several churches. This was agreed to though not without opposition. Rev. David Torrence prevailed on the Assembly to agree to ask the Presbyteries to initiate local ecumenical projects. While talks on unity are clearly foundering on certain basic disagreements, yet at local levels co-operative ecumenical ventures are flourishing.

A move to temporarily abandon negotiations towards union between the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church was defeated and the conversations between those Churches are to continue having in view bringing to next year's Assembly a basis and plan of union. The

Assembly also appointed the 1st Sabbath of January 1976 as a day of prayer for guidance in the plans for union between the two churches. Rev. Dr Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, called on the Church of Scotland to play a more solid, constructive and courageous part towards world ecumenism.

Rev. Peter Bisset, Convener of the Moral Welfare Committee, sounded an alarm on moral questions, particularly under-age drinking leading to an increasing rate of youthful alcoholism, immorality, gambling, and also abortion and euthanasia. The Committee accepted an addition to the Report re-affirming their conviction that total abstinence is the only safe policy that they can recommend to young people. The Assembly, while affirming that neither abortion nor euthanasia can ever be an acceptable element in any population policy yet conceded this to contraception and sterilisation.

Rev. John Waddell, Convener of the Overseas Council, in a plea for continued overseas involvement put forward a novel but not so bizarre argument as might have once been thought in support of his plea. He said that missionaries from these Overseas Churches may in the future (perhaps not so distant future), come to these parts to call the care-worn Christians of the West to a living hope. "Western society," he declared, "may well need to be spoken to by those of other lands who have discovered the glories of the Gospel. So when we insist that the work in other lands goes forward we may well be ensuring that the day of revival for Scotland is on the way." The Convener of the Home Board spoke of the need of a missionary Church to tackle those living in a near-pagan environment. He said that he was alarmed at the complete ignorance among young people in the school where he was chaplain of what used to be regarded as the basic things in Christian knowledge, morals and worship.

By a narrow majority the Church of Scotland members of the Joint Commission on Christian Marriage were instructed to raise with their Roman Catholic counterparts a Second Vatican Council declaration on the right of parents to decide the form of their children's religious education. Rev. H. Munroe of Denny, Stirlingshire, who put forward the proposal said that, while the non-Catholic partner in a mixed marriage might not sign any declaration about the religious education of children, he or she was fully committed by a promise which the Roman Catholic partner had to sign. Mr Munroe went on to say that in correspondence with Cardinal Gray's secretary he had been informed that for a Roman Catholic not to carry out the promise would be against the law of God.

On the Common Market issue the General Assembly voted in favour of the Church and Nation Committee's deliverance which recognised that opinion in the Kirk and nation was divided on continued membership and urged all members "to prepare themselves by prayer and study to exercise their responsibility to vote," and rejected a counter-motion by Lord Macleod that the Assembly request the Government to withdraw from the European Economic Community. The Assembly also called on all ministers to observe Sabbath, June 1st, as a national day of Prayer on the Common Market.

The Moderator in his closing address attacked the tidal wave of selfishness and greed which has deluged society. He declared that for Christians to withhold service for gain was both un-Christian and immoral.

Free Church of Scotland

At the Free Church Assembly, Rev. Duncan Macleay of Snizort, Skye, was appointed Moderator. In his opening address he claimed that the Free Church had maintained a sound evangelical and reformed faith. At the same time he admitted that they had cause for grief and shame because of their many failings and their often feeble and imperfect diligence and zeal in bearing testimony to the principles of truth. In referring to present-day church union movements, he said that these did not commend themselves to the Free Church because of the refusal to accept the doctrines of the reformed faith. In a pointed reference to the Church of Scotland he declared: "The continued departure on the part of the national Church from the reformed faith and the fact of her drawing nearer to the Church of Rome, from which we were mercifully delivered by God at the Reformation, makes any prospect of closer co-operation not only undesirable but more and more impossible."

During a debate on public questions, religion and morals Professor James Fraser spoke of the Roman Catholic Archbishop's addressing of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland as another nail in the coffin of Protestantism. He also regretted that the Moderator of the Church of Scotland on this occasion was Rev. James Matheson who had been bred, trained and ordained in the Free Church.

In the debate on the Training of the Ministry Rev. Fergus Macdonald warned that Marxism was filling the ideological vacuum that existed in the Western world. He stressed the need for the teaching of theology claiming that many church members were theological illiterates because they had not been taught theology. The challenge of Marxism, he said,

meant that Christian theology had never been more important than today. The Church had to state clearly not only what they believed but also why they believed it.

In his closing address the Moderator also referred to the question of the ministry. He warned that as a Church they had to examine carefully all those who sought to study for the ministry. To this warning of their Moderator the Free Church would do well to take heed as also to the following remarks which he made: "We should," he said, "at all times seek to deal in a scriptural and Christian manner with those whose conduct brings them and the Church into disrepute and who adversely affect the Church's witness." "Let us also guard," he stated, "against introducing methods which lower the dignity of our message. Let us avoid the unscriptural practices that have become so much a part of present-day evangelism such as decisionism and over-stressed emotionalism. Those are not likely to contribute to a robust Christian witness."

Sermon

by Rev. Wm Guthrie

"For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" — Matthew 16:26.

Christ had been pressing the company that were hearing Him, and His own disciples also, to lay out themselves for the truth, at all hazards. In these words that I have read in your hearing, He uses a double argument. The one is, What is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul for that worldly gain? The truth is, he is a perfect and an absolute loser. It cannot be told what loss he hath, and how bad a bargain he hath made. The other is, if a man lay his soul as a pawn, or pledge for this, he will not set it free again at his own pleasure. The text says, "Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Now, from these words, I shall hold out to you the following doctrines.

Doct. I.—*The souls of men are highly valued and esteemed by Jesus Christ.*

Christ Jesus hath valued the souls of men at a very high rate; for He hath so computed that He sets the whole world at nought in comparison to one soul. He says, "Though a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he is a perfect and an absolute loser." "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." Christ said this to the man that

had enlarged his barns, and had provided nothing for his soul. Christ values the souls of men very much.

Here I offer you the following evidences of the doctrine that Christ highly values and esteems the souls of men.

1. That glorious contrivance of the gospel speaks forth what a high esteem God puts upon the souls of men. Great has been the work and business of its contrivance, in order that His will may be revealed and made known to men: all is done with a design to save the soul. And if there were no more to speak of Him than the Bible, it sufficiently shows how He values and esteems the souls of men. He can make thousands of worlds at one word; and yet He has taken much pains in contriving a way how to deal with men's souls, and about that great and glorious business of man's redemption.

2. This also says that Christ values the soul so much, that He took on Him our nature, and subjected Himself very low, for such unworthy worms of the earth. None knew how to value the soul except Christ. He knows what it cost Him. In all the great revolutions of the world, He has a principal regard to the soul. There is not an up or down; a dethroning of kings, or protectors, or princes, but it is done with an eye to the good of the soul. He carrieth on some things in order to the good of the souls of men. If there were no more but the keeping up a standing ministry, and the vindication of that ordinance which He keeps up at a great expense, it shows that He values the souls of men at a very high rate.

3. Let us come and take notice of another evidence just at hand. Consider the particular care that He takes of particular persons; even a poor boy or girl. He will be speaking unto them, rebuking, exhorting, comforting, instructing them particularly, and singularly; waiting upon their ups and downs; to ratify the thoughts of their hearts, as if He had no other thing to do; though He has great kingdoms and sceptres besides to rule. All this shows how highly He values the souls of men.

Now what are the reasons of this doctrine? It is not because of any good works we can do unto Him.

1st, It is because He values the souls of men, at least comparatively with other things, as more glorious pieces of His handy-work than any other thing in this lower world. These glorious luminaries, the sun, moon, etc., are nothing to the soul. All the pleasant things that you ever saw, even heaps of gold, and silver, and streets garnished with pearls or precious stones, are nothing in comparison to a rational soul. There was never anything made upon earth that bore the image of God so eminently and singularly as the soul. And this is one reason why the Lord

values the souls so much; because it doth represent Himself more than any other creature upon earth.

2ndly, The Lord values the soul of man very much, because He carrieth on His work by the soul more than by any other thing. He gives the most glorious displays of His power and mercy, by the souls of men. He proves Himself Lord over heaven, earth, and hell, by the souls of men.

3rdly, I may say, the Lord values the soul much, because it is of the highest concernment. And this is one of the reasons God lays so much weight upon it; "For the redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever."

What use then can we make of this doctrine? God loves the soul so much, and we value it so little. It holds forth this unto us:—

That we differ exceedingly in our thoughts from the Lord. He hath put an high esteem on the soul, and we do not esteem it much. And therefore it holds out our disconformity unto Him; since He values the soul so much, and we value it so little. But you will say, "I value the soul very much, and will do anything for it." Well, if ye will put a high price upon your souls, it will appear.

1st, Try whether ye have any serious thought concerning your souls. Do ye value your souls much, who have never a thought of them to see in what case and condition they are, and what will become of them in the end? Dare ye say, in the sight of an all-seeing God, that ye had serious thoughts of your soul, and what would become of it in the end? If ye dare not say that, your value for your soul is a fancy indeed. And I pose you all, this day, that hear me, if ever you had deep thoughts concerning your soul's case and condition, answer me to that. You that cannot answer in the affirmative, ye are not far from the wrath and vengeance of God. Ye that cast your souls at your heels, and undervalue them, and spend more time and pains on the poor perishing things of the world, would ye be called Christians? Nay, rather limbs of the devil, worldly worms, and moles of the earth.

2ndly, Do ye value your souls much, who make no endeavours for your souls. Ye can tell every year how far your labour is advanced at such a time; that you have now got your oat-seed, or your barley-seed into the ground. But what have ye done for your soul? Surely everyone must give an account unto the God of heaven for their souls. I dare boldly say, that some of you lay more weight on six or seven steps of a rig's end to sow a little flax seed on, than ever you did upon your precious and immortal souls.

3rdly, Do ye value your souls much, when for a thing of nought, for a very little, or frivolous thing, ye will venture upon the wrath of God; when ye will swear and profane the name of the Lord for a thing of nought; when ye will lay down your soul against twopence; as if I were to throw down my gold ring, and play it against a few pennies Scots. And so you venture upon the wrath of the Almighty for a trifle.

4thly, Another evidence of it is given, when other things come in competition with the soul. Here is something that concerns the soul; there is something that concerns the world; I will refer it to your own conscience, which gets the first place. Here is a thing that concerns the soul; but ye are called to yoke the plough. Now lay your hand to your heart, and judge ye whether ye value your soul or the world most, and look which of these gets the priority.

5thly, Do ye value your souls much? Ye can hear threatenings concerning the destruction and ruin of your souls, and yet never be affrighted or alarmed. There is no need of greater evidence that thou valuest not thy soul, when thou sayest, "Let threatenings go their way as they came," when thou art never alarmed, nor affrighted, and when thou canst hear thy soul's ruin threatened a thousand times in one day, and never be moved more than the timber or stones of these walls. Thou that dost so hast no reason to think that thou valuest thy soul much, and thou hast need to be laying thy soul's case and condition to heart.

Doct. II.— *Though the soul of man be a precious thing, and much valued by the Lord, yet He hath committed it unto man's keeping for a certain time; and it is the business God has put you upon, to look to your souls.*

But ye will say, "We have no leisure for this." But tell me, when get you time to go about any other business? What is your work? Is it about your soul; or is it about other things? When got ye leisure to eat, drink, and sleep, and to go about your other worldly affairs? Remember that the Lord hath committed the soul to your keeping, as your principal work and business.

1st, In some respects, God hath allowed you more time to go about your other business. Yet in other respects, God has allowed you to take more time about your soul's case; much more, at least, than probably you do.

2ndly, Know, there are few in all the world that can give a faithful discharge of their souls as well kept. Look if ye be of the number of those few. But if ye can find no good reasons that ye are of these few, there is little hope of you. Are ye not afraid of these words, "Many are called, but

few are chosen." There are but few that enter in at that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leads unto life. There are but few to whom God discovers the worth and preciousness of their souls. Ye would do well to remember that a very little thing will wrong or injure the soul. We commonly say, and I wish it were more noticed by us, "That a little thing will harm the eye". But a far less thing will harm the soul. A thought will put the soul out of case for many days. And a wrong word spoken will put the soul out of order, so that perhaps it may never afterwards get the comfort of its peace with God in this life.

Use.—Now, ye should be making your peace with God; for ye know not if ever ye shall get another day after this. Yea, there is a day appointed when the Lord will take back again the souls of men; "O fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." There shall be no delay. It shall be taken from thee this same night. As thou doest, so shalt thou receive according to thy works. If thou hast dealt with thy soul, the Lord shall deal well with it also. And if thou slightest it, He will slight it also. And do not think that because the soul is a precious thing, and the Lord values it much, that He will not assign such a precious thing unto eternal torment. No, He shall not regard that much. He has thrust many a soul as precious as it into hell already. Therefore, think not so. Oh, then, will ye bethink yourselves? What reckoning can I make with God for my soul? I ask in reality, "What account can ye give to God, if He should require an account of you before ye sleep this night?" Can ye not answer? Are ye speechless? And how much more shall ye be speechless when God shall put that question unto you, and shall command you to be taken and bound hand and foot, and cast into hell-fire, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched".

Doct. III.—*The Lord cares little for the world.*

He values the souls of men much; and we value them little. He values the world little; and we value it much. Although a man should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, he is but a fool, and he hath made a very bad bargain. Christ values the world very little. I offer you these evidences of the truth of this doctrine.

1st, When Christ was in the world, He made a very mean purchase of it for Himself. He had not where to lay His head; and sometimes He could not command a drink of water therein. He made a very poor purchase of it to Himself. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head".

2ndly, He usually gives least of it to His dear friends and followers. I do not say but some who have much of the world may be gracious folk;

but ordinarily God gives least of the world to His own people. Where ye will get one rich man that is godly, ye will get ten that are atheists. "He hath not chosen many mighty men of the world, not many wise men, after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called".

3rdly, The Lord has given a considerable portion of the world unto His avowed enemies, who fight against Him, and improve it against Him. He gives much of the earth to profane atheists, profane beasts, and renegades, who are His avowed enemies; for "the earth is given unto the wicked".

4thly, And ere long He will set it in a flame. He will burn it up with fire. The earth is, as it were, withered already, and ready for burning. And what makes the Lord care so little for the world? "The earth also and works thereof shall be burnt up."

But what are the reasons for this doctrine?

It is because by man's transgressions it is made subject unto vanity "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." All things are properly diversions from God, from the living God, and there is not a dumb beast, but it is for man's sake plagued of him, and so made subject unto vanity.

For use of this doctrine, as I said formerly; it points out a conformity betwixt God and us. And we differ very much from Him in regard that He values the soul so much, and we esteem it so little. He values the world but little, and we esteem it very much, and care for perishing things, even trifles of the world. But ye will perhaps say, that ye do not value it much. But this will appear in these few things following.

1. A man values that much on which he spends his strength voluntarily, and with complacency and delight. Ye say the world pulls the life out of you. But yet ye suffer it to do so willingly, and with delight.

2. A man does that most willingly on which the affection of his heart is most bent. And do not your hearts run out most after the things of the present world? Hence your fear, love, hope and delight run out after a present world. What makes you glad and cheerful but something in the world that prospers, and is going well with you? And what makes you afraid, or sorry? Is it not because the world seems to frown upon you?

3. This proves that you value the world much, that ye will not take a rebuke, but will eagerly follow on in the pursuit of it, although it has failed you often, and given you many a disappointment; and although the Lord has blasted that which ye have been following after.

4. A fourth evidence is, That ye will venture to lose the friendship of God for a very frivolous thing. Ye will venture to wrong the God of

heaven for a little worldly enjoyment. But I go no further at present, only I shall notice these two things following:—

(1.) Although the soul be very precious, yet we value or esteem it very little: and although the world be a poor ambulatory thing, we put a very high price or esteem upon it.

(2.) Although your souls be threatened with utter ruin on that account, yet ye are not afraid, which shows that ye care not much for them. You cannot be put off the cutting and carking cares of this world, even though God has corrected you, and given you as it were, over the finger ends for them. And yet do your best ye cannot take delight in serving God half an hour. Look then to your souls in time; slight them not; otherwise God will slight them, if you mind them not in time. "For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Comfort in Affliction

by James Buchanan, DD, LLD

(continued from page 204)

That the general design of all the afflictions with which any of God's people are visited in the present state, is their progressive sanctification and final perfection, is evident from the whole scope and tenor of Scripture, wherein the necessity and usefulness of affliction, for this end, are frequently stated in very emphatic terms, and illustrated by apposite examples: "This is the will of God concerning you," says the apostle, "even your *sanctification*"; and this being the grand object of God's design in Scripture, is also the end of all his dealings in providence. It is not only said, "that affliction yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness," but that "God chastens us not for his pleasure, but for our profit, that we *might be partakers of his holiness*." That this is the design of all the afflictions with which we are visited, may well serve to reconcile us to them, even when they are most frequent and most severe. For to a mind that is sensible of its own high capacity, and of its best interests, what object can appear so truly great or desirable as this — a progressive and ultimately a perfect conformity, through the sanctification of its powers, to the very image and character of God? That *man* is capable of such a resemblance, is the very highest proof of his dignity as a rational and moral being. That God designs such a resemblance, is the noblest proof of his affection; for what higher gift could he bestow than a character similar to his own? And that affliction is one of the means by which this

boon is to be bestowed, and this resemblance improved and perfected, is one of the most precious truths of Scripture, and the very sweetest consolation of sorrow. Were we sensible of the infinite capacities for improvement and happiness which such a design, on the part of God, necessarily implies on the part of man; were we duly impressed with the consideration, that the nobility of our nature consists in our capacity of knowing God, and being like to him; that the misery and degradation of our present estate, flow from our ignorance of God, and the dissimilarity of our thoughts and feelings to those of the Divine mind; that our only prospect of being restored either to honour or happiness, depends on our being restored, in some measure, to a state of conformity to the will and likeness of God; and that, for this high and lofty end, affliction is employed as a means by which, if duly improved, that end may be attained in some measure on earth, and enjoyed perfectly and eternally in heaven; — oh! what heart would then murmur or complain, because of the strokes by which the rock is beaten into a conformity with God's image; or because of the fire of that furnace, by which the dross of our nature is separated from the pure and precious ore, and out of which we are to come as "gold seven times purified — vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's use?"

That affliction is a means *fitted* to this end, might be inferred from the fact, that it is employed as such by a God of unerring wisdom, who knows our frame and all the influences by which it can be affected, for good or for evil. But we are not left to conceive of it as an arbitrary appointment, betwixt which and its end, no natural adaptation can be traced. It is not only a sovereign, but a suitable remedy, and adapted, in many respects, to the evil which it is designed to cure. The evil of our present condition consists mainly in our affections being estranged from God and given to the creature; in our tendency to "forsake the fountain of living waters, and to hew out for ourselves in the world, cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water." The connection betwixt alienation from God and attachment to the creature, is so intimate and sure, that the one is inseparable from the other; it being a law of our nature, that our affections and desires must have some object on which they fix their regards, and from which they draw, or expect, their gratification; and if they be once estranged from God, their proper object, they will infallibly fix on some one or more objects in the world. Nor is their attachment to these objects, when once formed, capable of being easily broken. If they are attached to wealth, they cling to it with the tenacity of avarice; if to sensual indulgence, with the blind infatuation

of passion; if to power, with the recklessness of ambition; insomuch, that so long as these objects are within their grasp, or capable of being either enjoyed or hoped for, they will effectually fill and occupy the whole mind, and exclude God and all spiritual things. Now, God's method of breaking up this unhallowed and degrading attachment betwixt a rational and immortal creature, and the lying vanities of the world, is by either removing the favourite object from his reach, or smiting it with a curse, or visiting him with sickness, which spoils his relish for it; in one way or other, God shatters his favourite cistern, so as that he shall find it to be "a broken cistern, which can hold no water." Were this done, after all his fond dreams of happiness, and his earnest endeavours for its attainment, with no other view than to disappoint his hopes and blast his efforts, we might pity the fate of man, and wonder at the dispensations of God; but when it is done with the view of severing his affections from objects which are unworthy of them, and which, even were they attained, could not satisfy or fill the desires of an immortal spirit; and, above all, with the view of raising his thoughts and affections to God himself, as his chief good and satisfying portion, we cannot fail at once to see the benevolence which prompts God to interpose, and the wisdom of the means by which he endeavours to raise man to his true happiness, by the overthrow of his dearest earthly delusions, and the disappointment of his fondest earthly hopes.

Thus, a man who, forgetting his immortal prospects, debases his nature by making himself the slave of avarice; whose earliest thoughts and whose latest cares are engrossed with money; who thinks of nothing, speaks of nothing, cares for nothing, and does nothing, without a reference to the accumulation of a fortune; who, for this, lives the life of a slave, and stirs not from his place of business, and plies the oar of trade "from shining morn to dewy eve;" — on such a man, what could have so powerful an effect as the total ruin of his fortune, and the scattering of his gains? Cruel, indeed, would such an issue be to all his anxious thoughts, and prudent plans, and industrious habits, and bold enterprises, had he no other than an earthly prospect; but God designs that man for eternity — he offers him a portion in heaven — money stands between him and that prospect; and God dashes the cup of prosperity from his trembling hand, that it may not drown his soul in everlasting perdition. And is not this a benevolent deed? Is it not dictated by the highest wisdom, as the very discipline which is most necessary, and will be most effectual in such a case?

Again, a man who, losing all relish for the sweets of divine contempla-

tion, and the exercise of his moral affections, gives himself over to the indulgence of his sensual appetites, who finds his highest happiness in the gratification of his palate, or the excitement of intemperance, or the habits of profligacy — on such a man, what would have so powerful an effect as the total ruin of his health, and the visitation of an illness which left him neither the capacity nor the wish for his favourite indulgences? God designs that man, also, for eternity; but he lingers around the cisterns of worldly pleasure, in the fond hope of realising a happiness which he has long waited for in vain: God shatters the cistern, and dashes the cup of pleasure out of his reluctant hand, that he may no longer deceive himself with the vain hope, but seek to the fountain of living waters which springeth up unto everlasting life. And is not this, also, a benevolent deed — however painful may be the present disappointment, and however protracted the suffering which it occasions, is it not dictated by the highest wisdom, as the very discipline which is most necessary, and will be most effectual in such a case?

Again, a man of ardent affections has allowed his heart to be estranged from God, by an undue attachment to his wife, or children, or other relatives and friends. Amiable as his kindness to them appears, yet, if they engross that place in his affection which is due to God only, his heart is not in a right moral state, and his happiness is based on a precarious foundation. God takes away the desire of his eyes by a stroke; he is stunned by the shock of bereavement; but, perhaps, even this is not enough; his affections thus violently severed from one object, may only gather into greater strength, and settle on another; that other is also smitten and dies; and it is not till, by such strokes, he is impressed with the vanity of every thing, save the enjoyment of God as his chief good, that the afflicting hand of providence shall be withdrawn from him and his house. Painful, indeed, is the breaking up of a family by bereavement, when death smites one, and then another, of the happy household; and desolate, indeed, is the heart of him who is thus left alone in a wilderness where roses had encircled his path; but they stood betwixt him and God, and it was in mercy and faithfulness that God sent a worm into his gourd, till it withered around him and died.

These illustrations may serve to show, at once, the goodness and the wisdom of God in sending affliction, and adapting the methods of his discipline to the necessities of his people; and they cannot fail to recall to the minds of some, the recollection of many incidents in their past life, which were felt to be very painful, and seemed very dark and mysterious at the time of their occurrence, but to which they can now look back as

the very brightest manifestation of the care and kindness of their Redeemer. They may remember a time when the wealth, or pleasures, or business of the world appeared to them robed in attractions to which they were too willing to yield, and threatened to engross the chief place in those affections which God challenges as his own. They may remember some one object, which, more than any other, engaged their eager pursuit, and awakened their deepest interest; and that, for this, they were on the very verge of committing themselves to a course of life, which if prosecuted with the ardour with which they were about to enter on it, would have long ere now estranged them altogether from God, and ultimately conducted them to perdition. But, just as their affections were gathering around it, and just as they were stretching forth their hand to seize it, that cup of pleasure, or power, or prosperity, was dashed in pieces, and as they wept over its broken fragments, they were taught a lesson which they were very loth to learn, even that the creature is too frail and perishing to satisfy an immortal soul, and that God would not permit them to seek their happiness in what was unworthy of their nature. If, by these means, they were first *awakened* to a perception of the vanity of the world, and of the infinite magnitude and importance of divine things; if their afflictions were so sanctified as to become the means, in the hand of God, of their *conversion*, then, sure I am, that they cannot fail to look back on the most painful of them all, not only without one sentiment of rebellious regret, but with the deepest emotions of gratitude and of admiration; and they will never cease to regard the discipline of affliction as one of the most powerful instruments of good in the hands of the Redeemer, and one of the most precious privileges of his people. For is it conceivable that it should be otherwise, if, by these means, they have really "had their eyes opened, and have been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto the living God?" With the views which were then, for the first time, opened up to them of the transcendent truths of religion, and which, if they be really converted, they must still cherish with the fondest attachment, they can look back on affliction, and see it in a new and most interesting light — even as a very thick dark cloud, but a cloud, nevertheless, which has showered down upon them the most precious blessings, and has shed over their souls the freshness and fertility of "a well watered garden, which the Lord hath blessed."

In their subsequent history, too, they may remember, that just as often as their affections were about to return to the world, when they had begun to *backslide* from God, or were in danger of doing so, just so often

did God interpose, by a new stroke of affliction, whereby they were admonished of their danger, and prevented from ruin. They may remember many seasons, when the impressions of religion were almost effaced from their minds, and when "the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," were making gradual but sure encroachments on the sovereignty of that divine principle by which they professed to be animated; and when, although they still retained the belief of immortality, their hearts were beginning to settle down into a contented enjoyment of the world, and little, if at all, animated by the heavenly hopes of the Gospel. In these circumstances, it was needful for their correction, and progress, and comfort, that God should take them into his own hands, and administer such rebukes and chastisements as might wean their affections from the world, and bring them back to himself; and, in such cases, if they will consider the matter attentively, they will find, that the affliction with which they were visited, was the very likeliest and fittest means of accomplishing his gracious design. And what gratitude should they cherish towards God — what profound admiration of his wisdom — what unshaken confidence in his faithfulness, when they reflect, that at such seasons, and in such circumstances, his thoughts towards them were thoughts of love? That when they were doing what they could to provoke him, by manifesting a preference for the creature, and when they had fallen from their first love, he did not, and would not let them forsake him; that, although willing to live at a distance from him, he was determined to bring them near; and, that when, if they had been left to themselves, they would have gone on in a course of declension and discomfort, he did, in confirmation of his holy promise, chasten them, "that they might not be condemned with the world?" And if, at such seasons, the religion which had long lain dormant in their bosoms, and seemed ready to die, was revived and invigorated, and enabled them to bear up under the shock of bereavement, oh! how should they rejoice and be thankful, that the light of religion was made to dawn on their hearts, and that the thick dark cloud was sent to turn their eye again to that light, shining amidst the storm, as the bow of peace and the pledge of safety?

If the believer has thus experienced, even on earth, the blessed effects of affliction, he will the more easily comprehend the import, and believe the truth, of those statements in Scripture, which refer to its ultimate issue and effect, in a future world of perfect holiness and peace. Here, the benefits of affliction, however valuable in themselves, are only partially enjoyed, by reason of the opposition which every holy influence

meets with, from the remaining depravity of his heart, and other influences of a contrary nature to which he is exposed, from the contagion of a world that lieth in Wickedness. The iron may be taken from a furnace heated seven times, and beaten with many strokes, but it contains within itself much dross, which prevents the pure ore from being fashioned as it ought, and there plays upon it a cold current which hardens it, even while it is subjected to the artist's stroke. But there, all dross having been removed, and all unfriendly influences excluded, it shall be presented pure and spotless, and remain so for ever. It is in heaven alone that the full benefit of earthly afflictions shall be known and enjoyed. And what can reconcile us to the discipline of affliction, if this reflection will not, that it will terminate in a state of perfect holiness and peace; and that, meanwhile, it is preparing us for that blessed consummation?

It will terminate: the period is not far distant when all our sorrows and privations shall come to an end, when death shall bring us to that house where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest"; and when once the grave "has opened its peaceful bosom to receive us," the world, with all its changes and sorrows, can affect our comfort no more. The storm may rage above us, and the whirlwind sweep the solitary churchyard; the din of civil tumult may arise in the streets; the war-cry may be raised, and the shock of battle succeed; the voice of famine may wail around us; yet no note disturbs the peaceful slumbers of the dead! But affliction will not terminate merely in the stillness of the tomb; it will be succeeded by the bliss of heaven, for which it is even now preparing us, and where, finally and for ever, "the broken heart shall be bound up; the mourner comforted; beauty shall be appointed for ashes, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"; "and God himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes."

Scotland's Covenanted Martyrs

by Rev. James Kerr, Greenock

(This address was delivered in 1880)

"Thou hadst a favour unto them." — Psalms XLIV.3.

"Whose faith follow" (imitate). — Hebrews XIII.7.

Throughout the greater part of the forty-fourth Psalm we feel the beat of the pulse of the oppressed, we hear the cry of the martyr. In the opening verses, the inspired penman recalls some of the ancient glories of

his country, the memories of which had been fast sinking into the azure of the past. He recites the deeds of an Omnipotent arm for Israel in the days of old. The Amorite and the Hittite and the Anakim had been driven out of the promised land, and over Jericho and Ai and Hebron there waved the banner of victorious Israel. From Dan to Beersheba, and from Jordan to the sea, the vine from Egypt had stretched, and the chosen people of the living God were planted in their place. Great was this work of conquest; mighty this revolution in Canaan! Did Joshua and Caleb and their hosts perform it by their own arm? Did their own swords cut the alien armies in sunder? No; for "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them." God's sovereign goodness was the originating cause, and God's almighty arm the performing agent of all.

But, having thus raised a memorial to the goodness of God to his fathers, the Psalmist proceeds to lament the evils and tribulations under which his beloved land and the faithful laboured. "Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat." "Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death". "Our soul is bowed down to the dust". And in the midst of these sighs he turns his face to Him who had done so great things "in the times of old," and prays fervently that He would put forth His arm and build up the broken walls. "Thou art my King, O God, command deliverances for Jacob." "Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord; arise, cast us not off for ever." "Arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake."

These words are written for our instruction, and the application of them to these covenanted lands, and especially to Scotland, is evident. For "we have heard with *our* ears, O God, our fathers have told *us*, what work Thou didst in *their* days, in the times of old." Two hundred years ago, a great Reformation was accomplished in this land. Ancient forms of error and superstition, mighty like Anak's giant sons, were hurled from the place of their usurped dominion. Scotland rid herself of the bonds of idolatry, and placed upon her throne King Jesus—her own Sovereign by everlasting decree. A people who entered into covenant with God were planted in the land, and truth and liberty raised their heads in triumph. Did Scotland accomplish this great Reform in her own might? Is she entitled to attribute her deliverance to any arm of flesh? Nay; for "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and

the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them." God's free favour and mighty power were the cause of all. And when we consider present defections from the lofty Scriptural attainments of the past, the general disregard of the claims of the King of Nations, the many and determined assaults upon the foundations of Christianity, and the low state of practical religion, every lover of Christ and of his country may well sorrow with the sorrowing Psalmist, and pray the prayers he prayed. "Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face; . . . for our soul is bowed down to the dust: . . . arise for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake."

A little before he pens our selection from the Hebrews, the sacred writer has been presenting a list of some of the Worthies of Old Testament times—holding forth the fathers of the grey morning of the world's history for imitation by the people of God in New Testament times. He commemorates the faith and deeds of Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Gideon, and others. And we may well believe that when he calls upon the Hebrews to follow the faith of "those who have the rule over you," he had not forgotten the list of the heroes of the faith which he had been enumerating. Admiration of those eminent saints was not enough: the noblest eulogies upon their personal character and public deeds would be of little account. Something more was desired; something better was necessary. "Whose faith follow." Let admiration pass forth into imitation. Be like them in faith, in self-denial, in holiness, in constancy, in the high heroism of battling for God. If that list of faith's nobles were continued by some inspired hand till the present times, there would doubtless appear in it the names of those who, two centuries ago, "for Christ's royal truth and laws, and Scotland's Covenanted Reformation," jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field. By faith the Marquis of Argyle esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the honours of his high rank, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith Richard Cameron and his compatriots nailed their Declaration to the Cross of Sanquhar, not fearing the wrath of the King, for they endured as seeing Him who is Invisible. By faith Margaret M'Lachlan and Margaret Wilson beheld with composure, as they were tied to the stake, the rising of the waters that were to engulf them, for they judged Him faithful that had promised. And what shall we more say, for time would fail us to tell of Donald Cargill, and of Hugh M'Kail, and of John Brown, and of David Hackston, and of James Renwick, who "through faith subdued kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the

aliens; they were stoned, were slain with the sword, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy."

But mere admiration of these heroes is not sufficient in the way of commemoration. The most eloquent eulogies upon their character and exploits will fail to form a sufficient tribute to their memory. It is not enough though our hearts were melted at the recital of their sufferings, and though we were moved to tears as we look upon the place where reposes their hallowed dust. Our aims in the commemoration of their noble struggle must be higher. It should be ours to seek that a double portion of the spirit of martyred fathers might rest upon their sons—their mantles falling upon the shoulders of the men of this generation. It should be ours to renew our acquaintance with and redouble our efforts for the extension of the knowledge of those everlasting doctrines for which they contended to the death. It should be ours to pray and labour to induce these covenanted nations to lift up the banner for the supremacy of King Jesus, under which the martyred band went forward, and to unfurl every fold of it to the breeze. It should be ours to awaken the whole people to a sense of present dangers and present duties that, with united hearts as with one heart, we might give Jehovah no rest till His Anointed and Appointed King should be brought back again to Britain, and till glory greater than ever should have her habitation in the land. This would be the noblest tribute we could render to the memory of Scotland's Covenanted Martyrs; this a more appropriate and lasting memorial than forests of monumental pillars of marble; this the finest chaplet we could wreath around their tomb. Let our admiration of the martyrs include our adoption of their testimony; let our commemoration of their struggle include the unflinching maintenance by us of the Scriptural principles which made that struggle glorious. So shall we escape the withering curse of our Lord upon the pretended admirers of the martyrs of old:—"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which have killed the Prophets".

I. Scotland's Covenanted Martyrs were Christians of Eminent Piety. They were eminently pious because "Thou hadst a favour unto them." That piety we are to imitate.

When they look back to the Reformers and Martyrs, people in general

direct their attention more particularly to the attitude assumed by those men as public witnesses and national benefactors than to their personal devotion to Christ and the eminent holiness of their character. We think rather of John Knox the Reformer than of John Knox the fearer of God; of Richard Cameron the undaunted opponent of tyranny than of Richard Cameron the man of prayer; of James Renwick the public heroic sufferer than James Renwick the saint. Yet, this is as if we should admire more the streams than the fountain; as if we should concentrate our attention upon the light to the exclusion of the sun whence it emanates. The streams that irrigate the waste and make the desert blossom as the rose flow from the fountain; the light that dispels the darkness and floods the world with glory, comes from the great luminary of the day. The reformers and martyrs succeeded in beautifying the moral wilderness with righteousness and filling the nations with light, because of the purity of their soul and the heavenly light that shone in their understanding—that fountain of purity within being supplied from the river of water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne, and that light emanating from the uncreated Sun of Righteousness that had arisen upon them with healing in His wings. Yes, the reformers and martyrs were social regenerators because they were regenerate men; they were eminent sufferers because they were eminent Christians; they were illustrious reformers because they were illustrious saints. But for their piety, the Reformation and the subsequent valiant struggle in its defence never would have been accomplished.

The martyrs were Christians of great piety because they were Christians of strong faith. Their faith was the root of their piety, and by that faith they were unmoved. They had a personal interest in the Saviour of sinners; rested on Christ alone for Salvation, and believed in Him. They were not men of weak faith; they were men of mighty faith. Had their faith been weak, they would have failed before the difficulties that confronted them, they would have bowed their heads, like the willows, before the blasts that swept around them. They trusted God much, and God strengthened them mightily. He set their feet on a rock and established their goings. By faith they resisted every shock of their many and mighty adversaries, as the rock in the ocean breasts the giant billows and dashes them back in foam. They were pavilioned in the tent of the Lord of Hosts, and they feared not though tens of thousands were round about them. Their demeanour in the face of appalling dangers was marvellous. There was no perturbation of spirit; there was the utmost composure; yea, there was exceeding peace and joy. Trusting in the Lord

and compassed by the Angel of the Lord, they felt that their hearts were safe. Their foes might be successful in their assaults upon the outer defences—they might tear their bodies in pieces and trample them in the dust, but upon their souls no injury could be inflicted. Impregnable was the citadel of their souls. They were castled within the everlasting covenant; fortified by Almighty God.

“He that doth in the secret place
Of the Most High reside;
Under the shade of Him that is
The Almighty shall abide.”

Within that fortress they had every comfort; they laid their heads on a soft and downy pillow.

“His feathers shall thee hide, thy trust
Under His wings shall be;
His faithfulness shall be a shield
And buckler unto thee.”

“I do not say I am free of sin,” said old Donald Cargill at the scaffold, “but I am at peace with God through a slain Mediator. I bless the Lord that these thirty years and more I have been at peace with God, and was never shaken loose of it; and now I am as sure of my interest in Christ and peace with God, as all within this Bible and the Spirit of God can make me. And now this is the sweetest and most glorious day that ever my eyes did see.” “What do I see,” said Margaret Wilson to her murderers, as they pointed her to the waters closing over Margaret M'Lachlan, her companion in tribulation, “What do I see but Christ struggling there? Think ye that we are the sufferers? No, it is Christ in us, for He sends none a warfare on their own charges.”

“Tyrants! could not misfortune teach
That man had rights beyond your reach?
Thought ye the torture and the stake
Could that intrepid spirit break,
Which, even in woman's breast, withstood,
The fury of the fire and flood”.

The martyrs were men of consuming love for Christ, and entire consecration to His service. Theirs was a love which cruel mockings could not damp; a love which the boot that made the white marrow swim in purple gore could not abate; a love which the swelling waters could not

drown; a love which the scaffold could not expel; a love which, by the faggots and the fire, was fanned into a brighter flame. For, many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Though a man were to give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned. The martyrs felt they were redeemed men; redeemed by the most glorious person in the universe—the mighty God; redeemed at an enormous price—not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; redeemed from the most degraded and most dreadful of all conditions—from sin and all its dread everlasting consequences; redeemed to the possession of an undefiled and unfading inheritance for ever; redeemed perfectly, for by one offering He hath perfected for ever all them that are sanctified; and redeemed wholly—soul, body, and spirit redeemed. A sense of being thus redeemed enabled the martyrs to stand forth in heaven's own majesty. How shall they make some return to Him who, by His unparalleled sufferings for them, has laid them under such an insolvent debt of gratitude? They will make a total surrender of themselves to Him who gave Himself wholly for them. They will consent, yea, they will count it all joy to be laid on the altar of sacrifice in love to Him who by the cords of His own everlasting love bound Himself on the cross of Calvary for them. What cared they for the shame of their sufferings? They are ready to be esteemed the offscouring of all things for the sake of Him who for them was exposed to shame and spitting, and became a curse. Calvary to Christ was more glorious than his throne to Caesar, and the Grassmarket of Edinburgh was more glorious to the martyrs than the frowning castle or gorgeous palace to its Stuart owner. Jesus transformed the shame of His sufferings into glory, so that the offence of the cross has for ever ceased; and the shame around the scaffolds of the martyrs has been transformed likewise into pre-eminent honour. "Then let him glorify God in the Grassmarket," was the sneer of Lauderdale, as he relegated a poor saint to the place of execution. But the blasphemous sneer has been transfigured into glory, and Jehovah has encircled the names and memories of the sufferers with imperishable renown. Love, consuming love; consecration, entire consecration. "I am one of Christ's," said Margaret Wilson, as they tempted her to recant, "I am one of Christ's, let me go. I think my life little enough in the quarrel of owning my Lord and Master's sweet truth, for He hath freed me from everlasting wrath, and redeemed me." "I take God to witness," said James Guthrie as he stood upon the ladder, "that I would not exchange this scaffold with the palace or the mitre of the greatest prelate in Britain."

And what shall I more say of the elements of their eminent piety? What of their peace—that peace that passeth all understanding, and fortifies the heart and mind in Christ Jesus? “I go up this ladder,” said M’Kail, “with as little fear as I go to my father’s house. Every step is a degree nearer heaven.” What of their hope—that hope that is as an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, entering into that that is within the veil? “This is the day,” said Richard Cameron on the morning of Ayrsmoss, “This is the day we shall get the crown.” “Oh, how can I contain this!” said James Renwick, “to be within a few hours of glory”. What of their joy—that joy that is unspeakable, and full of glory? “I hear the voice,” said Marion Harvie as she came out of the Tolbooth for execution, “I hear the voice of my Beloved, saying unto me, ‘Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away?’” What of their meekness, their patience, their holiness, their brotherly love, their fidelity, their fortitude? All these fruits of the Spirit they bore plenteously. And, of their whole piety, Jesus was the Author and Finisher.

Doubtless the piety of the martyrs was rendered more sterling, and shone forth more brilliantly, by reason of the afflictions wherewith they were afflicted. Trees of righteousness, they were pruned that they might bring forth more fruit; jewels of gold they were put into the furnace—heated seven times—that the pearls of their graces might sparkle by the fiery trial. He who sat as the Refiner and Purifier brought out more clearly His own image upon them.

“When the righteous had fallen, and the combat had ended,
A chariot of fire through the dark cloud descended.
Its drivers were angels on horses of whiteness,
And its burning wheels turned on axles of brightness.

“And a seraph unfolded the door bright and shining,
All dazzling like gold of the seventh refining:
And the souls that had come out of great tribulation,
They mounted the chariots and steeds of salvation.

“On the arch of the rainbow the chariot is gliding,
Through the path of the thunder the horsemen are riding;
Glide swiftly, bright spirits, the prize is before you,
A crown never fading, a kingdom of glory.”

The piety of the martyrs was eminent, because it rested on right foundations—on the doctrines of the Book of Inspiration. It rested, not

on the rubbish of self-righteousness, nor on the sand of self-will, but upon the everlasting rock of revealed truth. Those eminent saints believed in the great doctrines of election—sovereign, absolute; predestination; the total depravity of human nature by the fall; the substitution of Christ in the room of sinners; regeneration by the Spirit alone; justification by faith alone in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; the perseverance of the saints; an eternal hell; and an eternal heaven. The martyrs' piety had its roots in the everlasting Covenant, and drew its inspiration from the everlasting God. The doctrine of sovereign grace — of God all in all in the plan, execution, and application of redemption, was the soil on which their piety flourished—the doctrine of Knox; of Luther; of Augustine; of Paul; of Him who came from the Father's bosom to reveal the Father's will, for, said He; "No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him." By reason of their belief in these doctrines, the martyrs cast forth their roots as Lebanon and stood forth majestic as the cedars—because "Thou hadst a favour unto them."

"Whose faith follow". Whose piety imitate. Several Christian denominations contest with each other the honour of the ecclesiastical representation of the reformers and martyrs. They eagerly claim to be their faithful followers and the true representatives of the Church of the Reformation and the times of Persecution. Is the contention so strong to be regarded as the representatives of the piety of those holy men? Are church members as desirous of imitating them in their piety as of being regarded as the faithful adherents of their principles? Is there not reason to call upon Christians to be imitators of the martyrs in their faith in, and love for Christ, in their self-denial, and entire consecration to the service of Christ? Why attempt to create a divorce between imitation of the martyrs as to the maintenance of their principles and imitation of the martyrs in their piety. The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. Ye are not straitened in God, ye are straitened in yourselves. Though our martyred fathers are no more, the God of our fathers liveth. He is from everlasting to everlasting God. The Saviour of the martyrs is still a willing and Almighty Saviour; and, as an ambassador of the Lord of Hosts having the ministry of reconciliation, we offer you that Saviour and all the benefits purchased by the sacrifice of Himself. Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. We offer you the salvation in which the martyrs rejoiced; the Saviour whom they loved; the God in whom they gloried. If you would maintain the martyrs' principles, believe in and love the martyrs' God.

Oh, for a baptism of the Holy Ghost upon all the people in these lands! Oh, that the God of Cameron and Cargill and Renwick would cause His saving and enlightening influences to descend in rich abundance, that multitudes would say, "I am the Lord's," and would "subscribe with their hand to the Lord, and surname themselves with the name of Israel". The strength of Britain this day is not in her armies nor her ironclads, but in those who are the disciples of Christ. "Ye are the salt of the earth". "The holy seed is the substance thereof". Would that the number of these were greater! The work of national reformation, at present loudly demanded, requires men of faith, self-denial, holiness, piety—men in whose souls, as in the souls of reformers two hundred years ago, runs deep and strong the current of everlasting life; men who are firmly rooted in the everlasting covenant; men who draw their power from Jacob's mighty God. "They that trust in the Lord shall be strong and do exploits". "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon and he blew a trumpet, and all Abiezer was gathered after him." "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever."

Gathan Glòir na Diadhachd

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce

(Air a leanntuinn bho t.d. 214)

3. Am bheil Dia neo-chaochladheach? An sin cia mar a bu chòr dhuinn a bhi air ar 'n ioraslachadh gu'm bheil sinn beo chò mòr air a chreutair, a dh'atharraicheas agus cho beag air Dia; agus cho beag air Dia nach atharraich? Ma smuainicheas sinn gu sòlamaichte oirne Fein, gheibh sinn (co dhiubh mòran againn) gu bheil sinn beo ni's motha air sluic eu-dionach, na tha sinn air Dia; ni's motha air a a chreutair na tha sinn air tobar uisgeachan beo, air a chuid is lugha, a chuid is fearr agus is naoimh dhinn gu'm bheil sinn beo ni's motha air a chreutair, agus ni's lugha air Dia; gabh beachd air an dian-thogradh, a'neart, a phlosgartaich, a tha 'n ar miannaibh as deigh a chreutair na as deigh Dhé agus co-chomunn Ris: Mo thruaigh! cho togarach iomadh uair 's a bhitheas sin a dol as deigh, agus cia neartmhor a leanas sinn an deigh a chreutair, 'n uair a bhitheas sinn toileach gu leoir deanamh as eugmhais Dhé agus co-chomunn Ris? Gabh beachd cho tric 's a tha ar smuaintean agus ar beachdachadh mu thimchioll a chreutair, ni's motha na mu Dhia, Mo thruaigh! tha sinn a smuainteachadh air nitheamh talamhaidh mar a rinn iadsan air am bheileas a labhairt ann am Phil. iii. 19, ach cia cho

aineamh 's a smuainttcheas sinn air Dia agus bheachd-smainticheas sinn Air? Nis, tha nì sin is motha a tha 'n ar smuaintean, air am bheil sinn nì's motha beo, a toirt fianuis air tlachd agus socrachadh anns a chreutair nì's motha na ann an Dia. Oh! ne'n t-urachadh beothail, an tlachd a tha againn iomadh uair anns a chreutair? agus cuin na cia cho beag 's a tha sinn a gabhail tlachd ann an Dia? Nis a nì sin a tha sinn a gabhail tlachd ann 's sin a tha sinn a gràdhachadh 's e sin a nì a tha sinn beo n's motha dha. Gabh beachd air ar bròin neo-chomhfhurtachaidh agus an searbhadais spioraid a tha sinn gu tric a nochdadh air son call na terruig air ais a chreutair nì's motha na tarruig air ais Dhé, agus a làthaireachd bh'uainn. Biodh so na leithid siud de chomhfhurtachd a chreutair air an tarruig bh'uain agus cia mar sin e anns an abhaist, agus ciod e'n searbhadas anam leis am bheil sinn air ar lionadh; an sin maille ri Hagar togaidh sinn suas ar guth agus guillidh sinn, Gen. xxi. 16. Cia mar a bha Iònah, an duine maith sin, 'n uair a shearg an luidh-sgaile, Iònah iv, 7-8-9, ach cia cho ainneamh 's a nì sinn bròn, 's a ghuileas sinn, 's a bhitheas sinn duilich as eugmhais co-chomunn ri Dia? Seadh cia cho caoin-shuarach, air son a chuid is motha, thà sinn am bheil na nach eil co-chomunn againn ri Dia. Agus ciod a tha so a nochdadh ach gu'm bheil sinn tuilleadh 's a chòir a beachdachadh air air an t-saoghal agus tuilleadh is beag air dia? Mar sin, ma bheir sinn gu sòlaimte fodh'n ear sinn fein, gheibh sinn, leis a so, agus leis a leithidean sin, gu'm bheil sinn beo nì's motha air na creutairean na tha sinn air Dia; agus Oh! cia an ioraslachd a bu cho so a thoirt oirne! Na creutairean, tha iad diamhain, a seargadh, na'n nithean caoch-laidheach annta fein, ach 's e th'ann an Dia ach bith a tha siorruidh neo-chaochlaidheach agus maith; tha E a' nì ceudna neo-chaochlaidheach, na Thobar nan uile mhaith de mhillseachd, de bheannachd, de thlac. Nis a bhi beo air na creutairean caochlaidheach so, agus cha'n ann air an Dia neo-chaochlaidheach so, is e olc mòr a tha ann, agus tha e gairm air son cùmha mòr agus ioraslachd air ar taobh-ne. 'S e briathran mòr a leugh mi ann an **Austin** anns am bheil e deanamh bròn thairis air an dearbh pheacadh so. 'S e 'n Ti a rinn mi Dia (tha e'g ràdh) agus 's e mo mhaith, ach ann an so pheacaich mi, cha'n ann-san ach na chreutairean. Dh'iarr mi fein agus thog mi mi fein ri sòlasan a chreutair, agus cha'n ann an Dia, agus ciod e'n sin? agus mar sin (tha e'g ràdh) ruith mi mi fein do iomadh trioblaid, mearachd agus eu-comhairle na 'm anam. Agus nach fhaod mòran againn an dearbh ghearain a dheanamh? Tha Esan a rinn sinn maith agus s'e ar maith E, ach ann an so pheacaich sinn, agus thà sinn a peacachadh, a chùim gu'm bu mhiann leinn a bhi beo air a chreutair, agus cha'n ann

Air-san agus mar sin dha'r ruith fein air iomadh trioblaid, mearachd, agus iomadh-comhairle anam. Tha sinn beo air creutairean caochlaidheach ni's motha na air an Dia neo-chaochlaidheach; agus leis a so tha Dia a faotainn eas-urram, tha a Spiorad air a mhàchadh, tha ar n'anamaibh air an cur bho bhi sealbhachadh Maith, seadh am maith is fearr, maith gràis, agus foillseachaidhean diadhaidh agus toirt seachad; Leis a so tha sinn a 'g itheadh plùisg 'n uair a dh'fhaodadh aran a bhi againn, agus tha sinn ag òl ni gu'n bhrìgh 'n a dh'fhaodadh-mid fion òl ann an tigh ar'n Athar. Leis a so tha sinn air fosgladh do bhrònitean, do ribidhean, agus do bhàs, seadh, le so tha sinn ann an cunnart bho bhi air ar dùnadh a mach bho Dhia gu bràth. Oh! luchd mo ghràidh, biodh dearbh-shoillaireachd againn air an olc so, agus deanadh-mid bròn thairis air. Air mo shon fein dheth, 'n uair a smuainticheas mì orm fein, gheibh mì aobhar eagail gu'n robh mì beo fad mo laithean uile, air creutairean caochlaidheach, agus gu'n robh mì ciontach gu mòr a bhi deanamh dìmeas air an Dia neo-chaochlaidheach, agus creideamh e, 's e nì doirbh a th'ann tighinn bho'n aon, agus a bhi beo cho lan air an aon eile, 's a bu chor dhuinn. Gu'n deanadh an Tighearna ar 'n ioraslachadh air son na'n nithean so.

(Air a leanntuinn)

Book Review

"Men of the Covenant," by Alexander Smellie. Banner of Truth Trust Reprint. Price £2.75.

"Men of the Covenant" was first published in 1903. This 1975 Edition is the third reprint of this volume of sketches of the Covenanters and is taken from the 1924 Edition. It is most attractively produced and, at present day prices, its price is reasonable.

Instead of reviewing this work I append a review of it written when it first appeared and which appeared as an editorial in the March 1904 issue of the Free Presbyterian Magazine. It was written, no doubt, by Rev. James S. Sinclair, who was then editor of the Magazine.

D.B.M.

Review—

The present age is not one that exemplifies the spirit, or holds fast the principles, of our Covenanting ancestors. The general character of the time is of an entirely different, or even opposite, cast. Most of the fundamental doctrines, which the Covenanters valued so highly as the very truths of God most pure, are now esteemed as antiquated and

unbelievable, while their noble spirit of resolute adherence to principle and bold opposition to error has given place to a spirit of compromise and surrender, which assumes to itself the sacred name of charity. And yet, strange to say, much has been spoken and written in our time in praise of their character and lives. Their love of freedom, and the greater sacrifices they made for it, no doubt still appeal to the popular mind, but it is very clear notwithstanding, that their view of liberty, as regulated by the laws of God's infallible word, is quite removed from the lawless notions of it that obtain among the majority of learned and unlearned, religious and profane, at the present day.

We are glad, however, to welcome almost any book that describes the character of our witnessing ancestors, and extols their glorious deeds, and one such, much above the common in excellence, though not quite our ideal, we have found in the "Men of the Covenant," by the Rev. Alexander Smellie, M.A., of the Original Secession Church. Mr Smellie is already well known as the accomplished editor of a series of new and beautifully got-up editions of such gems in religious literature as "Augustine's Confessions," "Bunyan's Grace Abounding," "Edward's Religious Affections," and "Guthrie's Saving Interest," which he has prefaced with finely written introductions. The "Men of the Covenant" which is now before us, in his latest effort, and it is his best. From the beauty and freshness of its style it is admirably adapted to attract a multitude of readers among all classes, while the author's powers of vivid and winning description are fitted to kindle admiration, if not love, in the hearts of even a generation of "Pliables," to the stern and faithful men of the Covenant. In fact, we think the chief merit of Mr Smellie's work, as a record of facts and a eulogy of men of God, in whose footsteps we would do well to tread, lies in its manifest power to win the attention and esteem of outsiders, who are ignorant of, or alien to, the thoughts and ways of our noble progenitors in the faith. It is with the keenest regret that we shall have occasion to notice, however, some things that must be regarded from an orthodox point of view as decided blemishes in an otherwise beautiful book.

Mr Smellie does not set himself in this work to deal with the period of the First Reformation; it is that of the Second Reformation he describes. He does not go back so far as Knox and Melville, though he has reference to them, but he takes up mainly the story of the 28 years' persecution, beginning at the year 1660, and portrays the "Men of the Covenant" then flourishing. The titles of his various chapters are fresh and apt. The chapter on Samuel Rutherford is entitled "A Deathbed at St Andrews"; on the Marquis of Argyle, "Marquis and Martyr," on

James Guthries, of Stirling, "The Short Man who could not Bow"; on Archbishop Sharp (for Mr Smellie describes the bad men as well as the good), "Sharp of that Ilk"; on William Guthrie, "A Sabbath Morning at Fenwick"; on Richard Cameron, "The Lion of the Covenant"; on Robert Baillie, of Jerviswood, "For a Gentleman there is Mr Baillie"; and on James Renwick, "He was of Old Knox's Principles." It is a matter of much satisfaction that Mr Smellie in the main upholds the attitude of the more faithful and uncompromising Covenanters. He argues in their defence, even where he does not fully endorse their proceedings, and is always dignified and tender when he handles the words and ways of men who loved not their lives unto death for the sake of Christ and His truth.

Now, a word as to the blemishes. Mr Smellie devotes the seventeenth chapter to a review of the preaching of the Covenanters, whom he well designates as "Spokesman of Christ." In the course of his review he points out that they were in a most noticeable degree expositors of the Word of God, and then proceeds to quote a statement of Dr George Adam Smith's in commendation of the expository lectures of the Scottish pulpit and its "continuous tradition and habit of scholarship." A little further on Mr Smellie adds, "Much was necessarily wanting — the results of modern research, and the conclusions of a believing and reverent criticism." Now, we are constrained to express our doubt, to say the least of it, as to the wisdom or appropriateness of quoting the opinion of Dr G. A. Smith, as if he were somebody whose name ought to be associated with the Covenanters, unless it be on the principle embodied in the words, their enemies themselves being judges. Has not Dr Smith written of the covenants of Scotland as covenants with death and hell? And, moreover, are we to conclude that Mr Smellie associates Dr Smith with "the conclusions of a reverent and believing criticism?" Anyone who knows Dr Smith's recent book on the Old Testament can only associate him with the most unbelieving and irreverent criticism that has ever appeared in Scotland. Criticism has nowadays come to be almost another word for infidelity, so that Mr Smellie, if he means something entirely different from what we attach to his words, should have been much more explicit than he is. A true and loyal son of the Covenanters, who loved God's word as their very life, should give forth no uncertain sound in regard to the dangerous character of the higher critics. There are a few other passages in the book that afford scope for criticism, but we forbear.

A very interesting feature of the work is "a whole gallery of admirable pictures." Some of these are quite new to us, such as those of Samuel Rutherford, John Livingstone, and William Guthrie.

Church Notes

Theological Conference — September 9th and 10th, 1975

The Theological Conference will be held, the Lord willing, on the 9th and 10th September, in the Dingwall Church. As formerly the Conference is for ministers, office-bearers, male-communicants, and congregational treasurers.

The following papers will be given, and discussion will follow each in turn.

Tuesday, 9th September:

The Ba'Hai Faith — Mr D. MacCuish, Inverness.

Expository Preaching — Rev. R.R. Sinclair, Wick.

Wednesday, 10th September:

Dispensationalism — Rev. E. Rayner, B.A., Aberdeen.

The Call to the Ministry — Rev. I.R. Tallach, Perth.

Present State of the Roman Catholic Church — Rev. D. MacLean, Glasgow.

The last paper will be given in public at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, 10th September, the Lord willing.

Rev. M. MacInnes,
Conference Secretary.

Aberdeen Church Opening

A good number of friends gathered to the church opening on 30th May. Rev. L. MacLeod, Greenock, preached most appropriately from Proverbs 8:34; "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." The sermon was particularly suited to the young. The three main points of the sermon were: (1) The One who speaks in the text (Christ); (2) The great importance of hearing Him. Apart from hearing Him we cannot be blessed. Only those who hear Him speaking in the Word and gospel are blessed; (3) Some things that are true concerning those that hear Him. The great importance of watching daily in private and attending the public means of grace was mentioned. Ambassadors for Christ speak to sinners on behalf of Christ to the extent that Christ says, "he that heareth you heareth me and he that despiseth you despiseth me."

It was encouraging to have local visitors as well as those from a distance, from Inverness, Dingwall, Fearn, Edinburgh, Laide, Skye, Caithness and even New Zealand. It was a pleasure not only to have Rev.

and Mrs Colquhoun present, but to hear Mr Colquhoun speak during the concluding remarks following the sermon.

May the Lord make this new place of worship to be a Bethel to many.
E.R.

Presbytery Meetings (D.V.)

Northern: At Dingwall on 26th August at 6 p.m.

Skye: At Portree on 21st October at 11 a.m.

Outer Isles: At Ness, on 4th August at 7.30 p.m. for moderating in of Call to Rev. William Maclean, and at Miavaig Church, Uig, on 5th August at 7.30 p.m. for the ordination and induction of Rev. D. A. MacIennan, Probationer.

Presbytery Clerkship

At a meeting of the Skye Presbytery on Tuesday, 24th June 1975, Rev. Fraser MacDonald, Portree was appointed Clerk of Presbytery.

Acknowledgment of Donations

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, FCMA, 20 Daleview Avenue, Glasgow G12 0HE, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Jewish and Foreign Mission Fund: Anon, £50 per Rev. L. MacLeod; Mr and Mrs J.P.D., Glasgow £5, both for Bulawayo Church; Anon, London postmark £5.

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Welfare of Youth Fund: Anon, Glendale £1.

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Edinburgh: Anon, Glasgow £25 for Congregational Funds per Rev. D. Campbell.

Kames: Friend, Kames £100 per Rev. D.A. MacDonald (Sustentation Fund £20, Foreign Mission £30, T.S.B. £20, Blythwood Tract Society £18, Kames Manse painting £10, Church Magazines £2).

London: Anon, Matt. 18:20, £15 per Rev. M. McL.; Bettyhill congregation £8 per Gen. Treas.; A.N., Glasgow £5; Uig Friend £5; all for London Church and Manse Building Fund; Anon £5 for Congregational Fund per Rev. M. MacI.

Portree: Anon £5 for Church Bus (Church Plate); Anon £5 in May for Church Property Fund (Church Plate); Two Glendale Friends £10; Glendale Friend £5; both for Church Renovation and both per F.M.

Shieldaig: Anon £10 for Congregational purposes.

Stornoway: Two Friends, Inverness £10 for Congregational Funds per Rev. J. Macleod.

Tain and Fearn: In memory of late Ronald MacLeod £25; In memory of late Willie MacKenzie £25; In memory of late Archie Robertson £25; all for Manse Fund; Canadian Friend £4.50 for Foreign Mission Fund per Rev. John Nicolson.

Uig, Lewis: Anon £7 (Church Plate); Friend, Glasgow £5, per M.M.; Anon £5, per M.S.; all for Congregational Fund.