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The Church and the Truth.

I TIMOTHY iii. 15.

THE Apostle in the course of two Epistles gives a great variety of counsels to Timothy, his own "son in the faith," and a young minister of Jesus Christ. In the verse noted above, he states the object for which these counsels were given, as follows: "that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." Timothy was, no doubt, a man who felt his constant need of divine direction in his work as an ambassador of Christ, and the apostle was evidently inspired of God to supply him with many necessary and important instructions, the record of which is preserved for the benefit of ministers of the gospel and others in subsequent times. We do not intend to enlarge on this subject in the present article, but, perhaps, we should point out one feature of the character of a Christian minister which the apostle strongly desires Timothy to exemplify, that of a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He impresses upon him that he has entered upon a life of trial and conflict, that it is his duty to wage a holy warfare against sin and error, and that while he would require to be "gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient," he was also under obligation to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine." A popular idea of the present day is that the Christian minister should avoid all controversy and reproof in the pulpit, and should only preach sweet and comfortable words that will not offend the flesh of any. But this idea is born of the flesh and not of the Spirit, and is entirely out of harmony with the example and precept of Christ and His prophets and apostles. Its observance in practice cannot be attended with a blessing. It is vain to think that the truth, if faithfully declared, can be made sweet to the natural man; rather the important

circumstance should be constantly remembered, though it may be sometimes difficult to grasp, that it is by the application of the very truth which the sinner naturally hates that he is to be saved for eternity, if saved at all.

We now proceed to the special subject we have in hand, and intend to notice, first, that there is a "house of God" in the world, secondly, the apostle's definition of the character of this house—it is "the church of the living God"—and then, thirdly, one great end or purpose for which the house or the Church of God exists, namely, to be "the pillar and ground of the truth."

1. The first point to be noted, and that briefly, is that God has a "house" in the world.

It may be thought strange at first sight that the infinite God should be said to dwell in a house, a figure that suggests limitation and confinement. Is He not boundless and unsearchable in His being and perfections, one whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, one who inhabiteth eternity? True is this; in His essential being, He is omnipresent, and dwells in all parts of His universe at all times; within created limits He is not and cannot be confined. Thus He exclaims to those who had low and narrow views of His infinite majesty, "Where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?" But while all this is true, yea gloriously true, there is also a very important sense in which it is possible for God to make His presence felt and known more clearly and impressively to His creatures in some places and under some circumstances than others; and it is this He has been pleased to do in the riches of His sovereign grace to the fallen children of men. In the fulness of the time God condescended to come and dwell in the tabernacle of a weak, though sinless, humanity, in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature. It is also a blessed reality that He dwells by His Holy Spirit in that institution here designated by Paul "the house of God," and destined and fitted to show forth His everlasting praise.

The first idea suggested by the word "house" is an outward material building, and under the Old Dispensation, God was pleased to associate the manifestation of His gracious presence in a special degree with the observance of a variety of rites and services in a "house made with hands." By His instructions, a magnificent temple was erected at Jerusalem, in which He visibly displayed His glory, and where sacrifices and intercessions were constantly offered in His name. Here was the seat and centre of the complete and perfect worship of God under that dispensation, and nowhere else was it lawful for ancient Israel to observe these ordinances, or to expect the same peculiar manifestations of divine glory. The worship of God in its completest form was then confined to a particular spot of the earth, and a special material house appointed for the purpose. But this order of things is not so appointed under the New Dispensation. The

temple at Jerusalem was destroyed, and divine worship in its most perfect form may now be observed in any part of the earth, and is confined to no special building. Christ says, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." The house of God now is exclusively a spiritual institution, and manifestly a more glorious temple than any of the ancient temples at Jerusalem. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

2. Let us observe, in the second place, the apostle's definition of "the house of God." He declares it to be "the church of the living God."

The word "church," in the original, signifies an assembly of *persons*, not any merely physical structure. The apostle evidently desired to make it very clear and emphatic that God's house was a gathering of living souls and not a mere collection of dead stones. The people in those days, whether Jews or Gentiles, were liable to cling to the erroneous notion that God's house was some material building, and that God could not be rightly worshipped unless He was addressed in some temple or other "made with hands." The Jews, indeed, were very ready to think that, when the temple at Jerusalem was forsaken or destroyed, the house of God was gone. This materialistic idea of the Church is still very common in the world, notwithstanding the progress of centuries, even among people who profess to have higher and more spiritual ideas of the true nature of God's Church. How many there are who think that almost everything is secured if they are seated in some particular building where their fathers worshipped! This will make up to them for all defects in the doctrine taught, or worship observed, in the building. "Truly the things seen, and temporal," have oftentimes a powerful hold of the mind, even when there is a spiritual profession in the life.

The word, in the original, for "church" means, more explicitly, an assembly or body of men "called out and together." In the language of Dr. Hodge, the term was used "to designate the public assembly of the people among the Greeks, collected for the transaction of business," while it is used in the Scripture "for those who are called out of the world by the gospel, so as to form a distinct class." Again, it was not all the people in Athens who heard the proclamation, but "those who actually assembled who constituted the *ecclesia* of that city. In like manner it is not those who merely hear the call of the gospel who constitute the Church, but *those who obey the call.*"

It is clear, then, that the Church of the living God is not composed of dead sinners who may hear with the outward ear the gospel call, but those who have been called effectually by the power of the Holy Ghost, out of an estate of sin and misery into an estate of salvation, which implies union to Jesus Christ, the glorious head of the Church, and a right and title to all the privileges of the sons of God. "The living God" is the God of

the living and not of the dead, and the true Church is a spiritual temple, consisting of lively or living stones "built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) It is in proportion, then, to the number of such persons as these, in any body calling itself a Church, that that body is worthy of the name, and able to do the work of Christ in the world. Large communion rolls and numerous external activities often obtain, at the present day, where there is no genuine sign of the work of God's Spirit in effectual calling, where, in fact, nothing but spiritual death reigns supreme.

3. The third and last point to be considered is a great end or purpose specified for which the Church exists in the world, namely, to be "the pillar and ground of the truth."

The first thing we observe under this head is "the truth." The apostle had found "the truth"; it was no uncertain and changeable quantity with him. He was confident that God had given an infallible declaration in His word of all the things of which He speaks to men. "The truth," then, we regard as the whole counsel of God, given by the Holy Ghost, in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This is a counsel in which there is no flaw or imperfection, and that may be unreservedly relied upon for eternity. The apostle has, no doubt, very specially in view, divine revelation as bearing upon the whole matter of the salvation of sinners through Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, and this he declares to be "the truth."

The second thing we observe is that the Church is called upon to be "the pillar and ground" of this truth. God makes use of means and instruments for the accomplishment of His work in the world, and one great mean is His Church. It is the duty and privilege of the Christian, both in his personal and in his Church capacity, to act as a pillar to the truth. Pillars were used for holding up statues, and for holding forth proclamations; and one great work committed to God's Church is to hold up and to hold forth the truth as it is in Jesus. The Church is to hold *up* the truth, not to let it fall in the mire of unbelief and carnality; to exalt the truth as the supreme object of attention, not herself or her own wisdom or policy. The Church is also to hold *forth* the truth—that all who run may read it—that sinners may be warned as to their guilt and danger for eternity, and may be directed to Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life." By the divine blessing, the holding up and holding forth of "the truth" will prove instrumental in the conversion of many from the error of their ways, and of planting their footsteps in the narrow path that leadeth to eternal life.

The Church is also called upon to be the ground or basement of "the truth"—its "stay," as may be found in the margin of our Bibles. The idea is a cognate one. The Church is the foundation upon which the superstructure of divine truth is erected. The Church is not to afford support to error, but to the truth, and is

to exist for the purpose of being instrumentally a stay and protection to the truth in the world.

If any body, calling itself a Church of Christ, ceases to be a pillar and stay for the truth, it ceases to perform a necessary function of "the Church of the living God," and, in proportion to the degree of its apostacy, does it lose the right and title to be considered a Church at all. Doubtless it is true, that God must be the keeper of the city, otherwise the city must decline and perish, and the truth along with it. But it is desirable and necessary that the professing Church should have its high calling deeply impressed upon it, in order that it may seek grace to walk worthy of its holy vocation. This is the apostle's aim in his penning such weighty and significant words to the excellent Timothy.

Notes of an Ordination Sermon.

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(Taken from his own manuscript and hitherto unpublished.)

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."—I Tim. iv. 16.

THE subject of this and the subsequent Epistle was born at Lystra, which was a city of Lycaonia. Of his father we are merely informed that he was a Gentile, who had married a Jewish female whose name was Eunice. Timothy was instructed in the oracles of God from his earliest years and brought to a saving acquaintance with the truth by the preaching of Paul on his first visit to Derbe and Lystra, at which time Timothy was only a very young man. When the apostle returned to visit the brethren in these cities at the distance of a very few years, they gave him such a favourable report of the piety of Timothy that Paul determined to take him for his companion in preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, and to cut off all occasion of complaint on the part of the Jews who did not see that the ceremonial law was virtually abolished by the death of Christ, Timothy was circumcised. From this time he accompanied the apostle for several years, assisting him in his apostolic office, until, as is generally understood, he took the pastoral care of the Church at Ephesus. Timothy evidently enjoyed a large share of Paul's affection, who always speaks of him in language denoting the very high estimation in which he held him, and the tenderest solicitude for his welfare. This Epistle is thought to have been written by Paul in the year

58 A.D. Its original design was to give instructions to Timothy concerning the management of the Church of Ephesus, and it was probably intended that this Epistle should be read publicly to the Ephesians, that they might know upon what authority Timothy acted. The Epistle goes on, fraught with every necessary and salutary admonition, which is applicable to every Christian minister in every period of the Church, and which is calculated to cherish and promote that circumspection, faithfulness, and usefulness, which are implied in the exhortations of the text. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt save thyself and them that hear thee." In enlarging from these words, I shall consider,

I.—The exhortations of the text; and

II.—The promises by which they are enforced.

I.—The exhortations.

1. "Take heed unto thyself." Notice six particulars:—

(1) Take heed that you be a sound believer, that you have been convinced and converted, and that you are making progress in the divine life.

(2) Take heed that you be a called and sent minister to witness the things you have seen and felt. If the Lord does not send ministers they shall not profit the people. The profitable minister is he who can say, "Lord, thou hast sent me; therefore go with me; bless me and make me successful."

(3) Take heed you be an exercised minister—not satisfied with systematic and orthodox views merely, but coming forth in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ, speaking from the heart to the heart, and bringing out of the treasure "things new and old."

(4) See that there be conscientious diligence in all the means for attaining fitness for this great work. "Till I come give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

(5) See that you will have the glory of God and the salvation of souls in view.

(6) See that you watch in all things; be on your guard against every temptation, every external and internal enemy, that your conversation be such as becometh the gospel, and that you walk with circumspection worthy of the vocation by which you are called. Being surrounded with more temptations than other men in general, the minister should learn to bear injuries with patience and be ready to do good to every one; to be affable without levity and humble without pusillanimity, conciliating the affections without violating the truth, connecting a suavity of manners with a dignity of character, obliging without flattery, and throwing off all reserve without running into the opposite extreme of volubility and trifling. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

Be watchful in the improvement of time, losing no time in indolence or unnecessary sleep, formal visits, or perusing useless books. Every day should have its work in Christ's vineyard.

As the Christian religion pre-eminently regards the welfare of our immortal souls, as its object is to promote the honour of God and the salvation of men, how incumbent it is upon the ministers of this holy religion to feel its grandeur and importance, to imbibe its true spirit and genius, to "magnify" their ministerial office, and to display the beauty and glory of it before a dark and fallen world! To them are committed the word of life, the mysteries of godliness, the riches of divine grace, for it is through this consecrated medium that these great and inestimable blessings are chiefly communicated. Hence they are called in the language of inspiration, the light of the world, the salt of the earth. If the light then be eclipsed, darkness covers the land; if the salt lose its savour, the earth becomes putrid and corrupt. Being, therefore, the appointed and instrumental causes of diffusing this knowledge of Christianity, and its character and reception in the world being closely connected with their fidelity and zeal, how ardently they ought to seek a conformity of spirit, a perfect congeniality of soul to this sacred and momentous office with which they are invested! To produce a capacity of enjoyment, there must be a congruity between the mind and the object, so that religion, when rendered congenial to the mind inspires also confidence and delight, and renders the service of God a service of perfect freedom and happiness. The heart, attuned to a just and elevated sense of divine objects, assists the operations of the understanding. Its feelings imperceptibly mingle with the light of the mind, and by their reciprocal influence, the fire kindles within, the thoughts begin to sparkle, and the expressions to flow. This is to become "burning" as well as "shining" lights.

There is also a force and an authority with the truth, when it is delivered with gospel sincerity and simplicity and accompanied with genuine holiness. Such characters are living sermons, read and understood of all men. Discourses about virtue are pictures only. A virtuous example is a virtue embodied, animated, and exhibited to public view. Well may saints be represented with a glory around their heads, seeing the work of sanctification assimilates them more and more to the divine image, and enables them to have a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. This holy fervour of spirit and hallowed flame of devotion, which all the ministers of Christ most anxiously desire to cherish in every duty and trial, arises from a spiritual knowledge of the glory of God shining in the person of Jesus Christ, and is a very different thing from that species of knowledge which defends only the outworks of Christianity, illustrates its nature and importance, and admires it only as a beautiful and perfect system. Knowledge is one thing; grace is another. Hence some men are able

advocates for "the faith once delivered to the saints," zealous champions for the truth as it is in Jesus, standing forth in the trenches, repelling by cogent arguments the bold attacks of infidelity, and yet, at the same time, strangers to the interior and vital parts of the Christian religion, to that inward sanctification of mind, to that spirit of genuine piety and devotion with which the ministerial success of a pastor, and the salvation of his own soul are inseparably connected. Though the intellect of fallen man still retains many vestiges of its primitive grandeur and capacity, though it be still competent to the investigation of the most abstruse sciences, and even to the acquisition of sound and orthodox notions in the great science of theology, yet it has no such perception of divine truths as admits them into the mind under a just view of their spiritual nature, moral beauty, and transcendent importance. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." His conceptions on these subjects are so feeble, so indistinct, and so inadequate that he himself comes not under their influence. To all practical purposes the light he has is little better than darkness, and if the light that is in him be darkness, how great is that darkness! It is, moreover, to be observed, that not only considerable theological learning may be acquired, and much sacred criticism displayed, but also the most splendid gifts may be bestowed for the general edification of the Church, independently of divine grace. But when genuine piety is not the basis of these qualifications and gifts, they swell and inflate the mind, and usually exhibit a light which dazzles more than it illuminates, leading to self-exaltation more than to the glory of God. Whereas it is the character of grace to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour and to promote holiness, all which are characteristics of true ministers of Christ; and the influences and operations of the Spirit upon their souls for these glorious ends are of a much higher order than those extraordinary gifts or even that miraculous information of the understanding, which were conferred in the days of the apostles. The latter were designed for particular purposes and ceased with the reasons which occasioned them, whilst the former are essential to the salvation of men, and to that holiness, without which, we must be eternally lost.

Let, then, holiness to the Lord be inscribed in deep and legible characters on the heart of the Christian minister. Let an ardent love to God and man inspire him with the most active benevolence. Let the love of Christ constrain him to consecrate all his gifts and talents to the glory of God and the benefit of his fellow-creatures. It is under the daily tuition of the Holy Spirit of grace and supplication that he can be thus animated and supported, in order to abound in every good word and work, to make full proof of his ministry, and to act the character of a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God,—of a careful and tender shepherd, of

a vigilant watchman, and an indefatigable labourer in Christ's vineyard. It is the Spirit that will enable him to ask aright, and to perform aright, that can stimulate him to care, to vigilance and exertion—to foil temptations, to discipline the inward man, to regulate the heart, to mark the secret recesses and operations of sin, to pursue it in all its multiplied forms and branches, to guard against its insidious or more daring encroachments, and to attain, not only deliverance from its dominion, but also the lively and habitual exercise of these Christian graces that constitute the beauty of holiness, and to which the Lord has annexed His promises and blessings. It is the Spirit that will enable him to wrestle at a throne of grace for a blessing to himself and to his people, that will keep him often in prayer, secret meditation and communion with his own heart, that will teach him savingly in all truths, and bring them seasonably to his recollection, that will render him well versed in all the sacred writings, and that will capacitate him to use the sword of the Spirit successfully as a skilful master in Israel, with Gideon's motto, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and to repel all the fiery darts of the wicked one, with a holy dependence on that final victory and triumph which the Lord has promised to all His faithful witnesses.

Under the teaching of this Spirit, he will "give heed to the doctrine;" he will be enabled to declare "the whole counsel of God" and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." He will not be carried about by every wind of doctrine, nor teach every kind of doctrine to his people. The ballast of grace and spiritual understanding will enable him to weather out the wintry storms to which he will be exposed from the world, the devil and the flesh, from external and internal enemies in the dangerous voyage of human life. Dangers and difficulties, opposition and contempt, he must calculate upon and expect. The very nature of his ministerial functions implies the former, and all the grandeur and dignity of it will not exempt him from the latter. "The truth itself" will offend. He will be regarded as an enemy by some for no other reason but because he tells the truth. The truth condemns the lax conduct of the unconverted, and their unscriptural creed founded on that conduct. To live in the consciences of such men as a witness against them is all that is desirable as long as they are at enmity with God. By consistency, however, you will command their esteem, for many often deny what they cannot disbelieve, and ridicule what they cannot but silently revere.

Whatever opposition therefore he may meet with from the supine indifference of some, or the intemperate zeal of others; whatever misrepresentations may, with secret but malignant industry, be circulated with a view to cloud his character or depreciate his ministry and usefulness; and however such vague and idle reports may be received, with a kind of inward complacency, by those who affect even candour and Christian charity,

and from whom better things might be expected—let none of these things, however, move the Christian minister. Let not the storms of various opinions move him. Let not the applause or flattery or contempt of any person or persons whatever move him off the gospel ground on which it is his privilege to stand, and which he is commanded never to abandon, as he would wish his own salvation and that of his hearers. Neither let fastidious delicacy, which is often more shocked at a breach of the artificial forms of politeness than of the sacred duties of Christian morality, deter you from making full proof of your ministry, of approving yourself to God, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; recalling ever to mind Paul's declaration to Timothy—a declaration of universal application—that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Let all his trials for righteousness' sake remind him of the dignity of his character, and of his resemblance to his Lord and Master, that the disciple is not above his Master and the servant above his Lord. "It is enough for the disciple to be as his master, and the servant as his lord."

If our own hearts be deeply affected with the important truths we deliver to others, we shall then walk with circumspection worthy of the vocation by which we are called. Let, therefore, a solemn sense of the terrors of the Lord, of the bitterness of sin, of the vanity and precariousness of all sublunary enjoyments, of the importance of eternity and the responsibility of our office, stimulate us to carry the momentous truths of the everlasting gospel with energy and life to the hearts of our hearers. For if our souls are not kept in the lively exercise of grace, our rounds of religious duties will unavoidably be cold, and our most sacred ministrations will be deplorably blasted. Let us always bear about us the dying of the Lord Jesus, and uniformly take heed that we are delegated ambassadors of Christ, to transact matters of everlasting importance between an infinite God and immortal souls. And if the honour of such a glorious embassy be so ineffably great, what inexpressible need have they of taking heed to themselves in all things, in the exercise of self-denial, ardent love to God, disinterested regard for His honour, and compassion for souls! What prudence, faithfulness, diligence, humility, holy zeal, spirituality of mind and conversation; what order and plainness and fervour; what just temperature of mildness and severity, are necessary as needs be! What heed for fear we may get careless and lukewarm in the Lord's vineyard about His glory and the salvation of souls, for fear that we may be deserted of God, and that pride and sinister motives may bear sway!

2. Take heed that "the doctrine" be not your own, nor that of others, but "Christ and him crucified"—Christ in all His offices—justification by faith—the law of God as a rule of life—the covenant of grace, with all its benefits. No Arminian or Antinomian doctrines.

Let a man speak as the oracles of God. Let thy doctrine be accompanied with much humility and self-denial, so as to have God's glory and the salvation of sinners in view. Let it not be mixed with vain philosophy, so as to be delivered from seeking yourself and the applause of men in the excellency of speech. It is found that the holiest ministers preach most plainly, and that the plainest ministers are most successful. Let it be grave and weighty, sound speech that cannot be condemned, commending ourselves to every man's conscience. The power of the truth upon our own hearts will greatly advance this.

Paul preached with a demonstration that the Holy Spirit was in him, sanctifying him. He preached so as to give a demonstration that the Spirit was with him. He was out of weakness made strong. The grace of our Lord was made sufficient for him. The Lord renewed his strength; he received out of the fulness in Christ, and grace for grace. He preached by the Spirit to the heart of the hearers, with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, from the heart to the heart, from faith to faith, and from experience to experience.

3. "Continue in them." Continue (1) in thy views; (2) in thy calling; (3) be laborious and diligent. Continue in thy principles and work; you must not abandon either while on earth. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel!" Continue to seek after greater fitness for thy work, in prayer, reading, and meditations.

II.—The great promises and encouragements by which these exhortations are enforced.

1. "Thou shalt save thyself." Your continuing and persevering in the ways of the Lord will tend to promote the salvation of your soul daily. "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our consciences."

"Thou shalt save thyself" from the guilt of other men's sins and ruin, if thou be faithful in the ministry. "Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked, and that he has not turned, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."—(Ezek. xxxiii. 9.) "I am clean," said the apostle, "your blood be upon your own head." "I take you to record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God."

2. Thou shalt save "them that hear thee." It is in the proportion in which a minister of Christ is taught to promote his own salvation, that he promises usefulness in the Church as a means of saving others—of opening their eyes to turn them from darkness to light. He is to preach in season and out of season for this end, and they are to hear. God's glory and the salvation of sinners are the great ends of preaching, and the Lord promised His countenance to His ministers, even to the end of the world, for convincing and converting sinners, and for building them up in their most holy faith.

The Memoirs or Spiritual Exercises of Elisabeth West.

(WRITTEN BY HER OWN HAND.)

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“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men.”—Psalm xxxi. 19.

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.”—Psalm lxvi. 16.

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THOUGH I cannot tell the time and place, when and where the Lord did me first good; yet this I know, that He began with me very early, when I was young in years, to incline my heart to seek the Lord. I wanted not good education from my mother, and likewise from my aunt, who was a godly woman, and took much pains on me. When I was conversing with my comrades, I would be telling them what my mother was saying to me, that if I were good, I would get to heaven. Now, thought I, heaven is such a place, where I would get fine clothes, and every thing that was brave and bonny.

This so allured me, that I could been content to do anything to get to heaven: I resolved, I would neither swear nor lie, nor do anything that was ill: but I would pray and seek the Lord, then I would be sure to get to heaven; yet I found a strong inclination in my heart to break all my resolutions: for the first temptation that came in my way to sin, I embraced it cheerfully. I was extraordinarily given to play of all sorts, which took my heart wholly up, so that I thought it a melancholy thing to be religious; but when I had gone to my bed, I would think, what if I go to hell, where I will never come out? That word *never*, wrought strongly upon me; but the remedy I took to still my conscience was, I would say my prayers I learned at school; then I was well enough. I cannot distinctly give an account how I spent my time: for some years I satisfied myself with the Pharisee's religion, that I was not so ill as others; but, in the Lord's own time, when He was pleased to send the gospel among us at the Revolution, then I began more serious-like to seek the Lord; I left off my form of prayer, and betook me to another way which I thought would please God better. I was for a considerable time under the ministry of Mr. William Erskine: all that I can observe, during the time he preached among us, was, that I attained to a great delight in hearing the word, which wrought upon my affections, that I durst not neglect secret prayer; where sometimes I would be very tender, and shed some tears, then I thought there was no doubt but I was converted. It pleased the Lord to remove this faithful servant by death.

Then I frequently heard great Mr. James Kirkton with a great deal of delight; for his sermons were very taking and good for the memory; the which I had been telling to others, they commended me; so I gained a great deal of applause with those among whom I conversed. This pleased me extremely, though I knew never what it was to make application of anything I heard. O how great reason have I to wonder and admire at the goodness of the Lord that did not send me to the pit in this selfish condition! seeking justification by works, never remembering what I was by nature. In this case I remained until it pleased the Lord to send Mr. George Meldrum to be our minister, in place of Mr. William Erskine, who was the Lord's messenger to me indeed. The first time I heard him I thought I felt something I never felt before, but knew not what it was; that word was made out to me, Hos. xi. 1, 2, 3. He preached on these words, Joshua xxiv. 15, "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Where he besought us earnestly, with tears, that we should choose presently whom we should serve. He said, "Many will say, I will do that afterwards; but few will say, I will choose presently." He protested, he would not go out of the pulpit till we would give our consent presently to the bargain without delay. If I right remember, this was the first time that ever I could observe the Lord speaking to me in public. At this time I thought the Lord made me willing in a day of His power to choose and consent to serve the Lord. O that I may never forget this day!

After this there arose some fears on my spirit, that the Lord did not regard anything I did; I thought my prayers were lost, for I could observe no answer; then that word came to me, Heb. xiii. 5, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." But, I now knowing there was such a word in the Bible, it yieldeth me some small comfort; this being the first time that ever my ears were opened to hear Christ preached in such a manner as now God eminently helped him to preach and me to hear. At this time he told us, "that our prayers were rejected by God, unless they were at first put into the hand of Jesus Christ; and that if we had not a saving uptaking of Christ in His natures as God-man, and in His offices as prophet, priest, and king, in every duty, it could not be accepted by God." Then I was struck with astonishment: for I was persuaded, that never a duty I had performed was accepted; for I never employed Christ to any. Now it was not in one preaching or two that he delivered these truths, but distinctly he preached on every one of them from several texts of Scriptures; such as Galatians iv. 4, 5, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Matt. i. 21; "And thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." Acts iii. 22, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear. And whosoever will not

hear this prophet shall be cut off from among the people." Psalm ii. 6, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Heb. vii. 26, "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens." O what love and desire was wrought in my heart after Christ, the time that these words were opened up, when I heard what he had done and suffered for poor sinners! yea, Jesus won my heart to Himself by love. Our minister also held forth the sufferings of Christ, from John iii. 14, 15, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." He not only preached to us on the sufferings of Christ, of which I never heard the like before (for I thought every sentence was a wonder, and was backed by the power of God), but also he made offers of that Christ to all that would receive Him; this was the blessedest news that ever I heard. Likewise he offered the cross, with all the circumstances thereof, to every one that had received Christ; to which my heart gave consent to take Christ, with cross and loss whatsoever, and that cheerfully, without any hanker in my heart.

After this I found corruption begin to stir in me; but, whatever troubled me, I got it spoken to on the Sabbath day, which struck me with wonder. I several times resorted to Mr. Meldrum, and told him my case (though very confusedly); his converse to me was both meek and comfortable; but particularly he exhorted me to keep a record of all the Lord's dealings with my soul (if I could write). I thought this a strange command; but I heard the same exhortation from Mr. John Flint at Lasswade, on these words, Isaiah xiv. 5, "One shall say I am the Lord's and another shall call himself by the name of Jesus; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord." This being on a communion Sabbath, he exhorted every one to write with their hands to be the Lord's. I would fain have put this exhortation in practice, but knew not how to begin; it being presently before the sacrament in Edinburgh, which was the first after the Revolution, and the first I ever was partaker of.

ON THE FAST DAY.

EDINBURGH, 9th August, 1694.

I am here this day, O Lord to go about a great work, which I am not capable of; therefore I desire Thy assistance. The thing I go to begin with is, to enter into covenant with Thee; and I desire, Lord, that Thou wouldst consent to the bargain. Say not to me, as in Psalm l. 16, "What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" but though Thou shouldst say the same to me Thou art right; but I will plead upon Thy own word, Matt. xi. 28, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O Lord, I know not any thing that is so loading to me as Thy absence, not knowing the cause thereof, and the sin that keeps Thee from covenanting with me. I shall

desire to say with Job, xxxiv. 32, "That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done any iniquity, I will do no more." O Lord, I have Thy promise, and I will come in Thy favour, and plead that my sins may be blotted out for Christ's sake; and give me leave to come to Thy holy table, to get my longing desires granted. I take heaven and earth to witness, that I desire Thy love before all the riches in the world: help me this day to prepare for a covenant betwixt me and Thee; for I am very unfit of myself to do this great work: if Thou had not said in Thy word, that all that are willing to come to Thee, Thou art willing to entertain. Now, O Lord, I beg that, in Thy goodness, Thou would have mercy upon me, and let not this be an unfit fast-day; but take glory to Thyself; and be not angry with this that I am writing, for it is to show my willingness to the bargain. O Lord, I beseech Thee, be not approaching to me at Thy table in anger; but in favour bestow Thy mercy on me; yet I think, before Thou be absent at such a time, I would rather Thou would come with rebukes (if not in fury) to me; for I long to be in Thy company. I cannot express my unfitness to come to Thy table, but I will cast myself on Thy mercy, as Queen Esther, when she was going to the king; I will go, and if I perish, it shall be at Thy feet.

The Saturday following, being a day of preparation for the sacrament, when my vows were made, and promises to the Lord;—O Lord, most holy and gracious, to whom all praise is due; I here this day avouch myself to Thee, on the terms of the covenant. Here, O Lord, I intend in Thy strength to walk humbly all the days of my life; as Thou wast humble in all things, both in Thy birth and during Thy abode in this world, so I intend to do; and as Thou wast mocked, bruised, and crucified for my sins, and yet bore it patiently; here I profess I shall be patient in all things Thou castest in my way, be what it will. As Thou wast not angry at them that despised Thee, but prayed for them; so help me never to be angry at anything, though it were ever so great an offence to me, in scoffs and mocks, for Thy name's sake; except it be that Thou be offended at it! And as Thou walkedst all Thy days in poverty, and not in pomp and honour, who many times wanted where to lodge and lay Thy head; so help me to be content with my lot in this world, were it ever so mean; if Thou be my portion, I have enough. I here this day promise to renounce all lusts and idols, and give my heart to Thee; all which I shall seal to-morrow at Thy table.

(To be Continued.)

Obituary Note.—We regret to record this month the death of Jessie Macleod, Strathy Point, Sutherlandshire, an aged Christian woman, long confined to bed, but much esteemed for her spiritual, exercised character by a wide circle of friends. A light has gone out on earth that will be greatly missed. A fuller sketch will appear in an early issue.

The Unity of the Church:

A SERMON BY THE LATE REV. THOMAS M'CRIE, SEN., D.D.,

AUTHOR OF THE LIVES OF KNOX AND MELVILLE.

(DISCOURSE II. ON THE SUBJECT.)

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 "They shall be ONE in mine hand."—Ezekiel xxxvii. 19.  
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(Concluded from Vol. X., page 451.)

5. We may learn from this subject what is the temper of mind which becomes Christians in a time of abounding divisions in the church, and what are the qualities required in those who attempt to heal them. All have it in their power to contribute, in some degree, to the promoting of this work, and therefore ought to cherish the dispositions which correspond to it; although this is in a more eminent manner the duty of such as possess superior influence, or who, from their station, may be called to take a leading part in the negotiations. And here I do not hesitate to name, as the primary qualification—*an inviolable love to truth and supreme regard to divine authority*. That person is totally disqualified for being a negotiator, or for acting the most subordinate part in such a sacred treaty, whose pulse does not beat high with this honourable and divine feeling. He will betray those interests which are in themselves the highest, and ought to be the dearest to all parties, whenever they are found irreconcilable with the attainment of an inferior object which he is determined to gain. When genuine, and pure, and enlightened, the feeling which we are recommending, so far from obstructing, as is often mistakingly imagined, will greatly facilitate and forward any negotiation to which a good man would wish success.—The next place is due to—*a pacific disposition*. He who has said, "Love the truth and peace," intended to teach us, what we are sometimes disposed to disbelieve, that a regard to the former is not incompatible with a regard to the latter. In settling religious differences, the nice and difficult task is, to find out a way by which to adjust the claims of the two—to "seek peace and ensue it," without "erring from the truth;" and who so fit for this as "the peaceful and faithful in Israel," who are endued with "the wisdom that is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated?" 2 Sam. xx. 19; James iii. 17. If in any, surely in religious contests the maxim should be constantly kept in mind, the end of all war is peace. He is not a good Christian who does not sigh for it in the heat of the conflict, who does not court it in the moment of victory, who does not enjoy a triumph in sounding the trumpet which shall "bid the people return from following their brethren." 2 Sam. ii. 26. The man who loves to live in the fire of contention, who feeds on

debate and controversy, whose thoughts are never turned to peace, but are "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," who is prepared to contest every point of common order as if it concerned the common salvation, is ever ready with his dissent, backed with its many reasons, against any ordinary measure which may not have obtained the sanction of his superior wisdom, and who flies off as soon as he finds that he cannot obtain his will in all things—this man is unfit for religious society, and though he may pretend to a zeal for God and religion, his zeal, like his wisdom, is not from above.—*Christian candour* is another quality which is requisite. This displays itself in an openness of mind to conviction, a readiness to hear whatever may be advanced, a disposition to give and receive explanations, and to pay all becoming deference not only to the reasons, but also to the difficulties and scruples of brethren on the points of difference, and to relieve these so far as may be practicable, safe, and consistent with public duty. It is also opposed to concealment, dissimulation, and all the crooked arts by which worldly politicians conduct their negotiations, and endeavour to obtain the best terms for their constituents. Far from those who engage in this holy work be all such Italian and Romish stratagems! Every one ought to speak the truth to his neighbour as he thinketh, without equivocation or mental reservation: there ought to be no masked proposals—no ambiguous declarations—no secret articles—no understood agreement among leaders—no imposition on the credulity or the confidence of the Christian people. Genuine and unaffected candour has a powerful influence in inducing persons to persevere in a treaty when there may be great difficulties in the way of bringing it to a happy termination; whereas duplicity and art excite jealousy in the breasts of the intelligent, and if successfully practised, lay a foundation for future repentance and disquiet.—*The gift of knowledge and wisdom* is requisite. This work requires a union of the qualities of the men of Zebulon and Naphtali who came to David, "to turn the kingdom of Saul to him according to the word of the Lord;" they were "not of a double heart," and they "had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chron. xii. That dexterity and knowledge of mankind which qualifies some individuals for settling ordinary disputes about the things of this life or in the church, will avail little in the work of which we speak. It requires an accurate acquaintance with the subjects of dispute in all their bearings—of the signs of the times, their duties, sins, and dangers,—of the real character and dispositions of the parties, and other circumstances which may go to determine the call we have to engage in such an undertaking, or to persevere in it;—not to mention an acquaintance with attempts of the same kind which have been made in former periods, with the effects which they produced, or the causes of their ill success.—Lastly, a *public and disinterested spirit* is indispensably requisite. Those individuals

whom God has raised up in different ages to "do good to Zion in his good pleasure," have been eminently endued with this disposition. Such was Moses, who showed himself fit for composing the strife of his afflicted brethren, when he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;" and proved himself worthy of "standing in the breach to turn away God's anger" from Israel, when he magnanimously declined the offer of Heaven to "make of him a great nation." Such also was Paul, who not only "became all things to all men," and a "servant to all," in things lawful and indifferent, but "could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren." There are no sacrifices which are in their power, which persons of this spirit will not be disposed to make for accomplishing so good and great a design—their worldly interests, their reputation and honour, their station in the church of God, provided it prove an obstacle, they will cheerfully relinquish and lay at the feet of their brethren.

If these dispositions were more generally and more strongly displayed, there would be no ground for despairing of the abolition of many of our religious differences. Some of them no doubt imply a diversity of views so radical and extensive that it would be unreasonable to look for their speedy removal. But the cure of others may be said to be more within our own power. In vindication of the perspicuity of the Scriptures, and of the certainty of the standard of religion, it ought to be acknowledged that we often err from the path of duty, not so much because we cannot discover it, as because we are averse to it. "The light of the body is the eye: if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Matt. vi. 22. If those who were once united had been true to their light and single in their aims; if they had lived together as became brethren; if they had been at one as to the ends of their Christian profession, and continued resolve, through grace, to prosecute them, "notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution they might meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of their duty," fewer differences would have arisen among them, and these would have been more easily composed in the spirit of the Gospel: "Whereunto they had attained they would have walked by the same rule, they would have minded the same things; and if in anything they were otherwise minded, God would have revealed even this unto them." Philip. iii. 15, 16. When we are brought to a proper sense of the causes of our "divisions and offences," the cure of them will be more than half effected.

In fine, I would improve this subject for warning you against a twofold extreme into which persons are apt to run with respect to the present movements towards union. Beware of indifference to the object itself, or to any scriptural means for attaining it. You are under the strongest obligations, not only to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," but also to be "workers together with God," who has promised to bestow this blessing. If others err by allowing this object to engross their attention, this will not excuse your

lukewarmness, or your refusal to do what may be in your power, in your place and station, for promoting it in any degree. Hard-hearted must he be who can look unmoved on the wounds of the church, or pass by, like the priest and Levite in the parable, without feeling disposed to provide and pour in the healing oil and balm. It would be strange and unnatural indeed, if any son of Zion should rejoice in her trouble, and take pleasure in beholding perpetual strife and violence in the city of God, instead of seeing it a peaceful habitation. If a true Christian is unavoidably placed in a scene of confusion, he will sigh and pray for deliverance from it; and if conscience and the duty which he owes to God require him to say or do what may prove the occasion of disturbance or of alienating him from the affections of his brethren, he will sympathise deeply with the plaintive prophet, when he feelingly exclaims: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me." Jer. xv. 10. No wonder that attempts to heal divisions have been made, proposals of conciliation started, and plans of union concerted, in almost every age. The importance of the design might warrant them; and though they may not always have been in themselves proper or admissible, nor attended with success, yet the movers may deserve the praise and receive the blessing of peacemakers, so far as they singly intended and sincerely prosecuted an end confessedly laudable. Every person of right feeling will be disposed to construe charitably, and to censure with lenity, some errors and miscarriages which may be committed in the management of such attempts; provided no selfish interest or dishonest snare lurk under the mask of conciliation, and provided the plans do not evidently tend to produce other evils, greater than those which they propose to remedy.

It is no less necessary to warn you, on the other hand, against being ensnared by fair and plausible schemes of union. Remember that the Spirit of Error takes an active part in the unions as well as in the divisions of Christians; and be not ignorant of his devices. Of old he deceived the people of God by raising the cry of Peace, peace; and so successful has he found this stratagem, that he has ever since had recourse to it at intervals. There is a rage for peace as well as for contention, and men otherwise wise and good have been seized by it as well as the giddy multitude. If religion has suffered from merciless polemics and cruel dividers, history shows that it has suffered no less from the false lenity and unskilful arts of pretended physicians—the motley tribe of those who have assumed the name of reconcilers. They will say that they have no intention to injure the truth; but it is your duty carefully to examine the tendency of their proposals, and not to suffer yourselves to be caught with "good words and fair speeches." Have nothing to do with those plans of agreement, in which the

corner-stone is not laid in a sacred regard to all that is sanctioned by the authority of your Lord. Beware of all such coalitions as would require you to desert a faithful and necessary testimony for the truths and laws of Christ, would call you back from prosecuting a just warfare against any error or sin, would involve you in a breach of your lawful engagements, or prevent you from paying the vows you have made to God. Keep in mind that there are duties incumbent on you beside that of following peace. Violate not "the brotherly covenant" by which you may be already bound to walk with your fellow-Christians in a holy and good profession, from a fond and passionate desire of forming new connections. Throw not rashly away a present and known good for the prospect of a greater which is uncertain and contingent; and do not suffer your minds to be diverted from the ordinary duties of your Christian vocation, by engaging in extraordinary undertakings, while the call to these is not clear, and you have not good ground to depend on God for that extraordinary aid which is required in prosecuting them.

The text on which we have been discoursing, my friends, and others of the same kind in the sacred volume, will, if rightly improved, keep you from this as well as the former extreme. If your hearts are established by a firm persuasion that God will, according to His promise and in His own time, restore unity and peace to His church, you will be kept equally from negligence and impatience, from indifference and precipitation. "Against hope you will believe in hope, that it shall be as God has said;" but you will "not make haste," nor have recourse to any improper means for obtaining the blessing. He knows to choose the best season for beginning and completing the work. We may think Him remiss and slack in performing His promises, weary at His delays, attempt to anticipate Him with unbelieving and impatient haste, or tempt Him by saying presumptuously, "Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it! and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" Isaiah v. 19. The check which our Saviour imposed on His disciples is needful here: "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready." John vii. 6. He has ends, wise, important, and every way worthy of Himself, to serve by permitting the continuance as well as the entrance of divisions. Divine truth must be cleared and purified from every foreign admixture by its being submitted to the ordeal of keen controversy. The faithfulness of its professed friends must be tried; the hypocrisy of false disciples detected; and the ignorance, imperfection, and mistakes which cleave to the best discovered. God must be glorified by preserving the cause of religion in the world, not only in opposition to its open enemies, but also amidst all the dissensions and rivalships and deadly feuds which prevail among its professed friends. When these and similar objects have been accomplished, He will "hasten his word to perform it."

Having begun the good work, He will not draw back His hand until He has "finished it in righteousness."

Are there any who, when they hear of the future uniting of all Christians in profession, affection, and practice, are disposed to receive the intimation with a smile of incredulity, to treat the prospect as visionary, and to exclaim, "How can these things be? Will God create a new race on the earth? Will He give a new structure to the minds of men? Will they not continue to think and act about religion as they have done from the beginning until now?" Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men: Is it a small matter for you to weary men, will ye weary my God also? Hath He not said, "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me?" And will He not do it? Let God be true, and every man a liar. When the time comes, the time which He hath set for accomplishing His promise, He shall arise, and every difficulty and every obstruction shall give way before Him and vanish at His approach. Do you ask a sign? Do you ask it in the heaven above? It is He that "binds the sweet influences of Pleiades, and looses the" frozen "bands of Orion—and guides Arcturus with his sons." Job xxxviii. 31, 32. Do you ask it in the earth beneath? "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them;—for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah xi. 5, 9. The Infinite One has, in His faithful word, pledged all His perfections for the accomplishment of this work. What resistance can be opposed to infinite power, put in motion by infinite love, and guided by infinite wisdom? He can raise up instruments properly qualified and disposed for promoting His design, guide their counsels, animate them to constancy and perseverance, and finally crown all their exertions with the wished-for success. He has the hearts of all men in His hand, and can turn them like the waters in an aqueduct. He can rebuke the spirit of error and delusion, "cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land," and remove and abolish all things that offend in His kingdom. He can subdue the most stubborn and inveterate prejudices, allay the fiercest heats and animosities, convert jealousies into confidence, and hatred into love, and having "made the wrath of man to praise him" by accomplishing His purposes, can "restrain the remainder thereof."

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of His servant, who walketh in darkness and hath no light as to the removal or abatement of the melancholy divisions of the church? Let him plant his faith firmly on the promises of Jehovah, and stay himself on His perfections. Say with the prophet Jeremiah, in a similar case, "Ah, Lord God! behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power; and there is nothing too hard for thee; the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord

of Hosts is his name: Great in counsel, and mighty in work." Jer. xxxii. 17-19. Place yourself in spirit in the midst of the emblematical valley into which Ezekiel was carried, and say, God who raiseth the dead can easily do this. Rivers, deep and broad, seas, noisy and tempestuous, "on which no galley with oars can go, neither gallant ship ride," have disparted the territories which the God of heaven hath given to his Son, and prevented the intercourse of His subjects. But He "shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and smite it in the seven streams thereof, and make men go over dry-shod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." Isaiah xi. 15, 16. Brazen "mountains of separation" may stand in the way of this desirable event. But the resistance which they oppose to it shall be overcome, not according to the confused plan of modern projectors, by throwing a scaffolding over them, by which those who have reared altars on their tops may hold occasional intercourse and partial communion; but in a way becoming the New Testament Zerubbabel, the Disperser of Confusion. When He rends the heavens and comes down to do things which we look not for, "the mountains shall flow down at his presence." Isaiah lxiv. 1. Those separations which have been of most ancient date, and which threatened to last for ever, shall yield to His power. "The everlasting mountains shall be scattered, the perpetual hills shall bow" before Him whose "ways are everlasting." Hab. iii. 6. If there shall be one that has reared its head above all the rest, and makes a more formidable resistance, it also shall crumble down and disappear: "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Zech. iv. 7. Then shall the mount on which the house of God is built be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow to it. And He will rebuke and repress the envious risings of its proudest rival. "A hill of God is the hill of Bashan; a high hill is the hill of Bashan. But why lift ye up yourselves, ye high hills? This (Zion) is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord shall dwell in it for ever." Psalm lxxviii. 15, 16.

May God fulfil these promises in due time; and unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Notice to Congregational Treasurers in Northern Presbytery.—Rev. John R. Mackay, Inverness, desires the said treasurers to send in as soon as possible their Annual Financial Statements if they have not done so. These Statements are expected to show the various amounts collected for all purposes during the year, and how the same have been expended.

Feeding beside the Shepherds' Tents.

I.—THE GREAT GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE TO SHILOH.*

BY REV. RALPH ERSKINE.

ARE ye gathered to Shiloh? O then endeavour to gather others! See if you can get all in your family to come to Shiloh with you; saying with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, whatever others do," Joshua xxiv. 15. O have ye been gathered to Christ, and will you be careless though your friends, your children, be gathered to the devil? O hath Christ brought you to Himself, and will He bring you to glory, and gather you to heaven? and will you be easy though all about you be gathered unto hell? No, no; that cannot be your disposition, if you be a believer indeed. If you be content in your lifetime to serve Him, you will study to your power that others may do the like. And this is the name to make the love of Christ continue in the world; for, when you teach your neighbours, your servants, your children, the way of the Lord, they, following your example, may teach their children too; and this will go from generation to generation, so as generations to come may praise the Lord; or, at least, it will not fail on your part. O! how is it to be regretted, that few come to Christ; and of the few that come, how few do show their love, in endeavouring to bring others to Him? Therefore, O let this be amended, and endeavour, in the places where you dwell, and the station you are in providence placed into, that, by your holy conversation, others may be gathered into Shiloh too.

Are you gathered? O, let not believers, that are gathered to Shiloh, forget their gathering together for prayer; Hebrews, x. 24, 25, "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as you see the day approaching." The wicked, that are to be gathered, to the burning Tophet are making speed in sinful ways, and gathering in clubs and cabals to hearten and harden

* This extract is taken from Vol. IV. of Ralph Erskine's works. It is the concluding appeal of a remarkable series of sermons on the text, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Gen. xlix. 10. The eighth sermon from which the extract is taken was preached at a communion season at Carnock, which played such a prominent part through its eminent minister, James Hogg, in the days of the Marrow Controversy. Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine were the sons of a gracious minister of Christ who suffered much in the times of the persecution. It was through his preaching that Thomas Boston was savingly impressed; or, as he puts it in his own characteristic way, got "an unexpected cast." Ralph and Ebenezer played an important part in the Marrow Controversy, and were afterwards leaders in the 1733 Secession movement.

one another. And, O, shall not the godly gather together, to exhort and excite one another in the way to heaven; as iron sharpens iron, so does the holy gathering of saints use to sharpen the edge of their spirits in the Lord's way. But since fellowship meetings have been deserted, many professors are blunted and rusted; several Christian societies are broken and vanished even at a time, when they that fear the Lord should speak often one to another in spiritual conferences. O! if you be gathered unto Shiloh, let your zeal for Him appear in restoring and reviving these Christian gatherings, in a regular manner. And pray, that the devil's scattering wind that he has raised in our day for separating and dividing ministers and Christians from one another may be laid.

To add no more, and to encourage you in the whole of your Christian course, O you, that through grace have been gathered to Shiloh, take home the comfort that belongs to your gathered state. As to those who are yet in a distant state, separate from the Lord Jesus, we have little more to offer, if you abide there; for, in the Lord's time, you will be gathered to the grave, and after that you will be gathered before the tribunal of God, to receive the dreadful sentence, "Depart from me ye cursed;" and, in all appearance some here will be gathered before that awful tribunal before they be gathered together here again; it is more than probable that we are not to meet again in this manner, till we meet before the fiery bench of the glorious Judge; and if you be not gathered to Him as an amicable Jesus now, you must be gathered to Him as a terrible Judge then. And O! that the thoughts of this would excite poor souls to think of gathering to Shiloh before they part, that they may part with God's blessing and not under His heavy curse! But as to you that have been gathered unto Christ I would have you know that God allows you strong consolation. You having fled for refuge to the hope set before you, you may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God that the joy of the Lord may be your strength in the whole of your work and warfare as you go through the wilderness. You may rejoice in this, that as your hearts are gathered unto Shiloh now, so your happiest gathering time is but coming; for He that hath begun to gather you as stones for the spiritual building will never leave the work till the building be completed with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it." He will never give over gathering you until you be completely happy. From time to time, the work will be advanced by means of His word and ordinances till the consummation of the work in glory; "for He hath appointed a gospel ministry for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till they all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. iv. 12, 13. He hath appointed these three fearful things, death, judgment, and eternity, to be three happy gatherings for you; the initial

gathering being over by your getting into Christ, after your progressive gathering has come to a close, in you having finished your course, and fought the good fight of faith, your glorious and consummate gathering will take place; the day of death will be the glorious commencement of it. The first coming of Shiloh hath ushered in a gracious gathering; His second coming will produce a glorious gathering; but of these glorious seasons I formerly spoke at large; I only say, therefore, that then, O believer, then shall you be ever with the Lord; and it is for this reason that you are now gathered to Him, that there you may be forever with Him; and so sure as you are gathered to Him in time, so sure shall you be with Him throughout eternity; not only forever with the patriarchs, and prophets and apostles, not only forever with angels and archangels, not only for ever with saints and seraphims, but forever with the Lord, for none of these can make a heaven without Him. Christ Himself will be the centre of the assembly and heart of the meeting; and though now you are but with Him for a start and He is with you but for a moment and so your communion with Him is but in transient glances of His glory. It may be just now you are with Him in the banqueting house, but instantly you are, as it were, at the back of the door. It is only for a little, but then for ever; and it is but a little of Him that you have for a little while; yet then, O then, shall you be forever with the Lord, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv. 18. Know that being gathered to Him on earth you shall be gathered to Him in heaven; and being gathered in grace you shall be gathered in glory. For all the promises of grace and glory are gathered in Him, and you being gathered to Him, are in Him also in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

And now this gathering of the people here is to part; but, O happy gathering to these who can date their first or further gathering to Shiloh from their gathering to Carnock? For, part with whom you will, Christ and you shall never part again. Whatever clouds may be in your sky, yet your sun is risen and will never set. But the most part of you here were never gathered to Shiloh. And O how can you find it in your heart to go away without Him and without so much as a desire after Him, who is the desire of all nations! For my own part I cannot think of your going away in such a case. Alas! shall He have it to say, "I would have gathered you as a hen does her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" O! wherefore did you gather to this place if you would not be gathered to Shiloh! And if you be more willing to be gone than willing to be gathered, woe's me that my text will be no more but a witness against you upon Carnock green that you would not; and that the devil and the world and your lusts are more desirable to you, and you had more heart to be gathered to them than to be gathered to Shiloh. O then, sirs, heartless parting while you are contented to part with Shiloh forever rather than part with a base lust or black devil. If that be

not your choice then let your heart say in the sight of the living God, if you can, "Lord, I think I would be gathered, and would rather choose to die upon the spot than not to be gathered unto Shiloh, and my soul could wish that all my dearest lusts were buried in this green, never to rise again, and that Christ might have my heart forever in room of them all." Why man! can you say that to the heart searching God? Then, poor soul, let me desire you to take the first convenient closet or corner you can get, and there tell Him this over again more solemnly; and at the same time bless Him that Shiloh ever came to you and that ever you felt the virtue of this promise—"To him shall the gathering of the people be."

The San Francisco Catastrophe.

THE whole world was startled on Wednesday, the 18th April, with the tidings that there had been, in the early morning, a tremendous earthquake at the city of San Francisco on the west coast of America. The earthquake lasted three minutes; the roads moved up and down like waves; and large, massive buildings toppled over. Most of the inhabitants rushed into the streets in their night apparel, but many were destroyed amid the wreck of the houses. Numerous fires almost immediately broke out, which baffled the efforts of the authorities to check, through want of water, and greatly increased the devastation. The poorer and more commercial sections of the city were the first to suffer, and the part which has best survived the shock is the residential quarter. Upwards of 200,000 persons were rendered homeless and shelterless, and had to cluster together and lie in the parks and open places. Many of the people were completely dazed and stupefied by the terrible and unexpected catastrophe, while some became literally demented. One reporter describes the case of a group of women gathered in the attitude of prayer, with a person who had gone "crazy" standing among them, crying out, "The Lord sent it—the Lord." It would be good, however, if the madness expressed in these very true words would extend to a greater number of the inhabitants. San Francisco, we understand, was one of the most wicked cities in the civilized world. The earthquake was evidently the visitation of God. Towns within a considerable radius have also suffered seriously from the shock. The United States Government have voted one million dollars towards a relief fund, and there is much talk already about rebuilding the destroyed city. It would be better if there were some signs of a fulfilment of the words of the prophet, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."

Copies of February number of Magazine, containing Rev. J. B. Radasi's very interesting letter, are still to be had.

Searmon.

LEIS AN URRAMACH MICHAEL BRUCE.

(Continued from Vol. X., page 468.)

“An sin dh’àithn Ioseph an saic a lionadh le siol, agus airgid gach duine a chuir air ais ’na shac, agus biadh a thoirt doibh air son na slighe : agus is ann mar so a rinn e riu.”—Genesis xlii. 25.

1. Tha e na phost no na thaic mhòir do chreideamh a chreidmhidh, agus a’ neartachadh an anam ann an aghaidh cagair agus ionnsuidhean an droch spioraid, ’nuair a tha e air a dhòirt-eadh a steach air an anam, agus ’ga dhaingneachadh ann an aghaidh cunnuill reusonachadh, feòlmhoir, agus a ghearan ann an aghaidh frithealaidhean an Tighearn’, agus ann an aghaidh eagal peacach agus tràilleil an t-saoghail. ’Nuair a tha’n Criosduidh coslach ri bhi gu dubhach air a chleachdadh fuidh na chrois, ann an sin tha’n diabhol a’ tòiseachadh ris a chothrom a ghabhail. ’Nis, tha fhios agam nach soirbhicheadh gu bràth leis. ’An sin tòisichidh reuson feòlmhor agus eascreidimh, ann an cùrsa féin, agus their iad, Mo thruaighe, mo thruaighe, ciod a ni mi? ’Se so an ni mu’n robh eagal orm : Agus a nis tha m’eagal cosmhail r’a theachd orm : là-eigin tuitidh mi ann an lamh mo naimhdean. Tha’n saoghal a’ tòiseachadh ri bhi gruaimeach, agus daoine an t-saoghail gu ràdh, gheibh sinn ar rùn air a nis : thainig an là air son an robh sinn a’ feitheamh, agus ris an robh ar dùil. Ann an sin tha creideamh a’ teachd a steach, agus ag radh, Marcaich air t’athais. Ciod a tha agad r’a radh ri mo Mhaighstir Criosd, agus ri a chranna-ceus-san? Bithidh sibh ’n’ur breugairean, oir bithidh mi ’ar-aon gu maith, agus ni mi gu maith, a dh’aindheoin air an diabhol agus na h-uile a ghabhas a phàirt. Oir tha aig mo Mhaighstir-sa uidheam agus lòn gu thabhairt do sheirbhisich féin, co maith ’sa tha aig neach sam bith anns an t-saoghal, agus mòran na’s fhearr. Mar sin ma ta, tha sinn a’ faicinn gu’m bheil buannachdan agus milsead na seilbh na luidhe ann an so, gu’m bheil e a’ dùineadh beul gach uile aobhairghearain.

2. Tha e cumail cridheachan pobull Dhé gun fhailneachadh ann an là na deuchainn, ’nuair a tha iad cosmhail ri géilleadh agus an obair sin a thabhairt thairis. Oir tha turus fada, agus saothar chruaidh gle sgith, air son diadhachd fhior-ghlan agus neo-shalach ann am fianuis Dhé, eadhon an diadhachd fhior-ghlan chleachdail. Firinn agus cinnteachas an ni so tha e na obair mhòir, agus uime sin tha e air a mheas mar chogadh, gleachd, strigh, na ruith rèis ; a’ deanamh strì gu dol a’ steach air a gheata chumhang, agus glacadh rioghachd neamh le ainneart. Ach tha’n dòrlach do dheadh shìol ann ar saic na dheadh thearuinteachd, agus na chungaidh neartachaidh ann an aghaidh fannachaidhean fuidh

gach uile mhi-mhisneach. 'Nuair a gheibh sinn am fagus do laimh Chrìosd, agus a gheibh sinn aon trà do dheadh sheann shearmon, agus tràth eile do dheadh sheann sheilbh agus do dh'fhoillseachadh mothachail, agus an treas tràth o sheann chomunn beòthail eigin. An saoil sibhse nach fheud so ann an turus fada sinn a chumail o fhannachadh air an t-slighe.

3. Tha e cumail a Chrìosduidh do ghnà suilbhir fuidh na chrois, agus a' tabhairt air a bhi seinn cliù an Tighearna fuidh an troiblaid agus an deuchainn a's dubhaiche ris an còmhlaich e: Bheir e air a chreid'mhach deadh theistean a thabhairt air uile dhéiligidhean, shlighean, agus oibrìbh an Tighearna, agus mòran a labhairt ann a bhi moladh gràdh Dhia. Ciod a thug air Pòl gàirdeachas a dheanamh ann an trioblaid? Ciod a thug air Pòl agus Silas seinn anns a phrìosan, am feadh a bha'n cosan teann anns na cip? Ciod a thug air Habaccuc seinn thairis air a sgrìos? Nach b'e an dòrlach so do dheadh shìol a bh' ac' ann an cuid saic? agus an deadh lòn a fhuair iad air an t-slighe o am bràthair Ioseph; oir bheir e do a chàirdean agus do a bràithrean a chuid a's fhearr do na chruithneachd.

4. Ni e an Crìosduidh comasach air briseadh troimh fheachd do dhoilbheachdan, agus balla leum le misneach agus dànachd. Tha e a' deanamh an lag làidir mar thigh Dhaibhidh, a' toirt orra ruith gun bhi sgìth, imeachd gun fhannachadh. Tha e tabhairt orra na h-uile ni a dheanamh tre Chrìosd a neartaicheas iad. Tha an namhaid a' rùnachadh gàraidhean droigheann a chuir ann ar rathad: ach trid neart Iehobhah, theid sinne trompa uile, leis an lòn a tha ar Maighstir a' tabhairt dhuinn air an t-slighe. 'Surrainn e thoirt oirnn balla a leum, agus a dhol troimh fheachd do dhoilbheachdan, 'seadh gach uile ni a sheasas 'n-ar-n-aghaidh. 'Salm xviii. 29; Salm cxviii. 6-13. Agus nach feud sinn a radh, gu'm bheil an dòrlach do dheadh shìol, agus an lòn air son na slighe, a tha ar bràthair Ioseph a' cuir ann ar saic, araan milis agus sòlasach, agus de' bhuanachd mhòr dhuinn air an t-slighe.

3. B'e an treas ni a rùnaich sinn focal rabhadh. Agus Air tùs, Cha b' àill leam gu'n togadh sibh 'am mearachd ar n-Ioseph glic agus beannaichte, oir bithidh se an trathas 'sa ris a' cuir siol ann bhur saic, ach gabhaidh se a thiom féin gu sin a dheanamh. Air an aobhar sin, cha'n fheud sibh crìoch a chuir roimhe, ach rùm fhàgail aige gu dhol agus a theachd mar is àill leis féin, no rathad a chuir roimhe, no tiom de do dhealbh féin air son gu'n oibrìtheadh e obair féin, no a rùn ghlòir-mhor a thabhairt mu'n cuairt. Feumaidh tu rùm fhàgail aige, mar-aon air son an tiom agus an rathad, 'san doigh; agus mar an ceudna do thaobh na meadhonan agus na h-innealan; air-neo ni sibh mòr dhochuinn dhuibh féin, agus suidhidh sibh ann an rathad bhur solais féin. Oir ma ghabhas sibh beachd cheart air mo cheann teagaisg, gheibh sibh na nithe so ann.

1. Gu'm falamhaich Crìosd bhur làmhan mu'n lion se iad. Oir thug iad saic fhalamh do'n Eiphit, agus bha e mar dhorus dòchais

ac', gu'n robh an stiùbhard rompa an sin gu'n lionadh. Co luath 'sa thainig iad an sin, bha iad air an druideadh am prìosan, agus an sin rinneadh an saic ni b' fhalamb. M'a dheireadh bha'n cor air a dheanamh ni bu ro eu dochasaiche, agus ann an coslach na bu mhiosa na bha e roimhe.

(1) 'Se'n dara mir do dheiligeadh glic Chrìosd ri a shluagh féin, mu'n lion e an saic, gu'n d'thoir e dhoibh cridhe goirt. Oir cha robh a bheag ann am measg bràithrean Ioseiph, ach bròn agus tuireadh. Tha sinn ciontach, a deir iadsan. Agus an sin tha e ag òrduchadh an saic a bhi air an lionadh. Tha fhios agam gu'm feum na's mò do leicheanan fliuch a bhi ann bhur measg-sa fathast, mu'm bi 'ur saic uile air an lionadh. Tha co lion cridhe rag agus slàn a tha ann ar measg ag radh, gu'm bi ar saic 'uin fhada gun lionadh.

(2) An treas doigh a tha'n Tighearn a' gabhail, crois nuadh a chuir oirbh air nach do bhruadraich sibh riamh roimh, mu'n lion e bhur saic. Simeon ceangailte, bu ni sin air son nach d'amhairc na bràithrean so air a shon. Uime sin na togaibh gu mearachdach ar Tighearn caoimhneil agus ar Maighstir; oir lionaidh e saic a chàirdean, ach gabhaidh e a thiom féin gu dheanamh, agus tha deadh aobhar air a shon.

2. Na togaibh so 'am mearachd, gu'm feum sibh aonchuid creidimh fhaotainn gu frithealadh an Tighearn do'r taobh féin ann an là 'ur n-àmghar a leughadh, airneo, leigidh sibh le iomadh ceanglachan arbhair do'n deadh shìol so a bhi air a chall, no air a dhiom-buileachadh. Tha mi 'n dùil, gu'n d'fhuir cuid a nis na's mò ann an cuid saic na bha iad an dùil; agus gidheadh tha eagal orm nach 'eil ach beag aire air a thabhairt dà. Ghabh an eaglais mi-chreideamh chum a cor a leughadh. Tuir. iii. 18; Isa. xlix. 14. "Ach thubhairt Sion, thréig an Tighearn mi." Cha'n 'eil i a' faicinn a bheag do thròcair ann a h-uile chrannchuir; ach tha creidimh a' teachd agus a' leughadh ni na's fearr, anns 22, 24. Tha creidimh a' faicinn nach 'eil i gu buileach air a caitheamh as gun sliochd: 'seadh, tha i gu misneachail air teachd gu a còir ann an Dia a dhearbhadh; agus tha so a' cumail taic rithe gu sam bheil i a' faotainn sealladh air rathad sona dol as dhi féin, agus sgrios d'a cuid naimhde, mar a dh'fhaodas sibh a leughadh anns na h-àitibh a dh'ainmicheadh de na sgrìobtuir. Is dana leam a ràdh, gu'm bheil iomadh tròcair mhillis agus thràthail sheul-aichte fuidh 'ar croisibh, air an cuir ann an di-mheas agus air an di-chuimhneachadh, do bhàrigh 's gu'm bheil sinn a tabhairt air a mhi-creidimh an leughadh dhuinn fuidh na croisibh so.

3. Bithibh air bhur faicill roimh na mhearachd so, do bhrìgh 's nach faigh sinn uiread do chreidimh a's gu buaidh fhaotainn air an t-saoghal; aig aon bhuille, agus uiread do chreidimh gu an ruaig a chuir air an diabhol a mach as a bhàr, agus buaidh iomlain fhaotainn thar 'ur n-uile naimhde, nach saoil sibh a bheag sam bith de leithid do thomhas creidimh 'sa chumas air 'ur cosaibh sibh, agus a ghleachd sa'n còmhrag a chumail suas. An saoil sibh

a bheag sam bith uiread do ghràs agus do neart, is gu'r cumail ri 'r dleasdanas, as-eugmhais a thoirt thairis mar ni gun dòchas; do bhrìgh 's nach fhaigh sibh uiread 'sa chuireas làn-chrìoch air bhur dleasdanas, a chum is nach bi sibh na's mò air ar trioblaideachadh leis. Ach gu deimhin, bu chòir dhuinn a shaoilsinn na dhòrlach do dheadh shìol ann ar saic, ma gheibh sinn uiread do lòn uidheam agus do ghràs, gus a chath a chumail suas ann an aghaidh an diabhoil, an t-saoghail, agus na feòla, agus gu'r cumail aig ar dleasdanas. Tha fhios agam gu maith, nach 'eil sinn a dh'easbhuidh dòrlach do dheadh shìol ann ar saic, ma bhitheas sinn air ar còmhnadh gus an òran sin a sheinn, ge nach urrainn sinn an là a chosnadh gu h-ìomlan thairis air ar n-anamhiannaibh agus ar n-iodholaibh aig a cheud làmh: gidheadh, buidheachas do Dhia, cha do choisinn iad eòrlach do ghrunn òirnn' o na thòisich ar croisean, agus rinn Ceannard beannaichte ar slainte sinn a chòmhnadh gu dol a mach ann am blàr na'n aghaidh. Agus trid a ghràs-san a tha neartachadh a shlughadh féin, "leis gach uile ghné ghràs anns an duine an leth a stigh," tha dòchas againn nach d'thoir sinn gu bràth thairis a chùis, gus am faigh sinn iad uile air an caitheamh as.

4. Na togaibh 'am mearachd air an doigh so a chùis, do bhrìgh 's nach faigh sibh comas dol a steach mothachail taitneach ann an urnuigh ri Dia, agus nach 'eil sinn air ar gabhail agus air ar n-altrum leis air a ghlùinibh agus sinn a bhi air ar tabhairt gu'r còir agus ar daimh ann an Crìosd a leughadh, trid solus mothachail a ghnùis, uime sin nach saoil sibh a bheag sam bith, ge d' robh sibh air 'ur cumail a' bualadh aig an dorus, a' tagradh, a' gleachdadh, gu liosda 'feitheamh aig an dorus gus am bi e air fhosgladh dhuibh, agus na h-uile h-amaladh air an atharrachadh. Ach tha làn-fhios agam gu'm feud sinn a mheas na dhòrlach do shìol maith ann ar saic, ma gheibh sinn gràs gu leantuinn, agus neart gu feitheamh, agus gun 'ar muinighinn a thilgeadh air falbh agus tarail as, do bhrìgh nach 'eil sinne a' faotainn comas dol a steach aig a cheud làmh. Feumaidh sinn do ghnàth a ghabhail mar dhorus dòchais, 'nuair a gheibh sinn gràs gu fantuinn aig dleasdanas sam bith. Air an doigh so thainig Daibhidh gu a chòir ann an Dia a chumail suas, Salm xxii. 12; agus Heman, Salm lxxxviii. 12, 13. Cha robh an duine diadhaidh so cho luath air a chosnadh gu fhàgail, agus gu ruith air falbh.

5. Cha'n fheud sibh am mir do dheadh lòn so air an t-slighe a thogail am mearachd, agus dorlach do dheadh shìol anns an t-sac, a tha ach gu beag air a chomharrachadh no air a mheas, agus cho beag air fhoghlum, no air iarraidh as a dheigh; agus 'se sin, fàs sios ann an irioslachd, agus ann am féin-àicheadh: Ge nach bi sibh gu mothachail a' fàs suas ann an seilbhean, ann an teachd air aghairt ann an gràsaibh eile agus coimhlionadh 'dhleasdanas. Tha sinn ullamh na's leòir gu ar dol suas a mheas na thròcair, agus gu uail a dheanamh ann, ach a bhi 'saoilsinn beag dheth, ma tha sinn a' fàs sios, mar gu'm b'eadh, fuidh an talamh. Ach tha

làn fhios agam, gu'm bheil iomadh dorlach do shìol na's miosa anns an tìr na irioslachd agus féin-àicheadh. Cha'n ann is lugha air Crìosd sibh idir, nach dean 'ur casan ach beag fuaim air sràidibh Ierusalem. Gu bràth cha'n ann is lugha a ghràdhaicheas e sibh, nach bi 'ur n-aidmheil na's mò ann am meud na bhios 'ur féin-àicheadh, agus 'ur diadhachd chleachdail.

Tha sinn a nis air teachd gu focal cleachdaidh. Tha mi a' saoil-sinn nach urrainn e bhì air àicheadh, nach 'eil croisean gle thròm an diugh air Alba. Ach am bheil sibh a' faotainn dorlach do'n t-sìol mhaith so, agus mìr do lòn gu'r còmhnadh gu'r cumail suas fuaidh? Tha dà fhocal dubhach a tha agam ri innseadh dhuibh. Agus

1. Gu'm bheil e, agus gu'n robh e mar-aon, na-mhìr de phlàigh agus de' bhreitheanas na h-Alba, g'um bheil ar croisean 'g ar faotainn 'n ar codal, agus lomnochd, le beag ann ar saic. Tha saic fhalamh agus urrais pheacach a ghnà a' dol maille ri cheile. Do bhrìgh 's gur e làmh an duine dhìchiollaich a tha deanamh saibhir, agus codal ag éideadh duine le luideagan, ge do tha aig 'ar Maighstir saibhreas na's leòir agus r'a sheachnadh, gidheadh, tha mi a' saoil-sinn gu'm bheil aig iomadh agaibh-se tighean falamh aig a bhaile. Tha trì tighean taisgidh gus am bheil Crìosd a' tabhairt a phobull féin, agus ann an sin a' lìonadh an saic. 'Se

(1.) Sin a tha anns Colos. ii. 3, "Anns am bheil uile ionmhais a ghliocais agus an eolais folaichte." Tha e na ionmhas do shàbhaladh anam, irioslachadh cridhe, naomhachadh nàduir, agus do ghliocas is eolas toil athnuadhaichte. O nach b'aithne dhuibh a bheag sam bith dheth na so, 'ar saic a bhì air an lìonadh leis an t-sìol mhaith so. 'Se an

(2) Tigh-ionmhais gus am bheil e 'gan tabhairt, sin a tha ann an Eoin i. 16, 17, "Agus as a lànachd-san fhuair sinn uile, agus gràs air son gràs. Oir thugadh an lagh le Maois, ach thàiaig an gràs agus an fhirinn le Iosa Crìosd." O 'mhuintir ionmhuinn, an aithne dhuibh cìod e sin, a bhì air bhur deanamh suas as an lànachd a ta ann an Crìosd, tobair a ghràis neartachaidh.

(3.) Tha e ga'n tabhairt a dh'ionnsuidh tigh-ionmhais a mhaithais, le toil-inntinn làn fhreagaireach. Salm xxxi. 19. "Cia mòr do mhaithais, a thaisg thu dhoibhsan d'an eagal thu." Agus tha làn fhios agam, ma fhuair sibh na trì tighean-taisgidh so, gu'n d'fhuair sibh dorlach do shìol maith ann bhur saic. Se'n

2 Focal dubhach a th' agam r'a innseadh dhuibh, agus cha'n 'eil mi 'g iarraidh mòr fhàistneachd a dheanamh 'an so; ach bheiream-sa cinnte dhuibh, gu'n tuit iomadh air an t-slighe mu'n crìochnaichear an t-iomlan. Bithidh iomadh luchd aidmheil marbh 'san raon ann an Alba, mu'm faigh sinne a mach as an Eiphit, trid na fàsaich, agus gu crìch air n-uile thrioblaidean. Tha mi 'ga radh, agus seasaidh mi ris, gu'n tionndaidh mòran an cùl fathast air an Eaglais, agus rachadh osag-storm a seachad.—'Seadh ma ta, tha na's leòir aig Ioseph, ma ghabhas sibhse e, agus ma nì sibh feum dheth. Ach mo thruaighe! tha mi a' smuain-eachadh gu'm bheil bhur saic air brothadh, agus bhur soithichean

a' sealltainn mar nach cumadh iad uisge sam bith. Cridheachan air an ullachadh gu gabhail ri tròcair Dhia, tha e toileach a thoirt seachad, agus a' ceadachadh do a shluagh féin; ach tha iad cosmhail ri bhi gle ghann ann an Alba. 'Seadh ma ta, ullaichibh bhur saic, agus leasaichibh iad, oir tha na's leoir aig 'ur n-Ioseph a chum an lionadh. The ceithir reubaidhean annt a ni am milleadh, mur dean sibh an càradh.

1. Is e a h-aon diubbh, Neo-chaomhalachd a thaobh na firinn, agus aobhairean gloir-mhoir rioghachd Chriosd. Tha eagal orm gu'm bi so na aon de na reubaidhean ann an saic iomadh.

2. Is e an dara h-aon, Easbhuidh cridhe air a lionadh le iarrtais neamhaidh ann an geall air Criosd, agus air a lànachd-san.

3. An treas reubadh, Easbhuidh cridhe, air a bhlàthachadh agus a' losgadh le gràdh do Dhia, agus eud cheart air son aobhairean a ghlòir.

4. Easbhuidh cridhe air a ghlanadh trid creidimh ann an Criosd, air a chumail ann an cleachdadh, gus an sgùm a thilgeadh suas, agus uile ghrùid na truaillidheachd oibreachadh a mach le fìor aithreachas agus claoidheadh. O feuchaibh ris na reubaidhean so ann bhur saic a chàradh, air doigh sam bith eile cha dean sibh ach droch thurus do'n Eiphit. Tha iarrtais naomh agus neamhaidh air dol air falbh. Tha'n fheòil naomha air imeachd air falbh, agus tha sin na reubadh mòr ann bhur saic. Air son gràdh, cha robh e riamh na's fuair na tha e nis. Tha mòran coslach ri bàsachadh, aig éigheach a mach agus cosmhail ri toirt thairis, agus tha 'ar n-Ioseph beannaichte ag ràdh, co is urrainn a leasachadh? Oir tha 'choire aig bhur dorus féin. Na'n iarradh sibh le na's mò do chreidimh, gheibheadh sibh na bu mhò. Na'n gràdhaicheadh sibh na bu mhò, bhiodh na bu mhò do chothrom agaibh air a bhi air bhur gràdhachadh. Cia maith a ta briathran Chriosd a nis air an coimhlionadh, gu'n rachadh peacadh am meud, agus gu'm fuaraicheadh gaol mòran. Cha'n 'eil a bheag a' deanamh an talamh so na's cosmhail ri ifrinn na'm peacadh, agus a luchd aiteachaidh na's cosmhail ri spioradaibh damnaite na bhi as eugmhais fìor ghràdh Criosduidh: oir cha'n 'eil a bheag ann an ifrinn ach peacadh; agus cha'n 'eil a bheag ann an cridhe a mhuinntir dhamnaite, ach fìor ghamhlas agus fuath ann an aghaidh Dhia agus a cheile.

(*Ri leantuinn.*)

Ralph Erskine's "Believer's Riddle" in Gaelic.—In the October number of the *Celtic Review*, the Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair has an interesting article on the late Rev. Dr. Blair, who died at Barney's River (the *Abhainn Bharnaigh* of John MacLean, the Gaelic bard), Prince Edward Island, in 1893. Dr. Blair was a poet of no mean ability, and among other efforts of his muse he left a Gaelic translation of Ralph Erskine's rich gospel poem, the "Believer's Riddle." Rev. A. MacLean Sinclair is willing to give a copy of the translation to any one who promises to publish it in pamphlet form.

A Father's Address to His Children.

BY THE LATE REV. JAMES SMITH, OF LONDON.

(Continued from Vol. X., page 471.)

THE next thing to which I would direct your attention is the love, mercy, and faithfulness of God, to all who believe. "God is love." He loves all who come to Him, call on Him, and trust in Him; and these very things are the effects of His love, for as Paul said to his Ephesians, so may I say to every seeking soul, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; for God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace are ye saved." Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5. And when you are brought to believe in Jesus, and walk after the commands of God; it is your privilege to look on God as loving you with an infinite, eternal, unchangeable love; as loving you as He loves Jesus, with a love passing knowledge. And, let your circumstances, trials, or troubles, be what they may; still you are warranted to believe that God is your Father, that He loves you beyond conception; and will make all things work together for your good. To be an object of the love of the Deity is the highest honour than can be conferred upon a sinner; to be a son of God, a joint heir with Christ is the truest dignity mortals can possibly enjoy. But "this honour have all his saints." He says of each and of all, "Thou shalt no more be called forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Isaiah lxii. 4. His mercy is great unto the heavens; and is from everlasting to everlasting; it is fixed on those that fear Him unto all generations. An interest in God's mercy is a sufficient guarantee that we shall never want, or be left destitute and wretched; for His merciful kindness is ever great towards us. Mercy will befriended us through time, and rejoice over us through eternity. It takes our misery to heart, and sympathises with us under all our conflicts and trials; if God's mercy is fixed upon me, and shown to me, all must be well with me. His faithfulness is like the great mountains, it stands unmoved and unmovable; every prediction in His word must be fulfilled, and every promise be made good, because they are the predictions and promises of a faithful God. Man may deceive, but God cannot. Man may not be trusted, but God should; we can never trust Him too confidently, or for too much, if we have a plain promise in His word to go upon. What a comfort is this under all the changing scenes and trying circumstances we are called to pass through, that "though we believe not, yet the Lord abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself." If all friends forsake, if every enemy be

enraged, if circumstances conspire to cast down, and distress us ; still, "God is faithful, and will make a way for our escape, that we may be able to bear it." To be able to say, "God loves me ; he has shown mercy to me ; prayers have been accepted in heaven from me ; the promises of his word are trusted by me ; and he will arise and have mercy upon me." Yet, every believer may say this, and rejoice that "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about his people for evermore." Millions have trusted in the mercy and faithfulness of God, but not one ever found Him untrue ; all must say, "Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." If God love me, it is of small consequence who dislike me ; if God have mercy in store for me, it is no great matter of grief if man try to keep good things from me ; if God is faithful to me, then I need not despair though all creatures deal falsely with me. But if God be angry with me, as He is with the wicked every day ; if He that made me, will not have mercy on me ; if the faithfulness of God only regards his threatenings to judge and punish me ; then what will it avail though man love me ; endeavour to show mercy to me ; or continue faithful to me ; I shall still find that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God." My dear child, I entreat you seriously to think over this part of my address ; and remember, Jesus says, "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." They who seek His love are sure to find it, they who come to His throne for mercy are sure to obtain it, for "he is faithful who promised." Think not that idle wishes, sleepy desires, or formal prayers are enough ; these do but mock God on account of His mercy, and insult His infinite majesty. Seek earnestly, seek importunately, seek until you obtain.

But perhaps it may be necessary that I say a little more in addition to what has gone before, on the all important topic of a sinner's justification. "How can man be just with God?" is one of the most solemn and important questions that can be proposed by man ; but blessed be God it is clearly and satisfactorily answered in His holy word. "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ;" all He did and suffered was in the character of a substitute, He fully obeyed the law's requirements, justified its claims, and suffered its penalty ; He went to "the end of the law for righteousness." The perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the only ground of a sinner's justification before God ; this is proclaimed and exhibited in the everlasting gospel, and the minister is commanded to declare that "by him all who believe are justified from all things." Nothing is required of the sinner to entitle him to claim the blessing, it is a gift of free grace, it is held out for his reception, he may take it freely, he may claim it honestly ; his past bad conduct, or his present sinful state, are no barriers in the way, for God justifieth the ungodly who believe in Jesus. Faith is a receiving the perfect work of Christ for justification ; which includes the renunciation of every thing of mine totally and entirely ; it is a putting on Christ ; a taking Him to be

my Redeemer, Saviour, and King. The work of Christ is imputed to the believer, and is henceforward reckoned his; he wears the name, is represented by the person, and is clothed with the robe of His righteousness. He is complete in Christ. He is accepted of God in the beloved, to the praise of His glorious grace. Everlasting life is his, he is passed from death to life and cannot come into condemnation. God is well pleased with him, and he is commanded to obey, not to procure life, but to glorify God, express his gratitude, honour Jesus, and benefit others. Justification and sanctification are inseparably connected, he who is justified by faith in the Lord Jesus, is sanctified by the Spirit of our God. The faith that embraces Christ and His righteousness invariably produces good works, and leads its possessor in the paths of holiness and righteousness. Faith in Christ makes and keeps the eye single; the conscience tender; the walk honourable; and the end blessed. Presumption, hardness, and the love of sin, cannot reign where true faith is found; consequently proud boasters, presumptuous sinners, or light triflers are not justified persons, however sound their creed or correct their notions; and of all persons these are the most dangerous, and their state is the most fearful, therefore I beseech you avoid the company of bold, daring, or trifling professors; they are a blot on a Church, a discredit to any cause, and a great injury to all young persons. Expect justification by simple faith in Jesus, but except faith bring forth fruit, God tells you it is dead, being alone. Avoid mixing anything with Christ's work in the point of justification, but avoid with equal care the idea that a truly justified person may indulge in sin, or walk licentiously. Faith always purifies the heart, and its possessor becomes consecrated to God; it works by love, and if it be strong, vigorous, and healthy, its possessor will be full of mercy and good fruits, without deception, and free from hypocrisy.

(To be Continued.)

Protestant Notes.

Papists and the King's Oath.—The first half-yearly meeting of the Catholic Union was held in the hall, 114 Mount Street, W. In the unavoidable absence of the Duke of Norfolk (the president) and Lord Ripon (the vice-president), Lord Llandaff was called to the chair. The proceedings comprised the re-election of the Duke of Norfolk as president of the society, upon the motion of the chairman, seconded by Sir Martin Dillon, and the adoption of the following resolution, upon the motion of Sir Henry Bellingham, seconded by Mr. F. Harwood Lescher:—“That the Catholic Union of Great Britain looks with confidence to the Catholic members of both Houses of Parliament for vigorous action to procure redress of the grievous wrong done to His Majesty's Catholic subjects by the declaration against Transubstantiation now required to be made by the Sovereign on his accession to the Throne.”

The Anglo-Spanish Marriage.—Reply to Western Presbytery's Protest:—

“WHITEHALL, 6th April, 1906.

The Rev. NEIL MACINTYRE,
The Manse, Glendale, Skye.

SIR,—I am directed by the Secretary of State to inform you that he has laid before His Majesty the Resolution from the Western Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, respecting the marriage of Her Royal Highness Princess Ena of Battenberg.

I am to point out that the prohibition of Royal Marriages without the consent of the Sovereign, which is contained in the Act 12, George III., cap. 11, does not apply to ‘the issue of Princesses who have married or may hereafter marry into foreign families.’—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

HENRY CUNNINGHAME.”

The point at the close of this reply has been disputed. Prince Henry of Battenberg, father of Princess Ena, though a foreigner by birth, became a naturalised Englishman, and so it is maintained that the above rule does not hold good in the present case.

Romanist Activity in the West of Scotland.—Some statistics as to the strength of the Roman Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Glasgow, are issued by authority of Archbishop Maguire. During the past year two new Missions were opened, five new churches were opened and three are in course of erection. New chapel schools were completed at Govan Street, Glasgow, Stevenston and Whiteinch, and similar buildings are in course of erection at Carntyne and Tollcross. Three new schools were completed at Coatbridge, North Woodside Road, Glasgow, and Govan. The priests of the Archdiocese now number 267. Of these 223 are seculars and the other 44 are regulars—*i.e.*, members of the following Orders or Congregations:—Jesuits, Vincentians, Passionists, Franciscans and Benedictines. There are 87 Missions in the Archdiocese, with 117 churches, chapels and stations. The estimated Catholic population of the Archdiocese is about 380,000. There are 109 schools, with 152 separate departments, of which 89 schools and 128 departments are attached to Missions. There are also seven secondary education centres recognised by the local committees. The total number of children in all the schools of the Archdiocese presented at the religious examination for the past school year was 54,540, an increase of 2,835 on the number for the previous year. The total number of teachers is 1,399.—*Banner of the Covenant.*

The English Roman Catholics and the Education Bill.—The Lenten pastoral letter of the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, read in all the churches of the archdiocese, is in the main devoted to the proposed Government Bill on the elementary education question, and a re-statement of the Roman Catholic claim. “Simple Bible teaching, it is now suggested,”

the pastoral states, "should be imposed by statute on all the public elementary schools in the country; in other words, that it should be permanently established and endowed. In the eyes of Catholics, this would be the establishment and endowment of Protestantism in its simplest form. We have no desire to interfere with the rights of parents to have such a system of education if it satisfies them. We can have none of it." The Catholic claim, the pastoral declares, is for a Catholic education, and that "implies three things: (a) Catholic schools, (b) Catholic teachers, (c) effective Catholic oversight of all that pertains to religious teaching and influence."—*Daily Mail*.

The late Lord Acton on Ultramontaniam.—The late Lord Acton was a staunch Romanist. The Roman Catholic *Tablet* of 11th November, 1905, p. 781, spoke thus of the most learned man in Europe:—"The fervour and the orthodoxy of this living encyclopædia of history are placed high above all reach of suspicion." "It has never been my fortune," Lord Acton says in a letter to the late Mr. Gladstone, "to meet with an esoteric Ultramontane—I mean, putting aside the ignorant mass, and those who are incapable of reasoning, that I do not know of a religious and educated Catholic who really believes that the See of Rome is a safe guide to salvation. . . . In short, I do not believe there are Catholics who, sincerely and intelligently, believe that Rome is right and that Dollinger is wrong. And, therefore, I think you are too hard on Ultramontanes, or too gentle with Ultramontaniam. You say, for instance, that it promotes untruthfulness. I don't think that is fair. *It not only promotes, it inculcates, distinct mendacity and deceitfulness.* IN CERTAIN CASES IT IS MADE A DUTY TO LIE. But those who teach this doctrine do not become habitual liars in other things."

Notes and Comments.

Communion.—Oban and Kames, 1st Sabbath of month; John Knox's, Christian Institute, Bothwell Street, Glasgow, 2nd; Glendale, Skye, 3rd. Bonarbridge, Creich, 1st Sabbath of June.

Acknowledgments.—The Treasurer of the Dingwall Congregation begs to acknowledge, with thanks, the following donations for the Manse Building Fund:—A Friend, Resolis (*second* subscription), 2/6; Mr. Duncan Mackintosh, Smithton, Gairloch, 10/; per Rev. D. M'Farlane, from a few Friends, £3; per Rev. D. M'Farlane, through the Rev. Mr. M'Intyre, from the Glendale Congregation, £3.

Rev. Neil Cameron acknowledges, with thanks, the following sums in aid of St. Jude's Building Fund:—A Friend, £1; A Friend, New York, £1 10/; A Friend, Oban, £1; Job xvii. 9, 2/, and S. Fund, 2/. For Bibles, Catechisms, &c., to Rev. J. B. Radas:—A Friend, New York, £1 10/; A Friend, Oban, 10/; Bracadale, Skye, 7/6; Job xvii. 9, 2/.

A Decreasing Drink Bill.—From the statistics supplied by Dr. Dawson Burns to the *Times*, it would appear that the consumption of intoxicating liquors in this country is decreasing, and that in a marked way. The decrease in six years is £21,759,286. During these years the population has increased about six and a half per cent., and if the expenditure had proportionately increased, it would have amounted in 1905 to £198,012,495. But it not only failed to rise to that amount, but fell to £164,167,941, thus giving an actual and proportionate decrease of £33,344,551. The consumption, however, is still £3 15s. 11½d. per head. Considering the children and the millions who drink no alcoholic liquor, this is still a large figure. Some of Dr. Burns' detailed figures are startling. Thus it appears that Birmingham spends on drink almost as much as Glasgow, though Glasgow has a much larger population.

Ritualism in the Established Church.—At a recent meeting of the Forres Presbytery, the Presbytery condemned the dedicatory services of Forres Parish Church, and expressed profound regret that the Moderator had taken part. This is as it should be. It is almost incredible that such a glaring aping of High Churchism should be allowed to pass uncondemned. The Rev. James Bain of Duthil, also brought the matter before his own Presbytery, as one of its members, the Rev. Wm. L. Levack, Grantown, had taken part in the dedicatory services. Mr. Bain moved that Mr. Levack be dealt with, but he failed to find a seconder, which says very little for the Presbytery of Abernethy.

The Plague of Church Social Meetings.—The Church Social Meeting of modern times is one of the most successful, or perhaps we should say unsuccessful, attempts to get the world and the Church to go hand-in-hand. Even in the Free Church matters in this direction have reached a point that has evidently awakened the deepest concern in the mind of the Editor of the *Free Church Record*. "For such things," he says in the April issue, "the Free Church went out into exile for four weary years, and to be rid of them many would gladly return to exile." Perhaps Free Presbyterians may now be pardoned for having had this opinion all along and putting it into practical shape by remaining in exile. It may be cruel to remind Mr. MacNeilage of another deliverance of his at the Special Meeting of Commission, held in December, when he said that the making the existence of a tea meeting in a congregation, or the existence of a sale of work, a reason for perpetuating denominational difference in Scotland, was surely straining at a gnat. A sentiment which evoked laughter and applause. We have no desire to be excessively hypercritical, but anyone who is in the habit of getting a number of local papers must have been surprised to observe the wide divergence between the reports of Free Church Social Meetings as they appear in the local press and as they appear in the *Free Church Record*. In the latter the worldly element, such as songs, etc., is usually conspicuous by its absence.

The Chalmers' Lectures for 1905.—Dr. MacCrie of Ayr, in his concluding lecture, under the MacFie of Aird Trust, gave expression to the opinion that in his judgment there is a clear call for a new and simpler creed, and Dr. MacCrie looks to a twentieth century Assembly of a National United Church of Scotland to formulate such a creed. Creed-making is a serious undertaking, and if the testimony of such men as the late Dr. Mitchell of St. Andrews, and Dr. Warfield of Princeton counts for anything, we have not the men to put together formularies of the Church's faith. The day of the great systematic theologians and students deeply versed in the ecclesiastical controversies is gone—at least so far as Scotland is at present concerned—and one cannot help wondering what would be the opinion of the great Dr. MacCrie of this "devout imagination" of his descendant.

Lord Shand's Judgment.—Paragraphs have appeared in the press announcing the probability of Lord Shand's judgment in the famous Church Case being published. Mr. Gulland, M.P., has taken active steps with a view to have his Lordship's opinion made public. It is generally supposed that the judgment was favourable to the U.F. Church, and that had Lord Shand lived the judgment of the Court of Session would have been upheld. But even at this late date the U.F's., in their unctuous rectitude, are under the impression that if Lord Shand's judgment is favourable to them that it would be a great moral victory. One is amused to read these outpourings of still unchastened hearts on the great might-have-beens of ecclesiastical history.

A Modern Fad—The Individual Communion Cup.—We have been recently reminded of this modern fad by receiving a price list from a London firm. Here is a sentence from one of these advertisements:—"Why use the insanitary common cup at the Lord's Table, which common courtesy would forbid at your own?" Perhaps it would be waste of words to tell these business gentlemen that the Lord's Table is not on the same level as the table used in our homes. The individual cup is a small glass filled with a sip of wine, and instead of the time-honoured and we believe the Scriptural practice of the cup being passed round, each communicant receives one of these small glasses. We are pleased to observe that the Rev. Thos. Burns, in his recently published "Benefice Lecturers," strongly condemns the practice. Here is his advice to the young ministers of the Church of Scotland:—"And let me also warn you regarding another and shocking innovation which should be strenuously opposed, viz., the introduction of the individual communion cup. The Holy Communion, as our Lord instituted it and as His Church for near 2,000 years has observed it, strongly inculcates the sense of unity, fellowship, brotherhood; the individual cup, on the other hand, suggests and intensifies, at the very moment of communion, some objections to such fellowship.—'Stand back; for I, if not holier, am cleaner or healthier than thou.'"

The Magazine.

Note to Subscribers.—We desire to call attention to the fact that April was the close of the *Magazine* year, and respectfully urge that all who are due for the past year should also endeavour to prepay for the year now begun. Those, for example, due 2/6, should make an effort to send 5/, which will save them some expense ultimately, and will help also the interests of the *Magazine*. All subscriptions to be sent to Rev. J. S. Sinclair, 248 Kenmure Street, Pollokshields, Glasgow.

Donations to Magazine Funds.—Some friends have very kindly sent donations to the *Magazine*, which we acknowledge with cordial thanks:—J. Livingstone, Stockton-on-Tees, 5/; D. Forbes, South Clunes, Beauly, 2/; K. M'Iver, Stockton-on-Tees, 5/; A. Graham, Greenhill, Achiltibuie, 2/6.

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