



THE Free Presbyterian Magazine

AND MONTHLY RECORD.

(Issued by a Committee of the Free Presbyterian Synod.)

*"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may
be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. lx. 4.*

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THE

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And MONTHLY RECORD.

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“Redeeming the Time.”

EPHES. v. 16.

WE are once again reminded, at this season of the year, that time is a privilege which we shall not always enjoy. Our years are fleeting away, one after another, into eternity, and it were well for us to consider what improvement we are making of them. Are we seeking to employ them for the glory of God, or for purely carnal and selfish ends? The Apostle Paul, in the opening part of the Epistle to the Ephesians, unfolds in a rich and impressive manner the truth that salvation is of the free and sovereign grace of God, in and through Jesus Christ. In the concluding chapters he makes it equally plain that if salvation is of grace, it is salvation unto holiness. He exhorts the faithful to be “followers of God, as dear children,” to avoid “all uncleanness or covetousness,” to walk as children of light, and to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” Still more, he adds: “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Sin is folly; holiness is wisdom. It is theirs to seek the redemption of their time from those base and foolish uses to which the children of disobedience put it, and to employ it for the highest of all ends—the glory of God and His Christ.

1. Let us notice, first, the lamentable misuse of time by men in general. God made man upright at the beginning, and bestowed upon him many gifts that he might employ them to the glory of his Maker. One of these gifts was time—a period of existence in the world. But no sooner did man become a transgressor than he misused this as well as his other privileges. He began to spend his time in vanity, to the dishonour of God and the destruction of his soul. Thus it is that the very time of men, as fallen sinners, has come under the blight of God’s just displeasure. “All our days,” says the Psalmist, “are passed away in thy wrath” (Psalm xc. 9). Still more lamentable and dreadful is this in view of the privileges of a revealed Gospel. God sent

His Word of mercy and truth during the Old Dispensation mainly among the Jewish people. Now He sends the same Word in a fuller and richer revelation to the very ends of the earth. He commands all men everywhere to repent and to believe the Gospel. The glad tidings of a finished redemption by the Son of God are now proclaimed to every creature under heaven for the obedience of faith. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation" (Mark i. 15, Acts xvii. 30, Rom. x. 16, 2 Cor. vi. 2).

And yet multitudes disregard this precious and all important message as an idle tale, and spend their time in fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the carnal mind, little considering that the destiny of the soul for weal or woe to an endless eternity, hangs instrumentally upon the use or abuse of time and its privileges. It is also suggested in the words of the Apostle that the people of God themselves are in danger of yielding to the suggestions of the devil and a corrupt nature, and of not employing their time like wise men but foolish. Such admonitions would never have been given if they were not required.

2. Observe, secondly, the call to the work of "*redeeming the time.*"

The children of God are not exhorted here to redeem the time in any sense of meritorious obedience, as if their right use of it purchased God's favour and blessing. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one meritorious Redeemer who, by His obedience and blood, has secured all the blessings of time and eternity for His people. Still, the "*redeeming*" spoken of has an important connection with this redemption. It belongs to the region of redemption applied, which is the grand outcome of redemption purchased. "*Redeeming (or buying up) the time*" is a branch of that sanctification which Christ is made unto His believing people. None, therefore, can redeem the time in the sense of the Apostle, except those who have first believed on the Lord Jesus as their personal Redeemer, and have experienced something of the efficacy of His blood in their guilty consciences and hearts. "*Repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ*" are the first steps in the important work of redeeming the time.

The children of God are to redeem the time by devoting it to those purposes for which it has been given them by the Redeemer. He came to "*redeem them from all iniquity,*" and they are therefore, in the strength of grace, to depart from iniquity in all its branches. They are called upon to eschew every form of evil or sin. Let the standard of their obedience be the whole preceptive will of God, as given in His Word. Still more, they are to redeem the time not merely by eschewing evil, but by following after that which is good with their whole heart and soul. Their time is to be devoted to the exercise of thoughts and words and works in the service of Christ. They are to redeem the time by seeking to have it filled with Christ, their glorious Redeemer, who is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. Their thoughts

must meditate much upon Him ; their words must be in harmony with His will and show forth His praise ; and their actions must be employed for the advancement of His name and kingdom. And they must look to and depend upon Him as the source of all grace for the accomplishment of these things, if they are to redeem their time effectually to the praise and glory of God. Let them set Christ before them in their daily avocations as well as in all religious services. "Without me," He saith, "ye can do nothing." He is omnipotent, and so Paul was enabled to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." This was written for the encouragement of the weakest and poorest souls to the end of time, whose desire is towards the Lord and the remembrance of His name.

3. A special reason is given to enforce the exhortation : "because the days are evil."

The days in which the Apostle wrote were "evil," in the sense that much persecution was abroad. The early Christians were exposed to cruel opposition from a "world lying in wickedness." They were in danger of losing their lives at the hands of their enemies. Their foes were also on the watch for their halting, and if they were guilty of indulging in any manifest sin, their unfriendly observers would take occasion to blaspheme the name of Christ on that account. Is there not a lesson here for the professing Christian to-day? Persecution of an open and violent nature is not common, but it exists in secret forms. There is great need for the graces of watchfulness and holiness. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

The days were also "evil" in the sense that iniquity abounded on every hand. Jews and Gentiles were setting at nought the commandments of God. The Psalmist in his day was so minded that the more men made void the divine law, the more he loved the Lord's commandments above gold. Something of this spirit should obtain among the children of God in our own time. The more wicked men are devoting their days and years to the service of sin and Satan, the more the believer should endeavour to redeem his time to holy purposes—to the service of his Divine Redeemer. "This people have I formed for myself ; they shall show forth my praise."

What must be said to you who are still in your sins? Your time and all your works, even the very best, are unredeemed from sin and the curse. All your labour is in the fire, and will come to nought. Never will you be able to redeem one moment to the real glory of God until you flee for refuge, as guilty sinners, to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the Gospel. You must, by grace, begin with faith in the once-crucified, but now risen and ascended Redeemer, if you are to spend one moment of your time in a way that shall prove profitable for eternity. May the Lord in His infinite mercy incline many thus to seek and follow Him during the year upon which we are about to enter !

A Sermon.

BY THE REV. JAMES S. SINCLAIR, JOHN KNOX'S, GLASGOW.

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"Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

2 TIM. ii. 3.  
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THE Apostle Paul in his Epistles to Timothy, whom he addresses as his dearly beloved son in the faith, gives him many directions and counsels as to how he was to act in his capacity as a minister of the Gospel and as a servant of Jesus Christ. He does not lead Timothy to expect that he will have a smooth time of it in his "work of faith and labour of love." He gives him clearly to understand that he has a conflict before him in the service of the Gospel—a conflict with lusts in his own heart, and with erroneous men and evil workers outside. "Fight," says the Apostle, "the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

The words of our text may have a special message to ministers of the Gospel and other public servants of Christ, who would be faithful to the trust committed to their charge. They are exhorted to be soldiers in the discharge of their duty—waging war against all manner of evil—and in this honourable work, to be "good" soldiers, enduring submissively all manner of hardness for the sake of Christ. The text, however, is capable of general application to all who are called out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel. Every truly gracious soul has entered upon a spiritual warfare, and it is the duty of all such to seek grace to behave as good soldiers, and to endure, with patience, hardness in the conflict. We shall, therefore, meditate for a little upon the text, in dependence upon the Spirit of truth, as a word of instruction and exhortation to all the children of God. It may be useful, therefore, to observe:

I.—The Commander that is brought before us, namely, Jesus Christ;

II.—What it is that constitutes any sinner a "soldier of Jesus Christ"?

III.—Some of the features or marks of a "good soldier" in this service; and

IV.—The exhortation to "endure hardness."

I.—Let us notice, then, in the first place, Christ as the Divine Commander. It is plain that this office stands related to the kingly authority of Christ. Among men, the king of a country is the supreme head of the army that belongs to it, and though he should not act himself in this capacity, as usually happens, still, the chief officer is the king's direct representative. In the person of

Christ the essential authority and the delegated authority of the King of heaven are both wonderfully combined.

It is evident that Christ possesses an essential authority as the co-equal of the Father and the Holy Ghost in the ever-blessed God-head. He is the King eternal, immortal and invisible, and in His essential deity, is the Commander of all creatures and things, animate and inanimate. He is "Lord of all." But it is not in relation to His absolute authority and power as the eternal Son that he is brought before us in the text, though all that He essentially is in His own person, is certainly included.

The Lord Jesus stands before us here as Commander in His mediatorial capacity, and as the mediator between God and men, under the covenant of grace, He sustains the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. The Father has appointed him King of Zion and King of Nations (Psalm ii.). In this office he is the Captain of the Lord's hosts. "Behold," says the Father, "I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people" (Isaiah lv. 4). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, He is described as the Captain of salvation, who was made "perfect through sufferings." There is a battle to be fought with the powers of darkness, and the mediatorial King must lead forth judgment unto victory.

Here we go on to notice that this glorious Commander, who is set before us in the Gospel, is not one who has a mere theoretical acquaintance with the art of spiritual warfare, but one who has had a deep experimental knowledge of it. He came into the world in the fulness of the time, and entered into the greatest of all conflicts that have ever been waged with sin, Satan, and evil men. His whole life on earth was a life of warfare. At special seasons, the battle was very hot. Witness his severe temptation by the devil in the wilderness, and the many attacks made upon His character, claims and work by the Scribes and Pharisees, during the years of His public ministry. Towards the end of these years, the prince of darkness marshalled all his forces against the Prince of life, and ultimately secured His condemnation to death at the hands of Herod and Pilate. He was led away to Calvary and was crucified between two thieves upon a cross. He cried, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. To the eye of natural sense, He appeared a defeated Messiah, but He was by no means so in reality. In all this suffering, He was doing the will of the Father for the accomplishment of the redemption of His people. He bore their sins by imputation in His own body on the tree, and by His obedience unto death, spoiled principalities and powers, and "made a show of them openly, triumphing over them" in His cross. His victory was made clearly manifest before men, and angels, and devils on the morning of the resurrection, when He arose in the evident character of a Conqueror over sin, death, and hell. This victory of His is the ground and pledge of every victory that His ransomed ones shall obtain in their own

personal conflicts with the forces of darkness during their journey through the world. "They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony." It is therefore not merely a Captain of experience, but of victory—one who, in the words of a godly minister of the past, "has never lost and will never lose a battle"—whom sinners are invited and encouraged to trust in and enlist under, by the Gospel. This leads us to consider briefly:—

II.—What it is that constitutes any sinner "a soldier of Jesus Christ."

1. It is very clear, my friends, from the general teaching of the Scriptures, that none of our fallen race are soldiers of Jesus Christ by nature. All sinned and rebelled against God in the first Adam, and all are by nature under the banner of another captain than Christ, that of "the god of this world," the Prince of darkness. As unconverted sinners, we are loyal soldiers in the devil's army—fighting against Christ, and not for Him. May the Spirit of God bring this home with power to many who are still on the broad way that leadeth to destruction! Let us be assured that, if we do not awake to feel and realise in our consciences and hearts that we are serving sin and Satan by nature as lost sinners, we shall never seek in reality to enlist under Christ's banner. Many, nowadays, seem to imagine that they were born lovers and servants of Christ—persons who give no real evidence of having ever been "born from above." Natural men may be servants of a false Christ—a Christ of their own devising—but they are not so of the true Christ of God. "Ye are of your father the devil, and his works ye will do."

2. Who, then, are they that are made soldiers of Jesus Christ? They are such as are described in the 110th Psalm as a people made willing in the day of Christ's power. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning."

(1) Those who become Christ's soldiers are made willing to part with the world, the flesh and the devil. They have been awakened by the light and power of the Holy Ghost, to see that they are in the hands of these enemies and that, unless they are delivered from them, they shall carry them away to eternal destruction. After a conflict, they are made willing to be done with these old masters for ever—if by any means they shall escape "the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched."

(2) They are made willing to part company with everything good or bad that comes into competition with Christ—their old religion and righteousness as well as their old sins. They have obtained something of the same spirit that Paul received when he said "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him" (Phil. iii. 8).

(3) They are made willing to close with Christ as their King as well as their Prophet and Priest. I do not say that any who ever in reality accept of Christ as their Prophet and Priest refuse Him as their King, for saving faith embraces a whole Christ in His three offices. But some *appear* to make choice of Him as their Prophet and Priest who do not give evidence that they embrace him as a King, and who therefore call in question the reality of their faith altogether. Some profess to believe the word of Christ in the Gospel, and to value Him as Priest for the pardon of their sins, who do not relinquish the service of sin. They still continue obeying the god of this world, and imagine that they can be saved by Christ at the same time. What a fatal mistake and delusion! Where there is vital union by saving faith to the Son of God, the sinner is made willing to part with all his darling lusts, and to have Christ as King in his affections. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). And so, where a sinner has truly exercised faith on the name of the Son of God, he has, by divine grace, been saved from the dominion of his sins, and has engaged to obey and follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Christ now reigns upon the throne of his heart. He hates his former evil ways, and it is his most earnest desire that the old man who is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts, should not only be cast down but cast out for ever.

(4) They are made willing to take the Word of Christ as a light to their feet and a lamp to their path, and as a sword—the sword of the Spirit—to overcome their spiritual foes. Christ's word is the supreme court of appeal with them—not the word of fallen men—as to every question of difficulty. "What saith the Lord?" "To the law and to the testimony."

3. I may notice here *three fields* on which the soldier of Jesus Christ is called to carry on the spiritual warfare.

(1) The first is the field of the Soul. Unless a sinner begins and carries on, by the grace of God, the conflict with sin in his own heart, he shall never be a true soldier of Jesus Christ. It is on the field of his own soul that the battle with every form of evil must first be fought and won. And they who know nothing of soul conflict with corruption and error, are not really out of the devil's service, however fair their profession may be. Certainly it is better that people should have an outward conformity in opinion and practice to the statute book of the kingdom than that they should be wrong in every way. But let none be satisfied with outward conformity, for if the adversary exert all his might, they will be in great danger, unless kept by the restraining power of God, of making a complete surrender to Satan, to their everlasting destruction.

(2) The field of the World. The Captain of salvation in His intercessory prayer said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from

the evil" (John xvii. 15). The soldiers of Christ are in the world, but not of it. It is theirs to wage war with the sinful habits, practices, and maxims of the world. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." True, Jesus recommends them to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," but this is evidently not in any way that will compromise the commandments of God, and bring dishonour on the name of Christ. "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps (1 Peter ii. 21). And let everyone study this example so as to follow it in thought, speech, and behaviour. Thus only we shall war a good warfare, and obtain the crown at last.

(3) The field of the visible Church. It is clear from these Epistles that Paul expected Timothy to have much conflict in this field. Men of erroneous views about the things of God's kingdom had already risen in the Church, and had departed seriously from the faith, and the Apostle, the inspired ambassador of Christ, exhorts Timothy as follows: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which wert before on thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare: holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." How clear it is from these words that it is the duty of the faithful soldier of Christ, whether in pulpit or in pew, to bear testimony against error in Christian doctrine! And how mistaken they are, surely blinded with a white mist from hell, who decry all controversy in the visible Church! They generally say that controversy is incompatible with the spirit of the love of Christ. Were Paul and Timothy not animated by the love of Christ? And what of the most eminent saints and witnesses in subsequent ages? Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Samuel Rutherford, Donald Cargill, Owen, Goodwin, and many more. Were these defenders of the faith ignorant of the love of Christ? If they were ignorant of it, we may well wonder who has known anything about it.

Let no one think that I imply that every person who enters into controversy on the sound side of a question is necessarily animated by the love of Christ—men may take this up in a natural way as well as other things—but it surely tells nothing against public witnesses but rather in their favour, when they add to their other evidences of being new creatures in Christ, zeal for God's truth in their day and generation. Surely, on the other hand, it tells very seriously against high-flowing professors of religion who make a great cry about the love of Christ and yet will surrender the word of Christ, the very life-blood of the Church, to the presumptuous demands of unbelief. May we get the spirit of the Divine Leader and Commander in all its completeness, who said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and "I lay down my life for the sheep."

III.—We now proceed to observe some of the features or marks of “a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”

(1) One of the first requirements of a good soldier in an earthly army is *faith* in his leader. If a man is destitute of this, all his other powers are paralysed. Still more is faith of divine operation necessary in relation to Christ, the heavenly commander. Success entirely depends upon it. “Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” And the soul must be kept looking to and trusting in Christ as its all and in all, who will prove a good soldier in the spiritual conflict.

(2) A second feature of a good soldier is *strength*. A weak man physically is not capable of much in the ordinary army. The soldier of Christ requires much strength. The Apostle exhorts Timothy: “Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.” The common soldier generally looks to himself as the seat of his strength. But it must not be so with the “good soldier of Jesus Christ.” He must be sensible of his own weakness and inability, and look to his Divine Captain for the supply of all his spiritual strength. The Apostle says elsewhere, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” The strength of omnipotence is available to the soul in Christ. But the moment the spiritual soldier becomes self-confident and self-sufficient he loses all his spiritual vigour: he ceases to be “a good soldier.”

(3) Another mark of a good soldier is *courage*. A timid or cowardly man will never make an efficient soldier. The children of God who desire to be faithful to Christ must seek to be “strong and of a good courage.” Unbelieving fears suck holy boldness out of the followers of the Redeemer. “The fear of man bringeth a snare.” The Captain Himself feared not the face of man or devil, and every poor soul is directed to look to Him for the courage needed to overcome his spiritual enemies. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Many weak creatures in days gone by obtained much gracious boldness to stand fast in the faith, in spite of the most dreadful temptations to the contrary. They were lifted above all fear, and made willing to face the scaffold and the stake and lay down their lives for the sake of Christ. The holy courage of the martyrs came by “looking unto Jesus”—a way that still stands open even to us.

(4) Still another feature of the good soldier is *wisdom*. An unskilful or foolish man, though well equipped with weapons, will not prove a satisfactory warrior. He will come short when he might be victor. Prudence as well as other virtues is needed in fighting. So it is in the Christian warfare. The inspired book of Proverbs dwells with great force and usefulness on the graces of wisdom and prudence. The Apostle Paul was a man of great courage and wisdom combined, and in this very chapter gives several counsels of Christian wisdom. He says to Timothy, “Flee youthful lusts.” Sometimes soldiers flee before their enemies at the dictates of prudence, not with a view to yield but

with a view to get a better vantage-ground, from which they may obtain the victory. So with the Christian. He must, on occasion, flee from the places and circumstances of temptation, to his private place, that he may thence get the victory over his foes. Again, "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Christian wisdom calls for the exercise of gentleness, patience, and meekness in carrying on the good warfare.

(5) A fifth feature of the good soldier is *self-sacrifice*. A soldier must be willing to sacrifice everything except conscience for the sake of the cause which he serves. And the good soldier of Christ must, like Paul, be willing to suffer the loss of all things—yea, of life itself, if required—in the service of the Gospel. Self must be mortified at every step, and Christ exalted. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

(6) A last feature I shall mention is *final perseverance*. There is no discharge in this heavenly warfare—no turning back. The good soldier of Jesus Christ will fight the good fight of faith to the very end; he is invincible. There is to be no surrender to the devil or his suggestions. There *may* be, and there *will* be temporary shortcomings and falls. But the cry of the soul under these is: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." He shall get on his feet again, and use greater care and watchfulness in the future. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

IV.—Let us now notice the exhortation to "endure hardness."

1. Here we shall observe first, certain *forms of "hardness,"* which the good soldier is called to endure. Some of them have been alluded to in passing already.

(1) He has to endure the hardness of *common affliction*. He is not exempted from the afflictions that are common to the world at large—afflictions in his body, family, or circumstances. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous" (Ps. xxxiv. 19).

(2) He has to suffer the hardness of *human opposition*. The Apostle says to Timothy further on in this Epistle: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (chap. iii. 12). Apart from public controversy, everyone who is faithful to Christ and His word, in his daily avocation, will meet with more or less opposition from the carnal, and it may be, the religious world. Persecution does not assume the same form in every age. There are many subtle forms of it in the present day. If a man, for example, will maintain a steadfast regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath, he will find himself exposed to contempt and derision, and may have to suffer the loss of employment on account of his steadfastness. What is this but persecution for the truth? If a man is scrupulously honest in business, he may

suffer in the same way. Numerous illustrations might be given of this point, but we must proceed.

(3) The good soldier is exposed to the hardness of *Satan's temptations*. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter v. 8). He seeks to devour the Christian in a vast variety of ways, and assaults him with many temptations. He knows the good soldier's weak point or besetting sin—for the most eminent of God's people have these to more or less extent—and he will do his utmost to cast in his fiery darts there. The soul, however, must seek to be prepared for these assaults of the adversary, and not to be too much discouraged by such difficulties in the way.

(4) The good soldier is called to endure what I shall describe as *spiritual privations*. Temporal privations are well known among the armies of the world, especially when engaged on the field of battle in a long and difficult conflict. It is the lot of the soldiers then to suffer the want of many comforts that they enjoy at other times. They must frequently fight on very short rations, and expose themselves to excessive cold and heat. The Lord, in His holy and wise providence, sometimes tries His people in a similar manner upon the field of spiritual conflict. Perhaps when they set out on their Christian course they enjoyed great spiritual enlargements of soul, and were fed abundantly with the finest of the wheat. They never seemed to lack any spiritual comfort they desired. "The bread and water of life" were plentifully supplied to them by the Spirit of all grace. Christ in the gospel was brought very near to their souls in all His rich fulness, and they were enabled to eat and drink their fill of Zion's provision at the gospel and communion tables. But this did not always last. God, in His mysterious providence, withdraws his comfortable presence from their souls, perhaps as a chastisement for an unsteadfast heart, and they are sent out to fight their spiritual enemies, with a few crumbs, if anything, in their wallet. The warm beams of the Sun of Righteousness are denied, and they feel they are walking in an atmosphere of intense spiritual cold. Job knew much of this when he bewailed his desolate condition and cried, "O that I knew where I might find Him that I might come even to His seat!" And if it is not the cold of desertion that they exactly feel, it may be that to which I have already referred—the heat of fiery temptation. Both indeed may be felt together at the same time. Such are some of the spiritual privations that Christ's soldiers are called to experience at certain times in their history. "I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying" (Psalm lxx. 5).

2. Let us pass on to observe, secondly, *the nature of the endurance* which Christ's soldier is called to exercise. It is manifestly the endurance of filial submission and patience—not a

merely compulsory resignation with rebellion at the heart of it. This principle of filial submission is in the soul of every person in whom there is a real spark of divine life, though they also are deeply conscious of the workings of rebellion in the corrupt heart. But where this life is, there is regeneration; and where regeneration is, there is a nature in agreement with the will of God.

(1) The good soldier is to seek grace to realise that "the hardness" he suffers is the appointment of Him who is holy, just, good—who "doeth all things well," however trying His dispensations may sometimes be to flesh and blood.

(2) He is to exercise submission and patience in the remembrance of his own sin and unworthiness. If God had dealt with him in accordance with His justice alone, He would have sent him to hell long ago. And his daily shortcomings and provocations are still deserving of God's displeasure and curse. On the other hand, many mercies are mingled with all the hardness he has to suffer. He must seek, therefore, to feel and say with Jeremiah, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

(3) He is to endure hardness in the spirit of one who also remembers that the Lord doth not ordain affliction, because He takes pleasure in the sufferings of His people, but for wise and good ends, for their soul's good and His own glory. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." He will make sin exceeding sinful, holiness desirable, and Christ precious in the eyes of the good soldier. The Lord will also make it plain before men, angels, and devils, that His servants will serve Him for His own sake, and not merely for the benefits they receive from Him. Though He slay them with trials and sufferings, yet they will endeavour to trust Him and follow Him to the end. The excellency of God's grace and power and faithfulness, yea, of all His attributes, is to be seen in upholding His servants in the fire of tribulation and in enabling them to be "more than conquerors" through the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

3. The exhortation itself. "Thou therefore endure hardness." Paul is the speaker, but he is the spokesman of the Lord of hosts, and the Most High here exhorts, encourages, and commands His people to endure in the spirit of the gospel all the hardness that falls to them in His service. Thus He sets before them the standard of their Christian obligation, and makes it sinful for them to kick against "the cross" and to endeavour in an unlawful way to get rid of it.

Some poor struggling soul may cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Your sufficiency is of God, who is able to make all grace abound toward you for the discharge of every duty. You have no might whatsoever to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ or to endure hardness in His cause; but the Father has placed an infinite fulness of strength in the Captain of salvation, who says to

you, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

In conclusion, let each one of us examine himself and herself on this great matter. Are we soldiers of Jesus Christ or not? If we are not, then we are soldiers in Satan's army, and if we continue so to the end we shall have Satan's reward, "the outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth for ever." Let us seek to lay this dreadful prospect to heart in time. Now, Christ is enlisting soldiers under His heavenly banner. He is willing to receive you, however, unworthy. And happy are they who by grace are made willing to have Him as their Saviour, Lord and Captain. He shall lead them on to eternal victory. Their everlasting song will be: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

"The Samaritan Pentateuch and Modern Criticism."*—A Review.

THIS scholarly production, which is appropriately dedicated to "The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth," is in one respect a book for the many; in another respect it is a book for the few. The general aim of the book is to vindicate the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. In that respect the production is one in which all believers will feel an interest. At the same time it holds true that the process of argumentation by which this vindication is gone about can be fully appreciated only by the few. Mr. Munro builds his argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch on two main pedestals, one of these being of the nature of certain conclusions respecting the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the other being of the nature of facts arising out of the higher comparative philology.

It is matter of general knowledge that until the discovery of printing in the fifteenth century the Bible existed only in manuscript—the New Testament (I speak of the primary sources) in Greek, and the Old Testament in Hebrew. Speaking of the Pentateuch only, we may say that before the age of printing the Pentateuch (that is, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) existed not only in several hundred Hebrew manuscripts, but also in a goodly number—Kennicott collated sixteen—of what are called Hebrew-Samaritan manuscripts. These so-called Hebrew-Samaritan manuscripts are to all intents and

* *The Samaritan Pentateuch and Modern Criticism.* By J. Iverach Munro, M.A., United Free Church Minister, Canisbay. With an Introduction by the Rev. Professor James Orr, D.D. London: James Nisbet & Co., Ltd. Small 8vo, xxviii. and 106 pp.

purposes Hebrew manuscripts, save that they are written in characters differing from the script made use of in the Hebrew manuscripts, and that the underlying text, although agreeing in the main with the Hebrew, contains a large number of minor differences in detail.

Mr. Munro's first main argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is based on his view of the source of this Hebrew-Samaritan text. His view, in brief, is that the text of the Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch is primarily the text of the Pentateuch current among the ten tribes of Israel up to the time of their transportation to Assyria, say about 730 B.C., and that the main differences between this text as we now have it in the Samaritan manuscripts, and that found in our Hebrew manuscripts, arose in the way now to be stated. At what time the king of Assyria deported the ten tribes to Assyria (see 2 Kings xvii.) he replaced those exiled Israelites by idolaters from without Israel, from Babylon, that is, and from Cuthah, and from Arva, and from Sephervaim. In the providence of God, some of these idolaters were slain by lions, and they concluded that the reason of this visitation was that they did not know the manner of the God of Israel. In their extremity they appealed to the king of Assyria, by whom an Israelitish priest, one of the exiles, was sent to Samaria to instruct those heathen in the ways of the God of Israel. It is natural to suppose that this instruction should be based upon the Law, and Mr. Munro's contention is that all the differences which are found actually to exist, as between the Hebrew text and the Hebrew-Samaritan text, find their most natural explanation in the supposition that those to whose assistance the Israelitish priest was sent in Samaria required that instructions should be given them in the simplest possible form, and that with a view to this, the Israelitish possessors of the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch in Assyria were compelled, under the supervision of Assyrian censors, to whom Hebrew was an intelligible language (see 2 Kings xviii. 27), to write out a copy of the Pentateuch in which archaic forms were dispensed with, ellipses were filled up, and references to instructions on cognate subjects made easy. That natural supposition, Mr. Munro maintains, accounts for almost all the differences between the Hebrew and the Hebrew-Samaritan text. In proof of this position Mr. Munro finds it necessary at the outset to correct Gesenius's depreciation of the Samaritan Pentateuch—a depreciation which for nearly a century has had the effect of causing scholars of almost all shades of opinion to put little value on the Samaritan Pentateuch, either as a witness to the authenticity of the Mosaic records or to the genuineness of the common Hebrew text. Having thus cleared the ground, Mr. Munro shows that the grammatical construction of the alterations introduced by the exiled Israelitish scribes, working under the censorship of Assyrian scholars, bears the water-mark of the age of Hezekiah. A comparison between the language of these

emendations and, say, the inscription found in 1880 on the walls of the tunnel which Hezekiah's men digged through Mount Zion in the eighth century B.C., or, say, those portions of Second Kings which almost every one allows to belong to the age of Hezekiah, establishes the truth of this contention. The characters too in which the Hebrew-Samaritan manuscripts are written are almost identical with those of the inscription found in Hezekiah's tunnel.

But there is existent not only a Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch; there is also a Samaritan paraphrase of the said Pentateuch. The Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch now being referred to is not Samaritan at all, although it is written in Samaritan characters. The paraphrase is Samaritan. Mr. Munro contends that not only is the Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch not later than Hezekiah, but that the paraphrase is almost as old. The Samaritan dialect is found to be a precipitate, or perhaps better, a conglomerate of Aramaic, Hebrew, and Assyrio-Aramaic. It is such a language as would arise among the Samaritans of the age of Hezekiah, when we may well suppose that in the land of Samaria the poorest of the Hebrew people (speaking Hebrew), Syrians (speaking Aramaic), Babylonians (speaking Assyrio-Aramaic), commingled. It was only about the period of Hezekiah that this dialect could have come into being. Besides, if the language of this complex people had been long spoken before being put to sacred use in this paraphrase, the resultant would have been something more unified than this conglomerate. The fact, however, that it was early put to a sacred use, helped to stereotype it in this conglomerate form.

Other proofs of the correctness of the date given when the Samaritan dialect became stereotyped are (1) that differently to the Septuagint (say 250 B.C.)—differently to the Jewish Targums also—the name Jehovah is given in the Samaritan version just as in the Hebrew originals. This is regarded as a sure sign of ancientness. Nor does the Samaritan text or paraphrase attempt to improve on the Hebrew Scriptures in those places where God's action immediately terminates on a creature, as do the Jewish Targums, by interpolating such expressions as "by the word of," or "by his word." All this evidence points to the conclusion that the Samaritan paraphrase ought to be dated as only a little later than Hezekiah, and if the paraphrase is thus early, *a fortiori*, that of which it is a paraphrase, must be still earlier. That position once secured, the contention of the destructive Higher Critics is once and for all overthrown. For according to them, the oldest portion of the Pentateuch, as we now have it, is Deuteronomy, and Deuteronomy itself is by them dated within the reign of Hezekiah's grandson, Josiah. The Samaritan text of the Pentateuch, argues Mr. Munro with great cogency—and he has been at the trouble of examining the sources for himself—is about a century older than Josiah.

That by way of defence. In an aggressive sense Mr. Munro goes on to show that no period between Moses and Hezekiah can

be suggested as one in which the production of Deuteronomy singly, or of the Pentateuch as a whole, can with any likelihood be placed. It could not have been written in the age between Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and Hezekiah; for in that case how could the supposed Jewish fabricator have given the place of honour to Shechem in the north (see Deut. xxvii. 4)? Neither could it have been written in the age of Solomon or of David, seeing that, whilst Deuteronomy makes so much of one central place of worship, there is not a word in the whole book about Jerusalem nor yet about Mount Zion. In short, no period save the Mosaic, nor any author save Moses, can have the least claim.

The other main pedestal on which Mr. Munro builds belongs, as we have said, to the Higher Comparative Philology. Mr. Munro, who has been specialising in Semitic for the past twenty years, is convinced that not only does the Hebrew of the Pentateuch rule the Hebrew of the rest of the Old Testament, but that in the Hebrew of the Pentateuch we have Semitic, in some remarkable respects, of the most ancient type extant. Not only so, but the existence of the personal pronoun, *hw*, epicene in the Pentateuch alone, places us here in sight almost of the time when the sons of Shem and the sons of Japheth held, in respect of language, much more in common than they did, say, at the date of the exile, so hoary is the antiquity. This is a part of the argument, however, so technical that it is almost impossible to state it popularly, and moreover, Mr. Munro has as yet given us but the first instalment of his case under this head, and on both these accounts we refrain from dealing further with the matter here and now. What significance this part of the argument has for Mr. Munro may be shown by a brief quotation. On page 98 he writes, "Evidence of the kind afforded by this pronoun thus embedded in the Pentateuch, is better (to attest, that is, the authenticity of the Pentateuch) than if Moses had signed every page of the original Pentateuch."

But enough has been said in order to indicate the great value and significance of the publication under review. We congratulate Mr. Munro on the appearance of this, his—so far as known to us—first contribution to Biblical science, and heartily recommend the production to theological students everywhere. The price is only 3/6.

J. R. M.

Rochester and Isaiah liii.—It is well known that this extraordinary man was, for many years of his life, an avowed infidel. One of his biographers has described him as "a great wit, a great sinner, and a great penitent." Even this man was converted by the Holy Spirit in the use of His Word. Reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, he was convinced of the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures, the Deity of the Messiah, and the value of His atonement as a rock on which sinners may build their hopes of salvation. On that atonement he rested, and died in the humble expectation of pardoning mercy and heavenly happiness.

A Sermon.

BY THE LATE REV. CHARLES C. MACKINTOSH, D.D.,
OF TAIN AND DUNOON.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”—2 COR. viii. 9.

(Concluded from page 307.)

IV.—“That ye through his poverty might be rich.”

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it passeth knowledge in its very existence, so it contemplated and craved for its objects a riches corresponding with its own immensity; and this riches His glorious, meritorious poverty procured for them. This grace sought their deliverance from wrath, and His poverty procured it—procured it so truly and so fully that the wrath can never touch them; that neither heaven nor hell can lay anything to their charge; that the law can never sue them for payment, nor justice for punishment. To estimate this riches it were necessary to feel the horrors of this wrath, and to feel it through eternity—which the God of all grace grant that we may not feel. To this unutterable woe they were exposed, and from this bottomless pit His grace rescued them. This grace sought their deliverance from sin, and His poverty procured it so truly that the reign of the tyrant is destroyed here, and its very being in the soul extinguished at death, and extinguished for ever. With this hideous, hellish, and degrading leprosy they were covered, to the utter loss of all dignity, all glory, all blessedness. His poverty procured their deliverance from it—a deliverance begun here and perfected hereafter—so that they shall be faultless, without spot and blemish. This grace sought their deliverance from their outcast and apostate condition, as banished from the divine presence and estranged from the divine fellowship, and His poverty procured it. He brings them nigh by His blood, obtains for them a reception at the hands of the divine majesty corresponding with His own preciousness, procures for them and calls them to the dignity of His joint-heirs, and obtains for them the shining forth in complacency and love of the divine countenance. This grace sought for them a watchful, tender, and gracious guidance through this world, a safe passage through the waters of death; a sure conduct to the gate of heaven, and admission there to His own presence. His grace sought and His poverty procured it. He guides them by His eye through the wilderness of this world; He watches their steps and holds up their goings; He preserves them from falling—from falling away from grace, and from falling into the hand of their spiritual enemies; He administers consolation and strength as they need;

He goes with them through fire and through water; and finally presents them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, that they may behold His glory, that they may be with Him, that they may see His face, that He may lead them unto fountains of living waters, that He may crown them with unfading and everlasting felicity. To estimate this riches, then, it were necessary to know the extreme of misery and the extreme of felicity—the misery of hell and the happiness of heaven.

Let us then—if we would contemplate this grace, and know it as passing knowledge—seek to perceive the uncreated riches of the Son of God; let us pray for a discovery of it; let us next contemplate the pit in which its objects lay—its misery, its guilt, its hideous foulness and pollution; let us then seek to be conducted along the road of Christ's humiliation and poverty; and finally, let us—if we have tasted in any measure of this grace—endeavour to bring together and concentrate the rich blessings it procures for its objects, and let us say that the grace of Christ passeth knowledge.

The practical reflections that arise out of this subject are numerous and important. Let us notice a few of them.

1. How is the work of redemption impressed in all its parts with the footsteps of divinity! Here is God becoming poor for vile sinners, to raise them up from a bottomless depth of misery and guilt. It is this great and most wondrous truth that constitutes the glory of redemption, and that gives its divine excellency to our holy religion.

2. Do we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? In other words, Are we Christians indeed? As the truth that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is the sum and substance of God's revelation, it is the one great truth to be believed in. Do we truly believe it? This is not such a very unimportant question, as many would have it to be. Do we believe it so as to rest in it, casting anchor for an eternity upon it, so as to glory in it, so as to experience its power in our hearts—for it is not the bare speculation that will avail us—so as to have our hearts filled with its wonders, so as to have our aims and our end of existence fixed by it. He deserves not the name of a Christian who does not thus know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose mind has not been filled by it as the noblest of all truths, whose affections have not fixed upon it as the most attractive of all objects, whose soul has not found rest in it, or who would conjoin with it as a ground of dependence any doings, works, duties of his own; in a word, whose mind it has not fixed in contemplation, whose heart it has not claimed and obtained possession of, and whose life is not guided and directed by its holy and sin-overcoming power.

3. How should it enhance, sweeten, and endear the blessings of salvation to poor sinners, that they have been purchased at the expense of Christ's poverty! Did He become poor that we

through His poverty might be rich; did He leave heaven and descend, as it were, into very hell, to snatch you as a brand from the burning and to raise you to heaven; did He endure the full weight of wrath, that you might enjoy the smiles of His Father's countenance and be comforted with everlasting consolation? Oh, then, let the thought endear to you the blessings of His salvation. Think of them, when they are offered to you and when you taste of them, as dearly bought—as bought with Christ's blood. Think of them thus, that you may see an inexpressible preciousness in the least drop of mercy. Think of them thus, that you may be taught to love Him who first loved you.

Infant Baptism.

SHOULD THE INFANTS OF SUCH AS ARE MEMBERS OF THE
VISIBLE CHURCH BE BAPTISED?

THE question of infant baptism has been widely discussed and variously answered, and has divided Christians into Paedobaptists and Antipaedobaptists. The discussion of this subject may be designated by some as unprofitable controversy. Nothing should be done ignorantly, and Paedobaptists should have some intelligent ground for the practice of baptising their infants. In approaching this subject, let it be understood at the outset, that with regard to adult believers, there is no difference of opinion. If they are not baptised in infancy, they are to obey the command of Christ and to be baptised in his name. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

The question then is not about adults, but infants. Should the infants of such as are members of the visible Church be baptised? Our opponents (the Antipaedobaptists) hold that, as there is a connection between faith and baptism, those only who are believers ought to be baptised, and consequently, infants who are incapable of faith are not to be baptised. At the same time, they hold that many, if not all, infants are saved. But the above argument which excludes infants from baptism, because incapable of believing, excludes them also from salvation, and we shall leave our opponents to choose between the two alternatives. Antipaedobaptists call upon us for the production of express precept authorising the baptism of children. Are we not the better entitled to require the production of such precept from them, repealing and setting aside the ancient practice of receiving infants into the visible Church? The covenant made with Abraham was the basis of the Church under the old and new dispensations, and this is of great importance in our argument, because it makes the Church the same under the two dispensations. Now, circumcision was the sign of the blessings, and

seal of the promises of the covenant which was made with Abraham, and by the divine command it was administered to children on the eighth day after their birth. If there were any in the Jewish Church who held the views of the Antipaedobaptists, might they not have said, "Children have not yet attained the use of reason and are therefore disqualified from coming under a moral obligation. How can they obey a law which they do not understand? It is a rite without meaning to them. Let it be reserved for grown-up persons who can understand its designs." Yet the Jewish male children were circumcised on the eighth day, and the persons circumcised came under solemn obligations to conform to the law and ordinances of the Church. For "every man that is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law" (Gal. v. 3). The above argument is what our antagonists practically put forward, that, because infants are incapable of understanding the design of this seal of the covenant, that it is only mockery to administer this sacrament to them. No doubt, in the case of Abraham, faith preceded circumcision, but did this exclude his seed from being circumcised, when they had not yet attained to any understanding? If circumcision then, as a religious rite, and a seal of the covenant made with Abraham, which was the covenant of grace, and the basis of the New Testament Church, was administered to the children of such as were members of the visible Church, and they (their children) became members of the same thereby, by what authority do the Antipaedobaptists debar the children of such as are believers now from the privilege which they formerly enjoyed?

Our opponents make much of this, that we are under a new dispensation. This is not disputed by any, but we deny that the New Testament Church is distinct from the Old. Such is far from being the manner in which the matter is represented either in the Old or the New Testament. To prove this, many passages from the Old and New Testaments might be quoted. Perhaps one passage from each will be sufficient to show the force of this argument.

(1) "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this" (Amos ix. 11, 12). How was all this to be done? We are not left to wander in the wilderness of uncertainty; for the answer to this prediction is clearly explained by one of the inspired writers in Acts xv. 14-17. This was to be done by bringing the Gentiles into the Church of Christ.

(2) "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree; how much more

shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree" (Rom. xi. 23, 24). Were the Old and New Testament Churches different, it is not easy to see with what propriety the Jews, in being brought into the latter, could be said to be grafted in again to their own olive tree from which they had been cut off. The tree is not represented as being cut down, or rooted up—not a new tree planted, but an old one. Some of the branches were cut off, some remained on, others were engrafted; the stock remained the same. Having shown then that the Church is the same in every age, and that infants were received into it under the old dispensation, we have a right to ask those who would now deny them this privilege to show their authority in doing so.

It is no argument to say that the Christian dispensation is more spiritual than the Jewish, for circumcision was a seal of the "righteousness of faith" as much as baptism is. Therefore the latter may be administered with as much propriety to infants as the former.

Antipaedobaptists say that the New Testament is silent on the matter, and that we ought to quote an express precept to baptise infants. What occasion was there to signify children? The only thing that could have rendered an allusion to infants necessary was their exclusion from the privilege which they had hitherto enjoyed. That the Jews who were converted to Christianity had no apprehension of the exclusion of children, is evident from the fact, that there is not any reference made to it by any of them. Is it likely that they should have remained silent had such a change taken place? They remained silent because no such change took place. The Apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, seems to allude to the perpetuity of this law, when he says, "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise was not only to themselves but also to their children, and the latter, consequently, were not to be debarred from their privilege of baptism, the seal of the covenant.

Before closing these arguments, let us consider how Christ and His Apostles treated children.

(1) Christ Himself received children. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark x. 13). The "kingdom of God" is the New Testament Church, including both its state in this world and in that which is to come. If the kingdom of God here may be taken as the Gospel dispensation, does not the expression signify that infants are capable of being members of the Church? At

anyrate, it is not the language of exclusion. On the contrary, it shows that such little children were capable of being subjects of His spiritual kingdom, and would it be a likely thing that Jesus at the same time would cut them off from the eternal sign of connection with the kingdom He was establishing? Surely such teaching is not easily believed.

(2) The practice of the Apostles. The fact that the Apostles baptised households or families cannot be denied. Of this we have several instances. (a) The case of Lydia—"The Lord opened her heart, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household" (Acts xvi. 15). (b) The Philippian jailor—"And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptised, he and all his, straightway" (Acts xvi. 33). (c) The household of Stephanas—"I baptised also the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. i. 16). It might be noticed that the word "house" (*oikos*) means one's family or offspring.

Taking these instances of the households which were baptised, as supported by the use of the word "house," and connected with the ancient custom of circumcision, are we not warranted in holding that the Apostles in baptising families baptised among them infants, unless our Baptist friends can prove the contrary? It has been put forward by our opponents that it cannot be proved that there were infants among these families. Is it not probable, in the highest degree, that among such a vast number of people, made up of families, there were infants? Those, who maintain that there were not, are bound to produce their proof. Till they do so, we shall hold that there were children in the families baptised.

Many more arguments might be adduced to prove that the infants of believing parents ought to be baptised, but those we have brought forward prove that it is a privilege which Baptists have no right or authority to withhold from the children of believers.

N. M.

A Chain of Calamities.—A Christian whom God had prospered in his outward estate, and who lived in ease and plenty on his farm, suffered the world to encroach so much upon his affections, as sensibly to diminish the ardour of his piety. The disease was dangerous, and the Lord adopted severe measures for its cure. First, his wife was removed by death; but he still remained worldly-minded. Then a beloved son; but although the remedy operated favourably, it did not effect a cure. Then his crops failed and his cattle died; still his grasp on the world was not unloosed. Then God touched his person, and brought on him a lingering, fatal disease; the world, however, occupied still too much of his thoughts. His house finally took fire; and as he was carried out of the burning building, he exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I am cured at last." He shortly after died, happy in the anticipation of a heavenly inheritance.—*Cheever's Anecdotes.*

Esther.

CHAP. III.-VIII.

“**D**ESTROY, destroy all Israelites
In borders of my land.”
So reads the proclamation
From Ahasuerus’ hand.

Low wails of deepest sorrowing
Are heard in every home,
And Jacob’s scattered children
Send up a bitter moan.

No law of Medes and Persians
Can altered be at all;
And sure the sentence terrible
On Israel must fall.

Proud Haman, Mordecai
To hang, he did conspire;
And he a lofty gallows built
To further his desire,

Dark clouds are quickly gathering
Around the covenant band;
And sighs and cries are rising up
For the Deliverer’s hand.

God ever rules in heaven and earth,
The Queen was early taught;
And under His protection
Fair Esther fearèd naught.

“I go, and if I perish now,
I perish in the way
Where duty bids me enter in;
My people, for me pray.

“Held forth a sceptre fair I see;
Of hope it speaks to me,
Of coming great deliverance
For Abraham’s family.”

The night is dreary, lone, and dark;
No sleep draws near the King.

“Bring out,” he cries, “the Chronicles,
That I may read therein.

“What’s this? A noble deed, I read,
Performed by a Jew:
My life preserved; no honour done,
And honour great his due.

“What honour shall be done to him?”
And with the King’s delight:
“Come, Haman, speak you out your mind;
It is a counsellor’s right.”

“Him deck in royal robe and crown,”
The traitor did exclaim.
“For me this honour,” Haman thought,
“And I love carnal fame.”

"Make haste, make haste," then said the King,
"And all this honour do
To Mordecai, at my gate,
By birth and creed a Jew."

Now decked in royal robe and crown,
Before all people's sight,
They lead the man whom Persia's King
To honour doth delight.

A royal banquet day has come,
And Haman is a guest,
And there the King in kindness asks,
"Oh Queen, what's thy request?"

"My life, and people's life, oh King,"
Queen Esther did reply;
"For we are now, by cruel act,
To be cut down and die."

"Who, where is he?" exclaimed the King
"That would presume in this?"
"The wicked Haman," said the Queen,
"The adversary is."

In anger great the King went out,
And saw the gallows high,
And bade that Haman on it might
Be hanged, until he die.

Once more the Queen implores the King,
"Oh do thy power employ:
Reverse all letters purposing
My people to destroy."

"Write as you like," the King replied;
And scribes wrote, "Let it be
That each of Zion's captive tribes
Stand up for liberty."

Dark days the chosen watched and prayed,
With hearts borne down and sad;
But now their Ruler's time is come,
And He has made them glad.

The powers of Rome may gather fast,
And march with mighty band
To crush the royal seed and law
Out of our favoured land.

The craft and wicked power of hell
May aid them on the way;
But from the darkening clouds shall break
A Reformation day.

"Destroy, destroy," is Satan's cry,
"And root it out of place—
The quickening work in sinners' hearts,
Of free and sovereign grace."

Not all the power in earth or hell
Can this blest work destroy,
For it shall grow from strength to strength,
And fill the heart with joy.

"Those that seek me early shall find me."

MARGARET A. MACIVER, STORNOWAY.

WE are frequently reminded at the expense of our fellow-sinners that here we have no continuing city. The lesson is rendered doubly impressive when young persons, and especially young Christians, are called home to their everlasting rest.

The number of those who exemplify the power of vital religion in their lives is comparatively few in our day, so that the removal of those of whom hopes might be cherished that they would take the place of older witnesses for Christ is a matter that should cause searching of heart, and should lead us to urgent prayer for the ingathering of the outcasts of Israel and the upbuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

The subject of this brief sketch, Miss Maggie Ann Maciver, was born near Stornoway some twenty years ago. She was the daughter of Mr. Donald Maciver, missionary, and grand-daughter of the late Alexander, or Sandy, Maciver, of revered memory. Being naturally of an extremely modest and retiring disposition, she never spoke much about her spiritual experiences until near the end of her journey. She then desired her experiences of the Lord's goodness to be made known, especially for the comfort of Christian friends whom she knew and loved.

Miss Maciver was engaged as a pupil teacher, after she attained her fourteenth year, in Laxdale Public School. Two years ago she resigned this appointment through ill health. From childhood she was the subject of serious impressions. Both by precept and example she was taught by her parents the necessity of possessing a saving interest in Christ. It was not, however, until her eighteenth year that she obtained some deliverance from the bondage in which she felt herself to be. A sermon preached by the Rev. J. R. Mackay, Inverness, was the means of greatly enlarging her views of the divine character. She declared that this sermon made her feel that it was against Jehovah she had sinned. How could He justly forgive such a sinner as she felt herself to be? Among other things, the Rev. Mr. M'Cheyne's sermons were greatly blessed to her for comfort and deliverance. When she became ill she said to her mother that she asked the Lord if she was to recover, and that these texts came to her mind, "Vain is the help of man," and "I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am," leading her to conclude that she was not to get well again. The Word of God was her great support, and she loved to hear it read and expounded. The means of grace and the Lord's people were very dear to her. Her sense of sin was deep and abiding. On one occasion she said to her mother that she was afraid when she retired to rest that she would be in hell before the morning.

Latterly she became so weak that she was confined to bed. "The accuser of the brethren," always ready to take advantage of every opportunity to tempt and harass the believer, assaulted her with his fiery darts, but she was sustained in all her conflicts by the Word of God. One day, after having heard the 102nd Psalm read, and some remarks on the Psalmist's desire to be prepared for death, she said to her mother that she had derived great comfort from what she had heard. Her own condition of soul at the time was somewhat similar to the Psalmist's. Towards the end, a friend asked her if she had any message for her young friends. She replied, "Tell them to 'strive to enter in at the strait gate.'" On the Wednesday morning, two days before she died, she thought she was about to depart, and seemed to have a foretaste of the eternal glory of the heavenly Canaan. Her sisters were present in the room and began to weep. When she noticed this she said, "Weep not for me, I am going to eternal happiness. The angels are here and they shall take away my soul. I have now received what I wanted. Doubts and fears are away. I leave my curse with sin and unbelief. I am leaving the world; I die happy."

She longed to depart. The end came on Friday the 15th of September. Shortly before she died she said, "I am going home; I never did anything good. I have nothing of my own to trust in for eternity. Is it not wonderful what He now gives me and how He sustains me?" Shortly afterwards she passed calmly away and entered into the joy of her Lord.

"Be ye ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

The deepest sympathy is felt for her parents and sisters in their trying bereavement.

D. M. M.

The following sketch of some conversations with the late Miss Maciver has been sent us by another friend, and may be found interesting and profitable by our readers. This obituary, as a whole, contains a special message to the young at the beginning of a new year:—

It may be said without exaggeration that Maggie Maciver was not an ordinary young Christian. A gentleman lately pointed out to the writer, among some beautiful flowers, the rare beauty of a certain rose. Everyone who knew the subject of this notice would not hesitate to place her among the choice flowers of the Lord's garden. Eternal things were so real to her that one could almost see her pleasant countenance speaking forth the verities of the Christian religion. Well do we remember her look—so earnest and full of meaning. She said that she was never outwardly, like most of the young women of to-day, seeking for pleasure in the sinful vanities of this world, and that she had, as far back as she

could remember, thoughtful reflections about her immortal soul, but that these were, like the morning cloud and the early dew, passing away without leaving any beneficial results behind them. But she added that the time came when she could no longer be satisfied with outward conformity to the law of God. The time had indeed come when "old things" in her life were to pass away, and "all things" were to be made new. The means the Lord used to awaken her to a true sense of her position as a lost sinner were certain remarks which one of our ministers made in the course of a sermon in the Stornoway church concerning the name, Jehovah. "The minister," to give her own words, "said that Jehovah is God the Father, from whom are all things; and God the Son, through whom are all things; and God the Holy Ghost, by whom are all things," and she added that she got such a view of Jehovah that day that she thought that she was the vilest sinner out of hell. She also said that the very name, Jehovah, seemed to be continually ringing in her ears, and that that name used to melt her heart and humble her in the dust before Jehovah. Verily, "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God." (Rom. ii. 28, 29.)

Maggie continued in this frame of mind until she learnt to submit to the sovereignty of Jehovah, the God of Israel, as a lost creature, whom He would be eternally just in casting out of His sight. But she found access unto Him in these words of Zechariah, "I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God." It is interesting to notice that it was through the Old Testament that she became conscious of her need of reconciliation; and it was through the Old Testament she became conscious of being reconciled. It is also worthy of remark that it was through the very name that she was convinced of her vileness and ruined condition that she also was made whole; and in the original, the words, "The Lord is my God," read "Jehovah is my God." She told us that this was exactly what she apprehended when the light of Jehovah's countenance was lifted upon her soul in the above-mentioned Scripture. She said that she understood that Jehovah had become her God. It was when her father was reading the chapter at the family worship in which the above-mentioned words occur that light arose for dear Maggie, and she said that she could hardly refrain from shouting for joy before the household gathered around her bedside, "Jehovah is my God." With a view to elicit her thoughts, the question was asked her some time after this, if she thought that she loved Christ better than the Father, and she looked as if she wondered that such a question would be asked, and she replied in Gaelic, "Cha-n'eil ann ach an aon Dia," which may be translated, "Jehovah is one." No one, however, is to conclude from this that she did not fully

understand the distinction there is between the persons of the Trinity in unity, for Jehovah was to her, God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—one God.

The writer remembers the last day he saw her—it was in the month of June. She remarked that she had a very comfortable day the preceding day, which was the Sabbath. She said that she was able to read herself, and that she was reading in the Song of Solomon. It was suggested that she was getting on very well when she was able to feed in such pasture as the Song of Solomon, and she smiled but made no reply. It was then asked her what part of the Song she was reading, and she said that she read a good part of it, but that these words, "Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes," were made very, very sweet to her soul. She seemed, however, reluctant to tell what she understood by these words; but afterwards the cause of her reticence was evident. It was remarked that such words were wonderful words, and she said they were; and it was then asked if she thought it was Christ who was saying this about His Church, and she replied that she did think so. Then the question was put as to what she understood by "one of thine eyes"—"Do you think it is faith that is meant by the expression?" And she answered that she was thinking it was faith. It was afterwards suggested that it was probably the eye of faith that ravished the heart of Christ, and that very likely the eye of faith was almost closed with grief for a sight of the Beloved when Christ said these words about it. It seems that this was exactly her feeling at that very time, for she afterwards said that although she was yesterday happy, she was that day very empty in her experience as to the blessings of the Gospel—hence her backwardness in speaking of the truth which had been such a comfort to her on the preceding day. She said one day: "I have not always the light of His countenance, but I am never without hope." She was asked another day if she believed she would be the happiest creature in the world, even although confined to her bed, if she enjoyed the light of God's countenance, and she replied, "I know I would be." She was then asked if she was reconciled to the will of the Most High, who had laid His hand upon her in such affliction, and she answered, "I must be." It was asked if she meant by that that she could not make better of it; or that she felt that it would be very sinful on her part to complain of such dealings, and she replied by saying: "I would consider myself a fearful creature if I did not submit to what God sent." Those who heard her making these remarks felt that they had never seen such an example of what it was to be reconciled to the will of God, and they could not but envy her, afflicted though she was in her body.

But, in conclusion, the writer is led to remark that as her views of Jehovah were the brightest and clearest he ever had the pleasure of listening to, so on the other hand her views of the emptiness of the creature were equally clear. The remark was made

one day when she seemed to be very dull : " You will not have much trouble about sin lying on your bed ; you will not be sinning like those of us who are abroad in the world ? " Her answer was that she had trouble, and when asked what was troubling her, she replied with a look of intense earnestness which we will never forget, " my ignorance of God." It was pointed out to her that it ought to be a source of comfort to God's people that there were moments in their life when they could not but understand that they enjoyed the favour of God. She said, " If these moments would only continue ! " We may say that our beloved friend is now where there never will be a cloud intervening between her soul and the light of the countenance of Jehovah whose favour she knew and prized so much in this vale of tears. " They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters ; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. vii. 16-17.) A. M.

The late William Matheson, Tanera.

THE subject of this brief sketch was born in Tanera in 1832. His father's name is still fragrant in the district for his piety. William had thus the inestimable privilege of a pious example. We had no personal intercourse with him regarding his youth, but we gleaned that the Spirit of God did strive with him ; and when a young man he frequented the rocks at the sea shore for secret prayer. His first public appearance in prayer demonstrated that he was endowed with great gifts. His burning eloquence at the fellowship meeting on the Friday of a communion season could rarely be surpassed, and his striking mode of expression, along with his ability in handling divine truth, arrested the attention of almost every individual in the audience. The gift of utterance, which he possessed, was not allowed to lie dormant.

Many who had taken " shield and spear " against the declensions of the Free Church returned like the " fearful and afraid " in Gideon's army never to lay hold of them again in such a cause, yet a few remained steadfast to the cause of Christ. They formed in 1893 the Free Presbyterian Church. The relief brought to the godly then caused them to say, " The Lord hath done great things *for us.*" When the Free Presbyterian congregation was being organised in Lochbroom, William Matheson took an active part. He conducted divine services in Coigach. His indefatigable efforts to be present on the Sabbath continued till he was seized with an illness at the beginning of October. After being confined to bed for a few days, his spirit returned to God, and his remains were interred in Badscallie Cemetery, to await the coming of the Lord with ten thousands of His saints. May the Lord in mercy arise and plead His cause in our midst ! A. S.

Earail Chudthromach, Airson Leughadh Man Scriobtuirean.

Focal do Mhuinntir ann an caochladh cheumanna na beatha air
dleasnas beachd-smainteachadh air a Bhiobul.

A LEUGHADAIR, is e suim na thubhairt mi roimhe so, *Rannsuich na Scriobtuirean*, gu cleachdte agus gu laitheil, le urnuigh dhurachdach air son comhnadh Spiorad Naomha Dhe. Tha an aithne soilleir, tha na h-uile fuidh cheangal chum a dheanamh, agus tha a bhuannachd neochrionnach. Ciod air bith àite anns a' bheatha so dh'fheudas tu bhi lionadh, tha ni eigin anns na Scriobtuiribh a bhuineas *dhuit*, ni eigin gu'm bheil e neochrionnach cudthromach gu'm biodh eolas agad air, agus gu'n cuimhnichheadh tu e.

A Phàranta, a Cheannarda theaghlaihe—leughaibh am Biobul air bhur sgàth fein, agus air sgàth bhur cloinne, agus bhur seirbh-isich. Tha Dia ag amharc nach e mhain gu'n leugh sibh e ann an uaigneas, ach tha e ag iarraidh oirbh, “na briathran a dh'aithn esan a choimhead ann bhur cridhe—an teagasg gu dichollach do bhur cloinn—labhairt orra 'nuair a shuidheas sibh 'nur tigh, agus an uair a dh'imicheas sibh air an t-slighe, agus an uair a luidheas sibh sìos, agus an uair a dh'eireas sibh suas.” Deut. vi. 6, 7. Uime sin cia mar is urrainn sibh bhur beatha chaitheadh ann an dearmad teagasg agus ùrnuigh teaghlach? no cionnus is urrainn duibh bhur teaghlach a theagasg, ma tha sibh *fein* gu deonach aineolach air an leabhar so? Ma rinn sibh gu ruige so an dleasnas mor so a dhearmad, a nis na dearmaidibh e ni's faide. Cuimhnichibh ciod a tha an Tighearna ag radh timchioil Abraham: “Is aithne dhomh e, gu'n d' thoir e aithne da chloinn, agus d'a theaghlach 'na dheigh, agus gleidhidh iadsan slighe an Tighearna, a' deanamh ceartais agus breitheanais; chum is gu'n d' thoir an Tighearna air Abraham an ni sin a labhair e m' a thimchioil.” Gen. xviii. 19. Cuimhnichibh mar an ceudna rùn Iosua, a thubhairt—“Air mo shonsa, agus air son mo thighe, ni sinne seirbhis do'n Tighearna.” Leanaibh na h-eiseimpleirean dealrach sin.

A mhnathan, do gach ordugh agus inbhe—Tha moran anns a' Bhiobul gu stiuradh, gu togail suas, agus gu comh-fhurtachd a thoirt dhuibhse. Cia co mor a tha *diadhachd an iomlan* do'r teaghlach, fuidh Dhia, an earbsa ri bhur n-oidhirpean; am feadh a tha'n t'athair o'n tigh, is e bhur gnothuch-sa “an tigh a stiuradh; leanabh a theagasg a thaobh na slighe air an coir dha imeachd,” faire dheanamh thairis air luibhean neo-bhàsmhor, agus an deasachadh air son a pharris gu h-ard. Is e bhur gnothuch-sa mar an ceudna, an aire thoirt do dhiadhachd bhur seirbhiseach; am feadh a tha *iadsan* a' saothreachadh gu laitheil air son bhur

socair agus bhur comh-fhurtachd aimsireil; O na dearmadaibh an leas sìorruidh. Co a ta foghainteach air son na nithe so? Anns a' Bhiobul gheibh sibh riaghailtean iomlan gu'r treòrachadh, agus eiseimpleirean air bhur son gu'n leantuinn. Tha e ion-chomharaichte cia lion samhladh do mhnathan naomh a tha air an cur roimhibh. Comharaichibh urram Shàraih da fear pòsda, agus a creideamh 'na Dia. Iarraibh air son spiorad urnuigh Hannah, coisrigedh cridhe Rut, agus gliocas Abigail. Leanaibh gluasad neo-lochdach Elisabet, duil naomha Anna, tairisneachd Muire d'a Fear-saoruidh, agus oibrean graidh Dhorcais. Leanaibh ceumanna Lois agus Eunice, trid an curam crabhach an robh Timoteus air a thogail ann an oilean agus ann an teagasg an Tighearna, eadhon o na bha e 'na leanabh. Tha e soilleir ma's miann leibh dleasnais bhur n-aite a choimhlionadh gu ceart, gu'r cubhaidh *dhuibh* beachd-smuaineachadh air an leabhar so. Faicibh Titus ii. 3, 4; 1 Tim. ii. 9-15; 1 Phead. iii. 1-7; Gnath xxxi.

A Chlann—bu choir dhuibhse mar an ceudna am Biobul a leughadh, ni h-ann a mhair mar leabhar uallaich ach gu'r deanamh glic a chum slainte. Is aithne dhomh eadhon clann òg, leis an ionmhuinn dol a leth-taobh leo fein, chum 's gu'm feud iad an leabhar beannuichte so a leughadh, agus urnuigh a dheanamh ri Dia ann an uaigneas. Tha Iosa ag radh, “Fuilingibh do na leanabaibh teachd a'm'ionnsuidhse, agus na bacadh iad.” Agus a ris, “Iadsan a dh'iarras mi gu moch gheibh iad mi.” Dh' iarr an leanabh Samuel an Tighearna gu moch—cha robh Iosiah ach ochd bliadhna dh'aois an uair a rinn e an ni sin a bha ceart ann an suilibh an Tighearna—bha Iosa aig dà bhliadhna dheug a dh'aois air fhaotainn anns an teampull—b'aithne do Thimoteus na Scriobtuirean o na bha e 'na leanabh. Annta leughaidh sibh mu thimchioll Iosa Criosd—cia mar a rinneadh e 'na leanabh air bhur sonsa, agus co caoimhneil sa bha e ri leanabaibh: an sin foghlumaidh sibh mar an ceudna, gur e bhur dleasnas aon a cheile a gràdhachadh, agus gràdh agus umhlachd a thoirt do bhur luchd-teagaisg. Faicibh Ephes. vi. 1-3; Col. iii. 20. Bu choir *dhuibhse* uime sin Bhur Biobuil a leughadh—

A dhaoine òga—is eigin dhuibhse am Biobul a leughadh. Tha sibh gu tionnsgnadh air gnothuichean an t-saoghail—bithidh sibh an sin buailteach do chunnartaibh agus do bhuaireannaibh do-aireamh agus “ciod leis an glan an t-òganach a shlighe, *ach* trid faicill, a reir focail De? Salm cxix. 9. Bha Daibhidh na bu ghlice na eascairdean, agus bha tuilleadh tuisge aige na bh'aig a luchd teagaisg, agus tuilleadh crionnachd na bha aig na seanairean, do bhrìgh gu'n do bheachd-smuaintich e air teisteis Dhe, agus gu'n do ghleidh e a reachda. Salm cxix. 98-100. O! gu'm b'urrainn mi buadhachadh *oirbhse* gu eiseimpleir Dhaibhidh a leantuinn. Ghleidheadh e sibh stuama 'nur n-inntinn, agus bheireadh e riaghailt cheart do'n uile theas agus eud leis am bheil an òige air a comharachadh. Choimhheadh e sibh o pheacannaibh do-aireamh, bheireadh e dhuibh sìth-inntinn, agus threoruicheadh e

sibh gu glòir shiorruidh. Ciod air bith a their bhur companaich, ceadaichibh dhomh earalachadh *oirbhse*, bhur Biobul a leughadh.

A sheirbhisich—bu choir dhuibhse mar an ceudna bhur biobuil a leughadh. Feudaidh e bhith gu'm bheil cuid dhibh ann an seirbhis chruaidh, fuidh mhaighstiribh geur-theann. Bheir focal De comh-fhurtachd dhuibh anns an t-seirbhis a's miosa. "B'iad do reachdan," arsa Daibhidh, "mo cheòl ann an tigh mo chuairt." Salm cxix. 54. Feudaidh dream eile a bhi ann an tigh dhaoine diadhaidh, far am bheil am Biobul air a leughadh gach latha anns an teaghlach. Cia co mor is a ta *bhur sochairean*: bithidh taingeil air an son, agus na smuainichibh gu'r leoir a mhain am Biobul a chluinntinn le bhur cluasaibh corporra, ach beachd-smuaintichibh air fhirinnibh, agus taisbeanaibh gu'm bheil sibh da rìreadh 'ga mheas le bhi 'ga leughadh ann an diomhair, an uair a cheaduicheas bhur dleasnais eile dhuibh a dheanamh mar sin. An sin gheibh sibh cunntas air seirbhisich dhiadhaidh—chi sibh cia co firinneach 'sa thug seirbhiseach Abraham umhlachd d'a mhaighstir; Gen. xxiv, agus mar a ba banoglach feumail do Naaman ceannard-sloigh rìgh Shiria—chi sibh mar an ceudna peanas an t-seirbhisich bhreugaich ann an Gehazi. 2 Rìgh. v. An sin gheibh sibh bhur dleasnas air a làn chomharachadh a mach dhuibh agus air a mhìneachadh. Colos. iii. 22; Ephes. vi. 5-9; Titus ii. 9, 10. Tha sibh a' faicinn, uime sin gur eigin *dhuibhse* am Biobul a leughadh.

A dh'aon fhocal, na h-uile ordugh dhaoine agus bhan, anns gach aois, anns gach suidheachadh, rìghrean agus iochdarain, ministeirean agus sluagh, fir phosda agus mnathan, pàrantan agus clann, maighstirean agus seirbhisich, bochd agus beartach, fireanta agus aingidh, sona agus mì-shona, foghlumte agus neo-fhoghlumte, agus na h-uile sheòrsa dhaoine, feudaidh iad, mar a ta Easbuig Cranmer ag radh, "na h-uile ni fhoghlum anns an leabhar so, ciod is coir dhoibh a dheanamh, agus ciod nach coir dhoibh a dheanamh, co maith a thaobh Dhe Uile-chumhachdaich, is mar an ceudna d'an taobh fein agus na h-uile eile. Agus gu h-aith-ghearra, do leughadh nan Scriobtuirean cha'n'urrainn neach a bhi 'na nàmhaid, ach gu'm bi iad an dara cuid co tinn is nach toigh leo iomradh a chluinntinn air cungaidd leighis sam bith, no air sheol eile gu'm bi iad co aineolach, is nach 'eil fhios aca gur e an Scriobtur a chungaidh leighis ro-fhallain.

Thugaibh fainear ni's faide bhur sochairean sonruichte anns a' Bhiobul a bhi agaibh. B'e barrachd mor nan Iudhach thairis air uile chinnich eile an t-saoghail, "gur an riu-san a dh'earbadh briathra Dhe." Rom. iii. 2. A nis tha'm barrachd so air a phairteachadh ruibhse; cha'n'eil e air a thoirt do na h-uile chinneach no do na h-uile dhaoine: tha moran a' gabhail fadal air son a' Bhiobuil, aig nach 'eil airgod chum ruigheachd air. Deanadh an sgeul fìor a leanas labhairt air a shon fein. "Rinn tuathanach ann an aon do na duchanna mu thuath aig *Norway*, a thug gu tric oidhirp air a' Bhiobul a cheannach, ach nach robh uair air

bith co sona is gu'n d'fhuair e an rola luachmhor sin 'na sheilbh, rinn e mu dheireadh mart a thoirt do'n bhaile-mhargaidh bu dluithe dha, agus thairg e i ann am malairt air son aon, ach b'ann an diomhain : cha robh Biobuil ann air son an reic, agus an dream a bha a dhith orra fein, air sgath a bhuannachd aimsireil a bha air a thairgse." A nis, ma tha muinntir eile mar so a' gabhail fadail air son a' Bhiobuil, agus sibhse aig am bheil e caoin-shuarach, agus neochuramach na thimchioll, nach 'eil aobhar agaibh eagal a bhi oirbh, gu'n gabh Dia an ni sin air am bheil beag meas agaibhse mar so, agus gu'n d'thoir se e dhoibhsan a ni feum a's fearr dheth? Nach feud sibh gu reusanta stùil a bhi agaibh, gu'n cuir e, "gort anns an tìr; cha'n e gort a dhith arain, no tart a dhith uisge, ach (ni a's miosa gu mor) gort a dhith eisdeachd focal an Tighearna : ionnus mar sin gu'm feud sibh ruith air bhur n-ais, agus air bhur n-aghaidh, a dh'iarruidh focal an Tighearna, agus gidheadh nach faigh sibh e." Amos viii. 11, 12.

Comh-dhùnaidh mi an earail so le labhairt ri dà sheorsa eadar-dhealuichte do dhaoine.

1. *Riusan a rinn gu ruige so am Biobuil a leughadh a mhain mar ghnothuch foirm no cleachduinn, no ann an rùn gu'm b'urrainn dhoibh a radh gu'n d'rinn iad mar sin, no gu gladdhaich an coguis a shàsachadh.*

Dhuibhse, b'eigin do'n dleasnas a bhi iomadh uair 'na uallach. Is eigin gu'n robh am Biobul air fhaicinn leibh gu ro thrìc 'na leabhar trom neo-thaitneach. Feudaidh sibh cuid do eolas coit-chionn a bhi agaibh air na nithe a tha air an cuir sios ann, ach feumaidh sibh a bhi aineolach air a spiorad. O uime sin thugaibh an aire do na riaghailtean a tha air an cuir sios anns a' Bhiobul fein, chum a leughadh air mhodh tarbhach. Amhaircibh, air son teagasg an Spioraid Naoimh, agus an sin an ni a bha 'na uallach dhuibh san uine a chaidh seachad, bithidh e dhuibh mar bhur sonas a's airde à so suas; an ni a bha trom agus fadalach, bithidh e air a dheanamh làn do bhuannachd; ni a bha 'na arm maol agus gu'n fheum an aghaidh naimhdean bhur n-anamanna, nithear e 'na chlaidheamh an Spioraid, nach urrainn do neach dhiubh cur na aghaidh: ni sibh an sin maille ri Daibhidh, gairdeachas ri focal De, mar aon a gheibh creach mhor, agus bithidh e ni's millse na mil, agus cir-mheala.

2. *Riusan nach do leugh riamh am Biobuil roimhe so.*

Cia cunnartach bhur staid. Am feadh a tha sibh a' dearmad an leabhair so, is comhara soilleir e nach 'eil sibh 'nur fìor Chrìosd-uidhean. "Tha mo chaoirich," a deir Crìosd, "ag eisdeachd ri'm ghuth, agus is aithne dhomh iad, agus leanaidh iad mi." Is urrainn dhoibh a radh ni nach urrainn dhuibhse. "O cia h-ionmhuinn leam do lagh-sa." Leigibh dhomh fheuchainn ruibh, cainnt chudthromach ughdair àraidh—"Cìod an leith-sgeul a dhealbas sibh aig an latha dheireannach an lathair Chrìosd, a tha gabhail tlachd ann am faoineachd no innleachdan dhaoine eisdeachd agus a leughadh ni's mo na Shoisgeul ro-naomha-san,

agus nach faigh aon uine a dheanamh an ni sin, ni gu h-araid os ceann na h-uile ni bu chubhaidh dhuibh a dheanamh, agus leis am fearr nithe eile a leughadh na'n ni sin, air son am bu choir dhuibh sgar a leughadh na h-uile ni eile?" Agus an eigin dbomh 'ur fagail toilichte gu fantuinn anns an staid mhuladaich so? Car son a shuidheas sibh ann an dorchadas, an uair a dh'fheudas sibh solus a bhi agaibh? Leigibh dhomh bhur n-earalachadh, leigibh dhomh buadhachadh oirbh, gu toiseachadh o'n àm so, chum cuibhrionn do'n leabhar bheannaichte a leughadh gach aon latha. Cha'n'eil fhios agaibh ciod na cothroman a bha sibh a' call rè na h-uine, ciod na sochairean a bha sibh a' dearmad, agus ciod an fheisd shògmhor o'n robh sibh a tionndadh air falbh: a nis uime sin na cuiribh dail ann ni's faide, ach deanamh greim daingean air a cothrom a tha làthair. Soilleirichidh am Biobul bhur n-inntinn, ni a reachdan bhur treòrachadh trid gach teinn, ni a theagasgan bhur neartuchadh fuidh gach deuchainn, ni a gheallanna solus a thoirt dhuibh ann an iomadh doilghios, agus ni iad comasach sibh, eadhon gu siubhal trid ghlinn sgàile a'bhàis, agus gun eagal a ghabhail roimh olc sam bith.

Is e mo chomhairle dealachaidh, uime sin, do gach leughadair,
RANNSUICH NA SCRIOBTUIREAN.

A mhuinntir mo dhuthcha,

Rinn mi na duilleagan air thoiseach air a so, eadar-theangachadh, agus a nis am faotainn air an clodh-bhualadh, chum gu'n leughadh agus gu'm beachd-smuainicheadh sibh air "na Scriobtuirich naomha, a tha comasach air bhur deanamh glic chum slainte, tre'n chreidimh a ta ann an Iosa Crìosd." Cia taingeil bu cnoir dhuibh a bhith gu'm bheil iad agaibh ri'n leughadh? Rinn Eaglais na Roimhe *iuchair an èdlais* a chumail as an t-sealladh co fhada 'sa dh'fheud i, ach tha i nis air a cur do gach dùthaich is do gach talamh a dh'fhosgladh suas slighe chum saibhreas dorannsuchaidh Chrìosd. Gidheadh, cha'n'eil ach uine ghoirid o na chaidh an t-slighe so fhosgladh dhuibhse, oir ged bha na Scriobtuirean anns a' Bheurla, bha so do'n chuid mhor agaibhse na teanga choimhich.

Chaidh bhur cor a thoirt fainear le daoine aig an robh gradh d'ur n-anama, agus aig an robh glòir Dhe san amharc, rinn iad an seann Tiomnadh agus an Tiomnadh-nuadh eadar-theangachadh 'nur cànan fein; agus air dhoibh fios a bhi aca nach robh sibh ach bochd, rùnaich iad an reic ruibh co saor is a b'urrainn doibh; ionnus gu'm feud an neach is bochda dhibh ruigheachd air an iomlan do'n ionmhas bheannaichte. Is beag nach robh sibh air bhur fagail gu'n leithsgeul. Ach 'na dheigh so uile bha moran agaibh a thagradh nach b'aithne dhuibh an Scriobtuir a leughadh. Chuala na daoine ceudna bhur gearan, agus chuir iad cobhair d'ur n-ionnsuidh. Chuir iad daoine chum nan dorsan agaibh a theagasg dhuibh an fhirinn a leughadh; gu'n airgiod agus gu'n luach. C'ait a nis a bheil bhur leithsgeul? Cha'n'eil i ann, an

lathair Dhe no dhaoine. Biodh meas agaibh air na sochairean sin, agus gnàthaichibh iad a chum glòir Dhe agus maith siorruidh bhur n-anamanna. Oir a nis feudaidh Dia a ràdh ruibh, “Ciod tuilleadh a ghabhadh deanamh ruibh nach d’ rinn e?” Thugaibh an aire nach mi-bhuilich sibh na sochairean sin, air eagal gu mionnaich Dia ’na fheirg nach d’theid sibh a steach d’a fhois. “Oir an talamh a dh’olas a steach an t-uisge a tha teachd gu minic air, agus a bheir uaith luibhean iomchuidh do’n droing leis an saothraichear e, gheibh e beannachadh o Dhia. Ach an talamh a bheir uaith droighionn agus drisean, tha e air a chur air cul, agus fagus do mhallachadh; d’an deireadh bhi air a losgadh.” Eabh. vi. 7, 8. Uime sin, leughaibh an fhirinn, agus guidhibh air Dia, gu’n d’thigeadh an “soisgeul d’ur n-ionnsuidhse (ni h-ann) ann am focal a mhain, ach mar an ceudna ann an cumhachd, agus anns an Spiorad naomh, agus ann am mor lan-dearbhadh; chum gu’n iompaichear sibh, agus gu’m pill sibh, o gach uile iodhol agus peacadh, “a dheanamh seirbhis do’n Dia bheo agus fhior.” “Oir mur beirear duine a ris, cha’n fheud e rioghachd Dhe fhaicinn.” 1 Tesal. i. 5-7; Eoin iii. 3.

A Review.

Fra Paolo Sarpi: The Greatest of the Venetians. By Alexander Robertson, D.D., Venice. London: George Allen & Company. 3rd Edition, enlarged, 7s. 6d.

Dr. ALEXANDER ROBERTSON’S “Life of Sarpi,” the first edition of which appeared in 1893, takes rank as the best English biography of the great Venetian. A second edition of this valuable work appeared in 1894, but it, too, was soon sold out, and the book had been reckoned for some time as out of print. A third edition, with which the public are now happily supplied, was a real desideratum.

Dr. Robertson has unbounded admiration for his hero, and his “Life of Sarpi” is felt from outset to finish to have been a labour of love. Dr. Robertson is naturally disposed to sympathise with all his heart with Sarpi’s ruling passion, “freedom of thought and love of country,” and his long residence in Venice has placed him in the most advantageous position for his coming to know all the facts.

Paolo Sarpi (1552-1623) is best known as the author of a History of the Council of Trent, as “the incomparable historian of the Council of Trent,” to use Gibbon’s description of him. But he was a many-sided man, a colossal personality, a man indeed who is coming to his own, and readers of Dr. Robertson’s “Life” will have a good idea of the reason why that should have been so. At all events, Sarpi, on account of his intrinsic personal worth and greatness, is well worth knowing. To the student of history, an acquaintance with his life and opinions is simply indispensable. Who would know Italy as it now is must know Sarpi.

He was an altogether remarkable man. He was born in comparatively poor circumstances in Venice. At the time of his death he was the most highly honoured citizen of the Republic. He was left a fatherless orphan when yet a child, yet he rose to distinction in almost every intellectual pursuit known to his age. Galileo reckoned him as second to none in Europe in his knowledge of mathematics. In anatomy, his discovery of the arterial valves led to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. Gladstone placed him second to Thucydides as an historian. With natural philosophy in all its branches he was profoundly conversant. And he was good as he was great, "a miracle of learning and of modesty," as Bishop Sanderson of Lincoln, his contemporary, called him. He seemed to know the Greek New Testament by heart, and in an acquaintance with the history of Christian doctrine none in that age excelled him. At the age of fourteen he became a fratri of the Servite Order, and for fifty-seven years scarcely spent a night out of his cell, yet his influence was nowhere exerted as in the Council Chamber of his country's Senate, or in his Doge's palace. He was not a Protestant, in the sense of being either a Lutheran, or a Calvinist, or an Anabaptist, yet his principles were essentially reformatory, and these found expression on a splendid scale when he victoriously led the Venetian Republic on the historical occasion of its contest with Pope Paul V., when the Pope placed the Republic under interdict. He never quite quitted the Roman Catholic fold, yet by his constant opposition to the Jesuits, and by his powerful, and whilst he lived, successful advocacy of the doctrine of a Free Church in a Sovereign State, he brought upon himself the undying hatred of the Papacy. At the instigation of Pope Paul V. he was waylaid by would-be assassins, who, when he had yet fifteen years to live, wounded him so that he carried the scar to his grave. Nor did he only in his life-time win the mortal hatred of the Papacy. After his death the Papacy, which with Sarpi away could and did dominate the Republic, was influential and spiteful enough to bring it about that his mortal remains should have come to a tenth re-burial ere they found their present resting place, and that a statue to Sarpi's memory, which was decreed in 1623, was erected only in 1892.

Dr. Robertson's "Life" of this powerful and interesting personality is one very pleasant to read. The type is all that could be wished for, and Dr. Robertson's own style appears to us to have been modelled on that of Sarpi, "flowers and ornaments it has none, yet is a delight to read." The interest of the book centres in Sarpi's great contest with Pope Paul V., already referred to, but what relates to Sarpi's life antecedently to and subsequently to this pivotal event is told with ample fulness from the point of view of a biography. The value of the book is enhanced by numerous full-page illustrations, and a fac-simile letter of Sarpi.

J. R. M.

Notes and Comments.

The Religious Observance of Christmas.—In recent years there has been an extraordinary change in the attitude of Presbyterian Scotland to the religious observance of Christmas. This festival, which has no scriptural command for its observance, was one of the feast days mentioned in the Articles of Perth (1618), which were cast out of the Scottish Church by the famous reforming Assembly of Glasgow in 1638. The proceedings were concluded with the historic utterance of Alexander Henderson, the Moderator: "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho: let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel, the Bethelite." Christ's birth is nowhere commanded to be observed in Scripture, marvellous though that event was. On the other hand, an express injunction makes the commemoration of His death obligatory on Christians until He come again.

Attitude of Presbyterians to Christmas.—In the First Book of Discipline, among things declared to be repugnant to Christ's Evangel and "damnable to man's salvation," is mentioned the "keeping of holy days of certain saints, commanded by man, such as the Papists have invented, as the Feasts of the Apostles, Martyrs, Virgin, Christmas, Epiphany, Purification, and other fond Feasts of our Lady." The Westminster divines, in their Directory, say that "there is no day commanded in Scripture to be kept holy under the Gospel but the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called *holy-days*, having no warrant in the Word of God, are not to be continued." In 1638 Alexander Henderson spoke of Pasche [Easter] and Yule [Christmas] as days of men's institution. David Dickson also spoke against the custom of observing Christmas, and the Assembly were emphatic in their condemnation. The position taken up by the Assembly of 1638 was confirmed by the Act of Assembly (1645), censuring the observers of Yule day, and warning is given that the observers of such superstitious days shall be proceeded against and censured. Presbyterian Scotland in her best days showed strong aversion to the observance of such festival days.

The Date of Christ's Birth.—The weak sentiment that is leading so many to fall in with the religious observance of Christmas is the chief reason for dwelling on a subject that will be somewhat out of date ere these notes appear in print. It is generally thought that the date of Christ's birth is an undisputed date, but apart altogether from the question of the year, there is the other of the month and the day of the month. Was the month December, and was the day the twenty-fifth? Let us hear what Sir W. M. Ramsay has to say on the point. "Now we must fix more precisely the month of the birth. The sheep were not folded at night, but feeding out in the open country. During great part of the summer, when that is the case, the operations of

harvesting and threshing would take up the attention of many people. Those operations take place earlier or later, according to the elevation above the sea, which varies widely in Palestine, and a general movement of the people would probably take place after those operations were completed, and before the preparation of the land for the winter sowing. The natural time would be between August and October. In that time occurred the Feast of Tabernacles. A considerable movement of the Jews from the northern parts towards Jerusalem occurred always at the Feast; and it was natural that a clever ruler like Herod, who paid much attention to the prejudices and customs of the Jews, should make the numbering about the same time as the Feast. *The Nativity, then, occurred towards the beginning of October.*" If Sir W. M. Ramsay is correct in his contention, the present date used for the observance of Christmas is wrong. And it is further to be observed that chronologists are not agreed as to the date, though there is general agreement that the twenty-fifth of December is the date of a pagan festival.

The 25th of December the date of a Pagan Festival.—

There is no record of the religious observance of Christmas until after the conversion of Constantine, and Moeller in his *History of the Christian Church* comments on its introduction as follows:—"The need of a special feast of the Birth of Christ developed out of the whole disposition of the Constantinian age, the desire after a solemnization of worship, approximating to traditional heathen views and seeking points of attachment to the life of nature. A historical remembrance of the day of the birth of Christ is nowhere demonstrable, a motive in Jewish festal celebration can only be artificially invented (P. Cassel, *Weihnachten*, 1861) and is excluded by the late Roman origin of the festival. On the contrary, in Rome, the heathen festal season of the December feasts, viz., the Saturnalia, occurring at the same time, with their remembrances of the Golden Age and their amusements, which abolished in festal joy all distinctions between master and servant, rich and poor, involuntarily suggested themselves. The close of these Saturnalia (17th to 24th December) formed the feast of the Sigillaria, on which children were presented with *Sigillaria*, little images or dolls of clay, wax, paste, and the like [the origin of Christmas trees]. Added to these were the Brumalia, the day of the unconquered sun, 25th December, regarded as the winter solstice according to the Julian Calender . . . This origin explains, on the one hand, the interpretation and Christian utilization of the traditional festival, but on the other hand also the tenacious and powerful continuance of heathen views and customs, even under the new Christian etiquette." Such is the origin of Christmas given by an unbiassed historian. Its heathen origin explains the many pagan customs associated with its observance down through the ages. The points of resemblance between Christmas and the heathen Roman festival of 25th December are fully set forth in Hislop's *Two Babylons*.

Railway Unrest and Sabbath Labour.—The *Times*, in a series of articles on the subject of Railway Unrest, has one dealing with the above subject. We may quote a few sentences from the article, and as we are quoting, we leave the word "Sunday," though objectionable to us.

"The problem of Sunday work upon the railways," says the writer, "has not played a prominent part in the recent agitation, but it is a factor which should not be ignored, perhaps, in considering the present situation. It would not be quite correct to say that railwaymen are reconciled to Sunday labour by the fact that it is often paid for at increased rates. Undoubtedly, however, the enhanced payment tends to prevent a general outcry against what is regarded at best as a necessary evil. When this work is paid for at ordinary rates it is distinctly unpopular. The attitude of the Union men, at any rate, towards Sunday labour may be inferred from the fact that in the so-called 'National' Programme, which was recently published, there is a demand that all work done between midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday shall be paid for at 'double the ordinary rates of pay.'" Here the intention appears to be to penalize or restrict Sunday labour by rendering it more burdensome to the companies.

Church Notes.

Communion.—Inverness, fifth Sabbath of January. Dingwall, first Sabbath of February.

Divinity Classes at Inverness.—These Classes were opened at Inverness on the 19th December, under the Rev. John R. Mackay, M.A., Tutor, and will continue (God willing) for five months. The praying people are asked to remember Tutor and Students at "the throne of grace."

A Note from North Uist.—The people of Claddach, North Uist, wish to express through the medium of the Magazine their most grateful thanks to the young men and women of the district resident in Vancouver for their substantial contribution of 34 dollars, equivalent to £6 19s. 7d., towards defraying expense in connection with a new meeting-house which is to be built at Claddach. The people of Uist are deserving of all support when we take into consideration the fact that they have been all along without a fixed pastor, and their laudable efforts in erecting suitable places of worship claim every encouragement. In connection with these efforts we cannot help mentioning the name of Mr. John M'Donald, merchant, Dusary, for his disinterested labours and kindness in promoting those objects. M. M.

Acknowledgments.—Rev. Neil Macintyre, Stornoway, acknowledges, with thanks, 20 dollars from "Friends" in Detroit, and 2 dollars from a "Friend" in Winnipeg, for the Stornoway

Church Debt. Rev. Neil Cameron, Glasgow, begs to acknowledge, with thanks, 10/ for "Rhodesia Building Fund," 10/ from "Master Mariner" for the same; also per Rev. J. S. Sinclair, 8/ for Mr. Radas's Building Fund, and 8/ for Kaffir Bibles and Psalm Books, from Mrs. R. Melville, Rydal Bank, Ontario. Rev. A. Macrae acknowledges, with thanks, 5/- from "A. M., Laide," for Portree Manse Debt.

Mr. Angus Clunas, General Treasurer, 18 Ardconnel Terrace, Inverness, begs to acknowledge, with thanks, the following donations:—*For Sustentation Fund*—£100, "A Friend," Glasgow, per Rev. N. Cameron; 20/-, "Anon," Lochinver P.O.; 10/-, D. MacLennan, 10/-, J. Mackenzie, 10/-, J. Macleod, and 10/-, F. Macdonald, all Inverasdale; and 8/-, "A Friend," Drumbeg P.O. *For Matabele Church Building Fund*—40/-, Mrs. Mackay, Sydney House, Lairg; 20/-, "Friend," Dingwall; 20/-, "Friend," Redcastle, per Mr. M'Iver; 20/-, "Friend," Inverness; 10/-, "J. M." per Rev. J. R. Mackay; 10/-, "Friend," Garve, Ross-shire; 10/-, "Friend," Tomatin; 10/-, "Friend," Carrbridge; 10/-, "Well-wisher," Inverness; and 10/-, "A Friend," Bettyhill. *For Foreign Missions*—50/-, "Glasgow," 5/-, "Mrs. H." and 5/-, "Edinburgh," per Rev. N. Cameron. *For Kaffir Psalms and Bibles*—20/-, "Friend, Dingwall; 20/-, "A Friend," Glasgow, and 6/-, "Arran," per Rev. N. Cameron. 10/-, "Friend," Kingussie, for Mr. N'Tuli. *Notice of a few Donations and Magazine Subscriptions is held over.*

The Magazine.

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