



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 Voice of Death.

THE voice of the last messenger has been heard speaking very loudly in various parts of the world during the past month. In the course of one week the country was thrilled with the tidings of at least four disasters, two of which were of more than ordinary magnitude. These alarming events happened in the three spheres of sea and earth and sky. The Lord has been showing that He is master in all the spheres of creation, whether men recognise Him or not.

The first disaster that falls to be noticed was the loss of the British steamship "Vulturno," which was destroyed by fire in mid Atlantic Ocean. This vessel was on its way from Rotterdam in Holland to New York, and carried emigrants and crew to the number of 657 persons, of whom something like 134 perished. The majority were saved with great difficulty, owing to a storm that raged, by steamers that came to the rescue. The second and the most extensive of the calamities happened in the coal-field of South Wales, at a place a few miles from Cardiff. A terrible explosion took place in a coal pit on Tuesday morning, the 14th October, when 935 men were at work. Fire immediately broke out, with the sad result that no help could be rendered to 400 men, who perished in the mine. This is stated to be one of the very largest disasters that has happened in the history of the British mining industry. A third disaster was a railway smash near Liverpool which occasioned the loss of six lives. The fourth of these melancholy events took place in Germany, when a new airship of immense proportions, belonging to the Government, collapsed in mid air, and fell to the earth a total wreck. The result in this case was the death of 28 persons. By these four disasters, the large number of nearly 600 souls were suddenly ushered in a painful manner into eternity. It was a week of

most distressing sorrow and loss to many families, for whom the keenest sympathy ought to be everywhere felt.

Now, we desire to press home some of the lessons taught by these events, especially upon the minds of those of our readers who have never been properly awakened to realise the sovereign authority and power of God, their accountability to Him, and the urgent necessity of being adequately prepared for death, judgment, and eternity. Many are the dangers by land and sea, which people, when preserved from them, little grasp or understand.

First, there is a general lesson to the age in which we live by these disasters. Men seem to think nowadays that they are the lords of creation, and that by their scientific knowledge they can overcome at their pleasure all the forces of nature and make them subservient to the demands of human ambition. God is not in all their thoughts, and they take little or no account of Him in their reckonings. But they must be taught that He is the universal governor, and that the success of their voyages, schemes, and inventions is dependent upon His approval and help. If He withdraws His hand, the most wonderfully-constructed air vessel in the world falls to the earth in splinters. The practical atheism of multitudes is becoming so gross and defiant that we wonder not at these outbreaks of divine judgment. If such events would be blessed to the spiritual awakening of careless sinners, they would not happen in vain.

Secondly, these events are a succession of voices to all who are accustomed to travel, or who occupy posts of danger in the world. The message is, "Prepare to meet thy God." Men take great pains to ensure temporal interests in the event of death, but how little thought is given to the soul and its vast interests in view of eternity! Death at most only reduces the body to dust and ashes, but death ushers the soul either into the abode of eternal happiness, or into that of eternal woe. What infinite need of concern to escape the latter! Nowadays, however, the delusion is almost universally fostered that all men, well-nigh without exception, enter into rest at death, and so people imagine they have nothing to fear, no matter how they have lived. A greater mistake could not be made. "The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment," saith Christ.

Thirdly, these disasters loudly proclaim to everyone the solemn truths that "it is appointed unto men once to die," and that they know "neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Some of us may be far removed from the situations of danger in which many of our fellow-creatures are placed, but this affords us no exemption from the hand of death. That hand may be laid upon us in a quiet and gentle manner, without any of the appalling and dreadful accompaniments that others experience, but the issues are equally the same. It therefore becomes those of us who are out of Christ to take serious warning by the case of

others, no matter in what way death comes to them. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Apart from the new birth, we cannot see the kingdom of grace here, or the kingdom of glory hereafter. Can we contemplate with ease the prospect of being cast into "the outer darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?" These painful dispensations of providence are all messages from God, and the more numerous they are, the greater are our responsibilities, and the more inexcusable we shall be found at last, if we neglect and despise them. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it" (Micah vi. 9).

Fourthly, we would take occasion from these sad calamities to commend the unspeakable privilege of having a saving interest in Christ. The Son of God took part of flesh and blood that "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). He has taken the sting out of death, and delivers even from the fear of death. True believers have no reason to fear what has been called "the king of terrors." Their Lord and Saviour has obtained an eternal victory over him, and they shall share in that victory. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And even although God's people, through the infirmity of the flesh or the remaining influence of unbelief, are sometimes afflicted with fears as to the future, yet their state is unchangeably safe. No power in earth or hell can separate them from Christ or His love, and so in life or in death they are "more than conquerors" through Him that loved them (Romans viii. 35, 39). Is there any condition under the sun more to be envied than this? And will those who read these lines and yet know in their consciences that they are on the way to death and eternity without Christ, and without hope, not consider their dreadful state and prospect, and by grace, betake themselves without delay to the Saviour of "that which was lost"? Some have no doubt been saved from "going down to the pit" at their latest breath, but these are the exceptions and not the rule. Rather, a most solemn warning has been given to those who set at nought the Lord's counsel in the day of privilege and prosperity, in those most impressive and alarming words, direct from His own mouth: "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. . . . But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Proverbs i. 22, 33).

"Stewards."

A SERMON BY THE LATE C. H. SPURGEON, METROPOLITAN
TABERNACLE, LONDON.

*Delivered to the Annual Conference of the Pastors' College
Association, 1887.**

"Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."—I COR. iv. 1, 2.

MY beloved brethren—I might even say with Paul, "My dearly beloved and longed for"—it gives me intense delight to look into your faces once again; and yet I feel weighted with a solemn responsibility in having to direct your thoughts at this time so as to give the keynote to our solemn conference. I ask your continued prayers that I may speak aright, saying the right thing in the right way.

There is considerable advantage in the freedom of the usual inaugural address. It may take the methodical form of a sermon, or it may wear looser garments and come forth in the undress of a speech. Certain freedoms which are not usually accorded to a set sermon are allowed me in this discursive discourse. You shall call my talk by what name you choose when I have done, but it will be a sermon, for I have a very definite and distinct text in my mind, and I shall keep to it with at least an average closeness.

I may as well announce the text, for it will furnish you with a clue to my intent. You will find the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, in the first verses of the fourth chapter: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."

The apostle was anxious to be rightly accounted of, and well he might be, for ministers are not often estimated rightly. As a rule, they are either gloried in or else despised. At the commencement of our ministry, when our stores are fresh and our energies are full—when we blaze and flash and spend much time in the firework factory—people are apt to think us wonderful beings, and then the apostle's word is needed: "Therefore let no man glory in men" (1 Cor. iii. 21). It is not true, as flatterers insinuate, that in our case the gods have come down in the likeness of men, and we shall be idiots if we think so. In due time foolish expectations will be cured by disappointment, and then we

* A friend who was much impressed with this sermon obtained permission for its re-publication in the *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, from Messrs. Marshall Brothers, Ltd., London, the proprietors of Spurgeon's sermons.—ED.

shall hear unwelcome truth, mingled with unrighteous censure. The idol of yesterday is the butt of to-day. Nine days, nine weeks, nine months, or nine years; be it more or less, time works disenchantment and changes our position in the world's account. The primrose day is over and the nettle months are come. After the time of the singing of birds has passed away we come nearer to the season of fruit; but the children are not half so pleased with us as when they wandered in our luxuriant meadows and strung our daisies and buttercups into crowns and garlands. In our more autumnal years the people miss our flowers and greenery. Perhaps we are becoming sensible that it is so. The old man is solid and slow, whereas the young man rode upon the wings of the wind. It is clear that some think too much of us and some think too little of us; it would be far better if they accounted of us soberly "as the ministers of Christ." It would be for the advantage of the Church, for our own benefit, and for the glory of God, if we were put in our right places and kept there, being neither over-rated nor unduly censured, but viewed in our relation to our Lord rather than in our own personalities. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ."

We are *ministers*. The word has a very respectable sound. To be a minister is the aspiration of many a youth. Perhaps if the word were otherwise rendered their ambition might cool. Ministers are *servants*. They are not guests, but waiters; not landlords, but labourers. The word has been rendered "under-rowers," men who tug the oar on the lowest bench. It was hard work to row a galley. Those rapid strokes consumed the life-forces of the slaves. There were three banks of oars. Those on the upper bank of oars had the advantage of fresh air; those who were beneath were more closely shut in; but I suppose that the lowest bank of rowers would be faint with heat as well as worn out with sore travail. Brethren, let us be content to wear out our lives even in the worst position, if by our labour we can speed the passage of our great "Cæsar" and give speed to the trireme of the Church in which He has embarked. We are willing to be chained to the oar and to work on through life to make His barque cleave the waves. We are not captains nor owners of the galley, but only the oarsmen of Christ.

The text, however, does not call us simply ministers or servants, but it adds, "*of Christ*." We are not the servants of men but of the Lord Jesus. Esteemed sir, if you think, because you subscribe to my support, that I am bound to do your bidding, you are under a mistake. Truly, we are "ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," but in the highest sense our sole responsibility is to Him whom we call Master and Lord. We obey superior orders, but we cannot yield to the dictation of our fellow-servants, however influential they may be. Our service is glorious because it is the service of Christ. We feel honoured in being permitted to wait upon Him whose shoe's latchet we are not worthy to unloose.

We are also said to be "*stewards*." What are stewards? Let us consider—

I.—*What is the office of steward?*

What is required of stewards? This is our duty. We are not now speaking of anybody outside, but of you and myself; therefore let us make personal application of all that is said.

First, *a steward is a servant and no more*. Perhaps he does not always remember this, and it is a very pitiful business when the servant begins to think that he is "my lord." It is a pity that servants, when honoured by their master, should be so apt to give themselves airs. How ridiculous Jack-in-office makes himself! I do not refer now to butlers and footmen, but to ourselves. If we magnify ourselves we shall become contemptible, and we shall neither magnify our office nor our Lord. We are the servants of Christ, and not lords over His heritage.

Ministers are for churches, and not churches for ministers. In our work among the churches we must not dare to view them as estates to be farmed for our own profit or gardens to be trimmed to our own taste.

A steward is a servant of a peculiar kind, for he has to superintend the other servants, and that is a difficult thing to do. An old friend of mine, who is now with God, once said, "I have always been a shepherd. Forty years I was a shepherd of sheep, and another forty years I was a shepherd of men, and the last flock was a deal more sheepish than the first." This witness is true. I think I have heard that a sheep has as many diseases as there are days in the year; but I am sure that the other sort of sheep are liable to ten times as many. A pastor's work is an anxious one. All sorts of difficulties occur with our fellow-servants; and, alas! unwise stewards make a great many more than there need be by expecting perfection in others although they do not possess it themselves. Our fellow-servants are, after all, wisely selected, for He who put them into His household knew what He was at. At any rate, they are *His* choice and not ours. It is not our place to find fault with our Lord's own election.

The other servants will take their cue from us. A steward who is dull, inert, and slow will have a slow team of servants about him, and the business of his lordship will fare badly. Those who travel will have noticed that the servants in a hotel are very much like the landlord. If the landlord is cheery, attentive, and obliging, all the maids and waiters partake of his geniality; but if he looks sourly at you and treats you with indifference, you will find that the whole establishment is of a disdainful order. Oh, that we may always be alive and earnest in the service of the Lord Jesus that our people may be alive also! A minister must give himself wholly to his work. I have read of a Puritan divine that he was so full of life that his people said he lived like one who fed on live things. Oh, for a life sustained by living bread! We

shall not be good stewards in the management of our fellow-servants unless we are ourselves filled with the grace of God. We must set our fellow-servants an example of zeal and tenderness, constancy, hopefulness, energy, and obedience. We must ourselves practise constant self-denial, and select as our own part of the work that which is hardest and most humiliating. We are to rise above our fellows by superior self-forgetfulness. Be it ours to lead the forlorn hopes and bear the heaviest burdens. Arch-deacon Hare was giving a lecture at Trinity College when a cry of "Fire" was raised. His pupils rushed away and formed themselves into a line, to pass buckets of water from the river to the burning building. The tutor saw a consumptive student standing up to his waist in the water, and cried to him, "What! you in the water, Sterling." The reply was, "Somebody must be in it, and why not I as well as another?" Let us say to ourselves, "Some fellows must be doing the drudgery of the Church and labouring in the hardest places, and why should not we take that post."

Next, remember that *stewards are servants under the more immediate command of the great Master.* We should be as the steward who daily goes into his lord's private room to receive orders. John Ploughman was never in the squire's parlour, but the steward is often there. If he neglected to consult the squire he would soon be doing amiss, and involving himself in heavy responsibility. How often ought you and I to say, "Lord, show me what thou wouldst have me to do." To cease to look up to God, so as to learn and practise His will, would be to quit our true position. A steward who never communicates with his master! Give him his wages and let him go. He who does his own will and not his master's is of no value as a steward. Brethren, we must wait upon God continually. The habit of going for orders must be cultivated. How grateful should we be that our Master is always within call! He guides His servants with His eye, and with His guidance He gives also the needful power. He will make our faces to shine before the eyes of our fellows if we commune with him. Our example must encourage others to wait upon the Lord. As our business is to tell them the mind of God, let us study that mind very carefully.

Again, *stewards are constantly giving account.* Their account is given as they go along. A business-like proprietor requires an account of outgoings and incomings from day to day. There is great truth in the old proverb that "short reckonings make long friends." If we make short reckonings with God we shall be long friends with Him. I wonder if any of you keep account of your faults and shortcomings. Perhaps the time will be better spent in constant efforts to serve your Master and increase His estate. We ought each one to ask himself, "What am I doing by my preaching? Is it of the right kind? Am I giving prominence to those doctrines which my Lord would have me put in the forefront? Am I caring for souls as He would have me care for

them?" It is a good thing thus to review one's whole life and inquire, "Do I give sufficient time to private prayer? Do I study the Scriptures as intensely as I should? I hurry about to many meetings, but am I in all this fulfilling my Master's orders? May I not be gratifying myself with the appearance of doing much, whereas I should really be doing more if I were more attentive to the quality than to the quantity of the work?" Oh, to go often to the Master, and to be right and clear in our accounts with Him! This will be profitable both to our Churches and to ourselves.

To come to the main point: *a steward is a trustee of his master's goods*. Whatever he has belongs to his master, and choice things are put into his custody not that he may do as he likes with them, but that he may take care of them. The Lord has entrusted to each one of us certain talents, and these are not our own. Gifts of knowledge and thought and speech and influence are not ours to glory in, but ours in trust for the Lord alone. It is *His* pound that gains five pounds.

We ought to increase our capital stock. Are all the young brethren doing that? Are you increasing in gift and capacity? My brethren, do not neglect yourselves. I observe that some brethren grow, and others stand still, dwarfed and stunted. Men, like horses, are very disappointing creatures. Good colts drop suddenly lame or develop a vice of which they were never before suspected. To be always giving out and never taking in tendeth to emptiness.

Brethren, we are stewards of the mysteries of God; we are "put in trust with the Gospel." Paul speaks of the Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to his trust. I hope none of you have ever had the misfortune to be made a trustee. It is a thankless office. In executing a trust there is little scope for originality. We are bound to carry out a trust with literal exactness. One person wishes to receive more money and another desires to alter a clause in the deed; but the faithful trustee falls back upon the document and abides by its provisions. I hear him say as they worry him, "Dear friends, I did not make this trust; I am simply the administrator of it, and I am bound to carry it out." The Gospel of the grace of God needs great improvement—at least, so I am informed. But I know it is no business of mine to improve it; my part is to act upon it. No doubt many would improve God Himself from off the face of the earth if they could; they would improve the Atonement until it vanished. Great alterations are demanded of us in the name of the spirit of the age. Of course, we are warned that the very notion of punishment for sin is a barbarous relic of mediæval ages, and must be given up, and with it the doctrine of substitution and many other old-fashioned dogmas. We have nothing to do with these demands; we have only to preach the Gospel as we find it. Stewards must keep to their orders, and trustees must carry out the terms of their trust.

My brethren, we are at this present hour set for the *defence* of the gospel. If ever men were called to this office, we are so called. These are times of drifting : men have pulled up their anchors, and are driven to and fro with winds and tides of divers kinds. As for me, I have in this hour of danger not only let down the great bower anchor, but I have cast four anchors out of the stern. That may be quite the wrong place ; but in these times we need anchoring both fore and aft. Now am I fixed. Sceptical reasonings might have moved me at one time, but not now. Do our enemies ask us to lay down our swords, and cease to fight for the old faith ? Like the Greeks to Xerxes, we answer, "Come and take them." The other day the advanced thinkers were going to sweep the orthodox into limbo ; but, as yet, we survive their assaults. These boasters do not know the vitality of evangelical truth. No, glorious gospel, thou shalt never perish ! If we are to die, we will die fighting. If we shall personally pass away, fresh evangelists will preach upon our graves. Evangelical truths are like the dragon's teeth which Cadmus sowed, they breed men all armed for the fray. The gospel lives by dying. Brethren, at any rate, in this contest, if we are not victorious, we will at least be faithful.

A steward's business is to dispense his master's goods according to their design. He is to bring forth things new and old ; to provide milk for babes and strong meat for men, giving to each one his portion of meat in due season. At some tables I fear the strong men have been waiting a long time for the meat, and there is small hope of its yet appearing : the milk and water is more plentiful by far. Someone went to hear a certain preacher last Sunday, and complained that he did not preach Christ. Another remarked that perhaps that it was not the due season ; but, my brethren, the due season for preaching Christ is every time you preach. God's children are always hungry, and no bread will satisfy them but that which came down from heaven.

A wise steward will maintain the proportion of truth. He will bring forth things new and old ; not always doctrine, not always practice, and not always experience. He will not always preach conflict, nor always victory ; not giving a one-sided view of truth, but a sort of stereoscopic view, which shall make truth stand out "evidently set forth" before them. Much of the preparation of spiritual food lies in the correct proportion of the ingredients. Excess in one direction and failure in another may breed much mischief ; let us, therefore, use weight and measure, and look up for guidance.

Brethren, take care that you use your talents for your Master, and for your Master only. It is disloyalty to our Master if we wish to be soul-winners in order to be thought to be so. It is unfaithfulness to Jesus if we even preach sound doctrine with the view to be thought sound ; or pray earnestly with the desire that we may be known as praying men. It is for us to pursue our

Lord's glory with a single eye, and with our whole heart. We must use our Lord's gospel, and our Lord's people, and our Lord's talents, for our Lord, and for Him alone.

The steward should also be the guardian of his master's family. Look to the interests of all who are in Christ Jesus, and let them all be as dear to you as your own children. Servants in the olden times were often so united to the family, and so interested in their masters' affairs, that they spoke of *our* house, *our* land, *our* carriage, *our* horses, and *our* children. Our Lord would have us thus identify ourselves with His holy business, and especially He would have us love His chosen. We, beyond all others, should lay down our lives for the brethren. Because they belong to Christ, we love them for His sake. I trust we can heartily say:—

"There's not a lamb in all Thy flock
I would disdain to feed."

Brethren, let us heartily love all whom Jesus loves. Cherish the tried and suffering. Visit the fatherless and the widow. Care for the faint and the feeble. Bear with the melancholy and despondent. Be mindful of all parts of the household, and thus shall you be a good steward.

I shall cease from this picture when I have said that *the steward represents his master*. When the master is away, everybody comes to the steward for orders. He had need to behave himself well who represents such a Lord as ours. A steward should speak much more carefully and wisely when he speaks for his lord than when he speaks on his own account. Unless he is guarded in his utterances, his lord may be forced to say to him, "You had better speak for yourself. I cannot allow you thus to misrepresent *me*." My beloved brethren and fellow-servants, the Lord Jesus is compromised by us if we do not keep His way, declare His truth, and manifest His Spirit. Men infer the master from the servant. Are they not to be excused if they so do? Ought not the steward to act after his master's manner? You cannot dissociate the squire from the steward; the Lord from His representative. A Puritan was told that He was too precise, but replied, "I serve a precise God."

If urged to utter your own thoughts rather than revealed truth, follow Jesus, who spake not His own things, but those of the Father. In this you will be acting as a steward should do. Here lies your wisdom, your comfort, and your strength. It was a sufficient vindication for a steward, when one accused him of folly, that he could reply, "Say what you please of what I did, for therein I followed my master's orders." Caviller, do not blame the steward. The man has done according to the command of his superior; what else would you have him to do? Our conscience is clear, and our heart is restful, when we feel that we have taken up our cross, and have followed the footprints of the Crucified One. Wisdom is justified of her children.

II.—*Our obligations as stewards.*

"It is required in stewards, that a man be found *faithful*." It is not required that a man be found brilliant, or that he be found pleasing to his associates, or even that he be found successful. All that is required is, that he be found *faithful*; and truly this is no small matter. It will need that the Lord Himself be both our wisdom and our strength, or we shall surely fail. Many are the ways by which we may come short of this requirement, however simple it may seem to be.

We may fail to be faithful through *acting as if we were chiefs instead of servants*. A difficulty arises in the church which might readily be settled by loving forbearance, but we "stand upon our dignity;" and then the servant grows out of His livery. We can be very high and mighty if we please; and the smaller we are, the more easily do we swell out. No cock is greater in fight than a bantam; and no minister is more ready to contend for his "dignity" than the man who has no dignity. How foolish we look when we play the grandee! The steward thinks he has not been treated with proper respect, and he will "let the servants know who he is." His master was roughly used the other day by an angry tenant, and he took no notice, for he had too much mind to be put out with so small a matter; but his steward passes by nothing, and fires up at everything; is this as it should be? I think I see the gentle master lay his hand upon his furious servant's shoulder, and I hear him say, "Can you not bear it? I have borne far more than this."

Brethren, our Master "endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself," and shall we be weary and faint in our minds? How can we be stewards of the gentle Jesus if we behave ourselves haughtily? Let us never ride the high horse, nor attempt to be lords over God's heritage; for He will not have it, and we cannot be faithful if we give way to pride.

We shall also fail in our duty as stewards if we begin speculating with our Master's money. We may play ducks and drakes with our own, but not with our Lord's money. We are not bidden to speculate, but to "occupy" till He comes. Honest trading with His goods is one thing; but to play a high game and run unlawful risks is quite another. I do not intend to speculate with my Master's gospel, by dreaming that I can improve it by my own deep thinking, or by soaring aloft with the philosophers. We will not, even with the idea of saving souls, speak other than the gospel. If I could create a great excitement by delivering novel doctrine, I would abhor the thought. To raise a revival by suppressing truth is dealing deceitfully; it is a pious fraud, and our Lord wants no gain which might come by such a transaction. It is ours simply and honestly to trade with our Master's pounds, and bring Him such increase as they gain in fair dealing.

We may become false to our trust *by acting as men-pleasers*. When the steward studies the good pleasure of the ploughman,

or the whims of the servant-maid, everything must go wrong, for everything is out of place. We are influenced by one another, and we influence one another. The greatest are unconsciously influenced in some measure by the least. The minister must be overwhelmingly influenced by the Lord his God, so that other influences may not warp him from his fidelity. We must resort continually to headquarters, and receive the word from the mouth of the Lord Himself, so that we may be kept straight and true, otherwise we shall soon be biassed, although we may not be aware of it. There must be no holding back to please one person; no rushing forward to satisfy another; no moving an inch even to gratify the whole community. We must not harp upon a certain string to win the approval of this party, neither must we be silent upon an important doctrine to avoid offending that clique. What have we to do with idols, dead or alive? O brethren, if you go in for pleasing everybody, you have indeed set yourselves a task! The toils of Sisyphus and the labours of Hercules are nothing to this! We must not flatter men; we must speak plain words, and words which conscience will approve. If we please men, we shall displease our Lord; so that success in our self-imposed task would be fatal to our eternal interests. In trying to please men, we shall not even succeed in pleasing ourselves. To please our Lord, though it may seem very difficult, is an easier task than pleasing men. O steward, have thine eye alone upon thy Master!

We shall not be found faithful stewards *if we are idlers and triflers*. Do you ever meet with lazy ministers? I have heard of them; but when mine eye sees them, my heart abhors them. If you plan to be lazy, there are plenty of avocations in which you will not be wanted; but, above all, you are not wanted in the Christian ministry. The man who finds the ministry an easy life will also find that it will bring a hard death. If we are not labourers, we are not true stewards; for we are to be examples of diligence to the household. I like Adam Clarke's precept—"Kill yourselves with work, and pray yourselves alive again." We shall never do our duty either to God or man if we are sluggards.

Yet some who are always busy, may yet be unfaithful, if all that they do is done in a jaunty, trifling manner. If we play at preaching, we have chosen an awful game. To shuffle texts like cards, and make literary essays out of themes which move all heaven and hell, is shameful work. We must be serious as death in this solemn work. There are boys and girls who are always giggling, but who never laugh; and they are the very image of certain ever-jesting preachers. I like an honest laugh—true humour can be sanctified—and those who can stir men to smile, can also move them to weep. But even this has limits, which the foolish soon exceed. Be seriously in earnest. Live like men who have something to live for, and preach like men to whom

preaching is the highest exercise of their being. Our work is the most important under heaven, or else it is sheer imposture. If you are not earnest in carrying out His instructions, your Lord will give His vineyard to another, for He will not put up with those who turn His service into trifling.

When we *misuse our Master's property*, we are false to our trust. We are entrusted with a certain amount of talent, and strength, and influence, and we have to use this trust money with a single purpose. Our purpose is to promote the Master's honour and glory. We are to seek God's glory, and nothing else. By all means let every man use his best influence on the right side in politics; but no minister has liberty to use his position in the church to promote party ends. I do not censure workers for temperance; but even this admirable purpose must not push out the gospel; I trust it never does. I hold that no minister has a right to use his ability or office to cater for the mere amusement of the multitude. The Master has sent us to win souls—all is within the compass of our commission which tends towards that—but that is chiefly our work which drives directly and distinctly at that end. The danger lies at this time in setting up theatricals, semi-theatricals, concerts, and so forth. Until I see that the Lord Jesus Christ has set up a theatre, or planned a miracle-play, I shall not think of emulating the stage or competing with the music-hall. If I do my own business, by preaching the gospel, I shall have enough to do. One object is enough for most men—one such as ours is enough for any minister, however many his talents, however versatile his mind.

If we would be faithful as stewards, *we must not neglect any one of the family*, nor neglect any portion of the estate. I wonder whether we practise a personal observation of our hearers. Our beloved friend, Mr. Archibald Brown, is right when he says that London needs not only house-to-house visitation, but room-to-room visitation. We must, in the case of our people, go further, and practise man-to-man visitation. By personal intercourse alone can certain persons be reached. If I had a number of bottles before me, and were to play upon them with a fire-engine, how much of the water would be lost? If I want to make sure of filling them, I must take them up one by one, and carefully pour the liquid into them. We must watch over our sheep, one by one. This is to be done not only by personal talk, but by personal prayer. Dr. Guthrie says that he called upon a sick man, who greatly refreshed his soul, for he told him that he was wont to accompany his minister in his visits. "While I lie here, I shall follow you in your visitation. I keep on remembering house after house in my prayer, and I pray for the man, and his wife, and his children, and all who dwell with him." Thus, without moving a step, the sick saint visited Macfarlane, and Douglas, and Duncan, and all the others whom his pastor called to see. We ought thus to beat the bounds of our parish, and go round and round our

congregations, forgetting none, despairing of none, bearing all upon our hearts before the Lord. Especially let us think of the poor, the crotchety, the desponding. Let our care, like the hurdles of a sheepfold, enclose all the flock.

Another thing must not be overlooked: in order to faithfulness *we must never connive at evil*. This injunction will be warmly commended by certain brethren, whose only notion of pruning a tree is to cut it down. A gardener comes to a gentleman's house, and when he is told that the shrubs are a little overgrown, he answers, "I will see to it." In a few days you walk round the garden. He has seen to it with a vengeance. He has done the garden, and done for it. Some persons cannot learn the balance of virtues: they cannot kill a mouse except by burning down the barn. Did I hear you say, "I was faithful, I never connived at evil"? So far so good, but may it not happen that by a bad temper you yourself produced more evil than that which you destroyed? Yield in all things personal, but be firm where truth and holiness are concerned. We must be faithful, lest we incur the sin and penalty of Eli. Be honest to the rich and influential; be firm with the wavering and unsteady; for the blood of these will be required at our hand. Brothers, you will need all the wisdom and grace you can get in order to fulfil your duties as pastors. There is an adaptation to rule men which would seem to be quite absent from certain preachers, and the place of it is supplied by an adaptation to set a house on fire, for they scatter firebrands and burning coals wherever they go. Be ye not like unto them. Strive not, and yet wink not at sin!

Some neglect their obligations as stewards by *forgetting that the Master is coming*. "He will not come yet," whisper some; "there are so many prophecies to be fulfilled; and it is even possible that he will not come at all, in the vulgar sense of the term. There is no particular need for us to make haste." Ah, my brethren, it is the unfaithful servant who says, "My Lord delayeth his coming." This belief allows him to put off labour and travail. The servant will not clean the room by daily duty because the master is away, and she can have a great clear up, in the form of a revival, before her Lord arrives. If we would each feel that each day may be our last day we would be more intense in our work. While preaching the gospel, we may some day be interrupted by the blast of the trumpet, and the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." This expectation will tend to quicken our pace. The time is short, our account is near, our Lord is at the door, we must work with all our might. We must not be eye-servants, except in this sense that we labour in the Lord's presence since he is so near.

I am impressed with the rapid flight of time, the swift approach of the last great audit. These annual conferences return so speedily: to some of us it seems only a day or two since that of 1886; the last of them hastens on. I shall soon be giving in the

account of my stewardship; or if I should survive for a while others of you may be summoned to meet your Lord; you will soon go home to your Lord if your Lord does not soon come to you. We must work on from hour to hour with our eye upon the audit, that we may not be ashamed of the record which will be found in the volume of the book.

The *reward* of faithful stewards is exceeding great; let us aspire to it. The Lord will make the man who is faithful in a few things to be ruler over many things. That is an extraordinary passage where our Lord says, "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and he will come forth and serve them." It is wonderful that our Lord has already served us; but how can we comprehend that he will serve us again? Think of Jesus rising up from His throne to wait upon us! "Behold," He cries, "here comes a man who served me faithfully on earth! Make way for him, ye angels, and principalities, and powers. This is the man whom the King delighteth to honour." And to our surprise the King girds Himself and waits upon us. We are ready to cry, "Not so, my Lord." But He must, and will, keep His word. This unspeakable honour He will pay to His true servants. Happy man to have been the poorest and most despised of ministers to be now served by the King of kings!

Beloved brethren, we are bound to go forward, cost us what it may, for we dare not go back: we have no armour for our backs. We believe ourselves to be called to this ministry, and we cannot be false to the call. If I must be a lost soul, let me be lost as a thief, a blasphemer, or a murderer, rather than as an unfaithful steward to the Lord Jesus. This is to be a Judas, a son of perdition indeed. Remember, if any of you are unfaithful, you win for yourselves a superfluity of condemnation. You were not forced to be ministers. You were not forced to enter upon this sacred office. By your own choice you are here. In your youth you aspired to this holy thing, and thought yourselves happy in attaining your desire. Brethren, if we meant to be untrue to Jesus, there was no necessity to have climbed this sacred rock in order to multiply the horrors of our final fall. We could have perished quite sufficiently in the ordinary ways of sin. What need to qualify ourselves for a greater condemnation? This will be a dreadful result if this is all that comes of our college studies, and our burning of the midnight oil in acquiring knowledge. My heart and my flesh tremble while I contemplate the possibility of anyone of us being found guilty of treachery to our charge and treason to our King. May the good Lord so abide with us, that at the last we may be clear of the blood of all men. It will be seven heavens in one to hear our Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The late Miss MacKay,

85 HIGH STREET, DINGWALL.

MISS Anne Moore MacKay was born at Bridge of Dee, Aberdeen, in the year 1837. Her parents, Thomas MacKay and Isobel MacKenzie, were godly persons. They were ecclesiastically connected with the Original Secession Church, and were members of the Original Secession congregation in the town of Aberdeen, of which the Rev. John Aitken was minister. Her father was an elder in that congregation. Her mother, to begin with, was a member of Gilcomston Chapel, where the famous and worthy Dr. Kidd preached. Dr. Kidd had a great respect for Isobel MacKenzie, and performed the ceremony when she was married to Thomas MacKay.

Miss Mackay was the youngest of a family of eight, five of whom died in infancy. We are not able to say at what period of her life she was converted, but her Christian life was an evidence that she had undergone a saving change. From the fact that she was a follower of the means of grace for the most part of her life, and able to discern when the gospel was preached, it would appear that "the good work" was begun in her at a comparatively early age. As her parents were eminent for piety, we may be sure that she, like Timothy, knew the Scriptures from her childhood.

After her parents' death, and when she grew up to womanhood, she was, while at Aberdeen, a member of Union Free Church congregation, of which Rev. Alexander Bannatyne was minister. Though she worshipped in the Free Church, she was in principle of the Original Secession Church, and was a strong advocate of the "National Covenant." But, as she saw that this Church was like other Churches in Scotland, beginning to depart from early purity, she could not worship with them any longer. As Rev. Mr. Bannatyne was a godly man, a faithful preacher, and a strong upholder of the doctrines of the Reformation, she sat under his ministry till he left Aberdeen. When Mr. Bannatyne left she told us that there was no minister in that town she could go to hear with profit to her soul. Thus deprived of the public ordinance of the gospel, she, like many others in Scotland at that time, groaned in bondage, and prayed for deliverance. She was looking for an answer to her prayers. She was not disappointed in her expectation; deliverance came at last. When she read in the newspapers that a stand was made in defence of the truth at the Assembly in 1893, she took courage, thanked God, and said, "I will join that party." She told this herself. Our taking up a separate position that year in defence of God's word, brought relief to many, in the Highlands especially. As there was no meeting in Aberdeen in connection with the Free Presbyterian Church, Miss MacKay and her sister (Mrs. Ross, a godly woman) went to reside in Glasgow as soon as they could conveniently

leave Aberdeen. Miss MacKay's state of health caused considerable delay. They were in Glasgow for several years, members of St. Jude's congregation, of which the Rev. Neil Cameron is minister.

After the death of her sister, Miss MacKay left Glasgow and came to Dingwall, where she resided to the end of her pilgrimage in the wilderness. She visited Dingwall several times on communion occasions in Dr. Kennedy's time, so that she was not quite a stranger in the town, nor a stranger to some of the Lord's people there, whose acquaintance she had formed during those visits, when she took up her residence in it. She was a worthy and useful member of our congregation in this town for the last seven years, and acted as collector of the Sustentation Fund till within a short time of her decease. She contributed to the Fund herself according to her means, and left a legacy of £100 for the General Sustentation Fund of the Free Presbyterian Church, £15 for the Dingwall Manse Debt Fund, and £10 for St. Jude's Building Fund.

Miss MacKay was a most intelligent Christian woman, possessed of spiritual discernment to understand the Scriptures, well read in Church history, and an able defender of "the faith once delivered to the saints." Many a contest she had with men and women who held unscriptural views on the subject of religion. If they did not yield to her scriptural arguments, and tried to defend themselves by the opinions of men, she did not hesitate to declare to them their awful doom if they persisted in their error till death. Nor did mere orthodox teaching satisfy her. As a living Christian she needed spiritual nourishment; and although the gospel table might be furnished with dishes of the most precious material, if there was no food in them, she could not relish the entertainment. The kingdom of heaven was within her, and she knew the voice of Christ. No thanks to her, for she was taught of God. Miss MacKay, in her own sphere, spared no effort to promote the glory of God and advance His kingdom in the world. She made herself useful for this purpose by writing as well as otherwise. She re-published several religious booklets for the benefit of sinners and saints. Notices of these have appeared in the Magazine of our Church. She also wrote letters to the newspapers on controversial subjects affecting the truth of the Bible and the cause of Christ in general. She could not endure to see the truth of the Bible run down by the "higher critics," or any other enemies, without raising her voice against them. She was a public witness for Christ and His cause.

She was a great sufferer, and learnt by deep experience the truth which declares that it is "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of heaven." She was for many years afflicted with melancholia—a painful disease, causing gloomy, groundless fears and general depression of the spirits. On two occasions especially, she had a severe attack of this malady—first

at Aberdeen, and secondly at Dingwall. Through this infirmity Satan found a door of entrance to assault her with unbelief, with the intention of driving her to despair. But he was disappointed in his hellish design. The Lord came to her relief in her distress at Aberdeen, and she was, for several years after that severe ordeal, enjoying more or less of gospel liberty; and, although she suffered severe agony in her last conflict with the enemy, she was made more than a conqueror through Him that loved her and gave Himself for her. She died in peace, never again to be disturbed. She was, for a day or two before the end, unable to speak, but the beaming expression of her countenance indicated the inward peace of soul she enjoyed. She passed away quietly, and without the least struggle, on Thursday, the 7th August last. The last fight was over, the victory was won, and she entered into her everlasting rest, we believe, with the triumphant shout—"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Her remains were interred in Aberdeen the following Saturday. Mr. Murdo Urquhart, Craigview, Craig Road, Dingwall, and Mr. Alexander Maclean, Kirkhill, accompanied the funeral all the way to that town. We extend our sympathy to her surviving relatives in their bereavement.

We should not omit to mention in connection with this incomplete sketch, that Mr. Murdo Urquhart and his wife showed great kindness and attention to Miss MacKay in her last illness, and that Mrs. Macleod, Alness, and latterly Nurse Cameron, Kiltearn, attended her night and day to the end with commendable attention. Dr. Adam, the genial and skilful practitioner, whose cheerful visit would be good medicine to a patient, spared no pains for the recovery of Miss MacKay, but he could not drive away the strong hand of death which was laid heavily on her mortal body. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." "There remaineth . . . a rest to the people of God."

The removal of the Lord's people from our midst has a solemn voice to us. The most of the fathers and mothers in Israel who adorned our Church in the past, have been called away to be with Christ, which, for them, is far better. Will the young seek grace to take up their place?

D. M. F.

"I will bless the Lord that ever there was such a thing as the free grace of God, and a free ransom given for captive souls. Only, alas! guiltiness maketh me ashamed to apply to Christ, and to think it pride in me to put out my unclean and withered hand to such a Saviour. But it is neither shame nor pride for a drowning man to swim to a rock, nor for a shipwrecked soul to run himself ashore upon Christ."—*Rutherford*.

"O happy and blessed death, that golden bridge laid over by Christ, my Lord, betwixt time's clay banks and heaven's shore."—*Rutherford*.

Account of a Revival of Religion in the Highlands of Scotland.

A Letter to the late Rev. David Black, Edinburgh.

BY THE LATE REV. ALEXANDER STEWART, D.D., OF MOULIN
DINGWALL, AND EDINBURGH.

(*Fourth Edition, 1815.*)

(*Continued from page 222.*)

IT is observable that the work of conversion has been begun and carried on among this people, in a quiet manner, without any confusion, and without those ungovernable agitations of mind, or convulsions of the body, or shrieking, or fainting, which have often accompanied a general awakening in other places. One young woman was so much moved in church, in March, 1799, that she wept bitterly, and her friends thought it prudent to convey her out a little before the congregation was dismissed. She was for five or six days unfit for going about her usual work. In June following at the time of our sacrament she felt emotions of joy for a few days, to such a degree as to withdraw her regard in a great measure from sensible objects. Spiritual affections were unusually strong in her, and spiritual objects appeared visible and near; but her sentiments were quite correct and scriptural. A few days afterwards, when her emotions had subsided, she told me that she was at the time sensible that her mind was somewhat unsettled, but that she found comfort in recollecting the apostle's words, "If we are beside ourselves, it is to God." This was exactly her case. She continues a humble, lively Christian, and, except these two short intervals, she has regularly performed her ordinary work as a maid-servant to the satisfaction of her master and mistress, in whose service she still remains. Another woman, the mother of the family, in April last, was so much moved in hearing sermon, that of her own accord she left the church. Excepting these two instances, I know of none whose emotions under the preaching of the word discovered themselves in any other manner than by silent tears.

Having lately made an enumeration of those of our congregation, whom, to the best of my judgment, I trust I can reckon truly enlightened with the saving knowledge of Christ, I find their number about seventy. The greater part of these are under thirty years of age. Several are above forty; six or seven above fifty; one fifty-six; and one about seventy. Of children under twelve or fourteen, there are a good many who seem to have a liking to religion: but we find it difficult to form a decided opinion of their case. Of persons who have died within these twelve months, three we are persuaded, and we hope two or three others, have slept in Jesus.

A very considerable number are friendly to religion, and countenance and defend the truth, even while they do not as yet appear to live under its power. A few among ourselves did for a while jeer and deride the godly; but such persons are left in so very small a minority, that they have ceased to be troublesome. The Scriptures too are so generally read and referred to, that the truth itself serves to stop the mouth of scoffers. We are sometimes told that the sentiments and language of our people are much misrepresented, and are the object of much wonder and ridicule and invective in other places. But we only hear of such things, they are hardly permitted to come nigh us. The chief opposition arises from those who possess superior scholarship and acquaintance with the Scriptures. These contend that there can be nothing substantial or necessary in that experimental knowledge which illiterate persons may pretend to have attained, and that it is mere arrogance in them to imagine that they can have a larger share of saving knowledge than men who are greater scholars and better versed in the Scriptures. "Are we blind also?" has ever been the indignant language of carnal wisdom, of literary pride, and of self-righteous presumption.

It is evident that the Scriptures represent all mankind as divided into two classes. These are distinguished from each other in the most explicit manner, and the distinction is marked by the strongest language and the most significant comparisons. They are called the children of God, and the children of the devil (1 John iii. 10); the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one (Matthew xiii. 38); the just and the wicked (Matthew xiii. 49); they who are dead in trespasses and sins, and they who are quickened together with Christ (Eph. ii. 1, 6). They are compared to wheat and tares (Matthew xiii. 25); to good and bad fishes (Matthew xiii. 47, 48); to sheep and goats (Matthew xxv. 32). In the general tenor of my preaching, especially in discussing the important doctrine of regeneration, I have endeavoured to keep in view this distinction and to exhibit it clearly to the notice of my hearers. Many have been not a little offended at such a discrimination; have found fault with the preacher; have complained of uncharitable judgment, pleading that it was God's prerogative to judge the heart; that they hoped theirs was good, though they did not make such a parading profession of religion, etc. The truth has prevailed, however, and some have confessed to me that their first serious thoughts about the state of their souls arose from the surprise and resentment they felt, on being classed, under the character of unbelievers, along with murderers and idolaters (Rev. xxi. 8). But in giving such offensive, though necessary warnings, I had much need of the spirit of Christ, to repress all asperity of language and manner, to awaken tender compassion for those whom I addressed, and to enable me to speak the truth in love.

(To be continued.)

Letters by Alexander Gair.

(WRITTEN, 1811-1847.)*

(Continued from page 215.)

(6.)

DEAR FRIEND,—Disappointments are very often in my ideas' way in a manner my mercy, and in another manner my cross ; but if I had what I want—the flower of patience—my cross would be more easily borne. Oh ! when will I be submissive ? This cursed heart of mine embitters all comforts to me. I have many reasons to sigh and sob over my treacherous heart and wandering mind. Dear friend, I have my bitter herbs outwardly ; but poisonous wormwood inwardly. Haman and his friends are trampling upon my back ; the Bashan bulls with their horns—the whole clergy of Caithness—are in enmity against poor and feeble A. Gair. The Lord has been favourable to me in delivering my wife of a daughter, and may His name be praised—He is God, and they but men. This child is not, nor will be, baptized by the ministers of Caithness, as Mr. G. says that I am Antichrist. Will you, dear friend, pray that the Lord would support a poor worm that has so many trials, all from proud Haman outwardly, and a brutish heart inwardly ? May the Lord keep the few among you near Himself—these are dangerous days. Write me, supposing you would not say but K. M.—I am your mindful and affectionate friend,

A. GAIR.

REISGLE, 14th September, 1818.

(7.)

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am thinking that all my lovers and friends are put far from me, and my acquaintance are in darkness, as my soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh the grave—free from the dead, outwardly and inwardly—outwardly, among dead ministers, dead elders, dead professors, dead means and ordinances, dead brothers and sisters, dead friends and living enemies—inwardly, among dead attainments, dead prayers, dead desires, dead faith, viz., love, hope, fear, charity, tenderness, sympathy, tears, sorrow, grief, mortification, meditation, conviction, compunction. Now, dear friend, so far as I can judge my own state, the above is truth ; meantime, I am sensible that these trials must be in my lot to keep down my proud nature and my spiritual pride. "While Antipater kept watch Alexander was safe." Satan is very envious at our condition—he watches all opportunities to break our peace, to wound our consciences, to lessen our comforts, to impair our graces, to slur our evidences,

* These letters are reprinted by permission from a booklet issued by Mr. C. Mackay, at Kingussie in 1891.

to damp our assurances. If the devil cannot raze the foundation-stone, he will use all means to throw the cope-stone down; he has his golden baits everywhere; he makes his bitter sweet, as he did at first in Eden. I must conclude with our Saviour's last command—watch and pray, pray and watch. These are dangerous days. The divisions of Reuben are upon the pinnacles. There are disputings and angry arguments in our days about false teachers and profane followers; there is a general cry, not without reason, against carnal gossellers; but oh, how few are our tears for a sight of the beloved Jesus! how few are our prayers from fear of being unconverted, and not ingrafted in the true vine as fruitful branches! I am afraid we are, like Saul, "hid among the stuff" of *Bellarmino's* horned arguments. Our day's profession is like Jeroboam's coat—rent in twelve pieces—not like Christ's coat.

ALEXANDER GAIR.

GOLSPIE, 29th February, 1820.

(8.)

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My backwardness in all duties, incumbent upon me towards my friends and enemies, hurts me, when my conscience and the word of testimony bear record against my carnal mind and brutish heart. I feel now by experience the result of sleep and slumber upon the bed of carnal security. On this bed I dreamed of golden apples and silver grapes, which fed my vagrant fancy, brought my soul to a famishing state, and made me a captive to the tyrant unbelief, that blindfolds my understanding, and renders all duties burdensome, and all promises dry breasts. If I am not deluded, I think I may say with Pharaoh's butler, "I do remember my faults this day." My young days are a terror to me. I read them more clearly now, than I did when I acted the mad youth upon Satan's stage. The law brought me off this stage outwardly, and the law nailed me on it inwardly—Rom. 7th chapter. I thought myself a saint when I dismounted the first stage, and Satan and his emissaries—the belly-god ministers, the Doeg elders, and the cursed Gehasi catechists—helped my proud heart to worship the image, and bow to Baal. I was then brought to my inward state, to my mortification. I thought I was converted now undoubtedly. Satan and God's people made a Capernaum of me, and my own heart made me believe that I had heaven on my finger ends. There was not a duty performed without a promise bought—bartering heaven—till at last Babel tower came to the cope-stone; but oh! oh! how I crucified the sweet, lovely Jesus when I was a heaven in my own eyes, but now I am a black hell on earth. I have three hells, three devils, three hearts, three laws, three covenants, and three lords, at this time. My present situation is agreeable and disagreeable—a heaven and a hell—a devil and a saint. I get drops of honey, and cups of wormwood. I am like Mahomet's

coffin hung between two loadstones, the one pulling down, the other keeping up. The devil is keeping me down, and Christ is keeping up—glory to Him that hath the upper hand. Remember me if you can. I have many trials outwardly and inwardly. Will you make mention of me to Peter Stuart? I am in haste, the bearer is going away, and I must stop, ashamed for sending this baffle.—I am, my dear friend, your dear friend,

ALEX. GAIR.

REISGLE, 22nd March, 1820.

(*To be continued.*)

Memoirs of the Life and Experience of Marion Laird of Greenock.

(*Continued from page 226.*)

AT this time I was visited by a minister who spoke to this purpose: He told me, the Lord afflicted some of His people sovereignly, as was to be seen from His own testimony concerning Job (chap. i. 8); yet the furnace, he observed, discovered much scum in Job, as we might see (chap. xxxiv.) He also said gold was the purest kind of metal, yet the fire discovered some dross in it. And he likewise added, it was so with the purest of God's saints; the furnace always discovered some dross in them. I was made to look upon this as coming from the Lord, for the man knew nothing of my condition. Though I did not see a particular cause why the Lord afflicted me, yet the furnace made much scum to appear that I saw not before. Mr. Gray saith in a sermon, "That the rod hath one of three voices to a Christian: the voice of the rod is either to mortify his predominant idols, to try his predominant graces, or to set him on that which is his predominant duty." I was made to consider a little on the second of these, but often I was afraid I had committed some secret sin, for which the Lord was contending with me: it sent me many errands to the throne of grace, till it pleased the glorious Hearer of prayer to discover His mind, concerning the rod, from His own word (John ix. 3), "And Jesus said unto them, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God might be made manifest in him." Then I saw the Lord designed a manifestation of His own work by the rod. These words were also brought to my mind, 1 Peter i. 7, "The trial of your faith being more precious than that of gold that perisheth; though it be tried with fire it shall be found to the praise, honour, and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ." By this I was persuaded that the Lord designed the trial of faith, together with a manifestation of His own works. But I thought that the honourable part of it, when it is tried, "It shall be found to praise, honour, and glory at the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ," and concerning which I was glad: but when I thought of its being a long rod,

and affliction being compared to fire, and fire being in its own nature a very trying thing, I began to shrink at the thoughts of it: but presently the Lord supported me with the words, "My grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength made perfect in thy weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9). Then I was made to believe that our Lord sent none a warfare on their own charges: then I thought, no matter how heavy the burden be, if I get strength to bear it; no matter how bitter the cup be, if I get grace to drink it off. This was a sweet ground for praise under all my heavy afflictions: I saw the rod in the hand of a loving Father, and that made me sweetly to acquiesce in His infinite wisdom, and to believe He saw it all for my good. This made me often say, "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" O that He may enable me to drink it with courage, and to His own glory. This was the fourth year of my trouble, and the year 1761.

During the continuance of my trouble I was often visited by many of the Lord's dear children, some of whom I was no ways acquainted with, when in health, nor so much as had ever seen, that I knew of. Many of their visits were very refreshing to me, and the Lord eminently countenanced them for a blessing to my soul. Meditation was now become a delightful exercise to me, and some of the glorious days I formerly enjoyed, in attending upon the Lord in His ordinances, were very supporting to me. Some subjects I had formerly heard Mr. Cock upon were now a new feast to me, particularly one very remarkable Sabbath, I remember he preached on Psalm lvii. 1, "Be merciful unto me, O God; be merciful unto me, for my soul trusteth in thee." This was a very sweet subject to my soul. In the forenoon I got a view of the mercy of God, extended through our Lord Jesus Christ, with application to myself. After the sermon was over, two things induced me to go to a secret place for prayer: the one was the ground I saw for praise; the other was, that the Lord might come forthwith and countenance His servant in the afternoon, and give Him a door of utterance and a door of entrance into the hearts of sinners: to which I was answered, "I will cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill all their treasures" (Proverbs viii. 21). So far as I can remember, I forgot myself, there was such a concern laid on my spirit for the Church in general, with a view of our great backslidings from the Lord: particularly our great breach of personal engagements and vows to the Lord; the breach of our baptismal and sacramental vows; our breach of national covenants which our forefathers sware to the Lord with uplifted hands, which many are now ashamed to own—these, and many other things, made me often fear that the Lord would depart from our land. I got leave to lament over them before the Lord, and to pour out my soul into His bosom. The Lord was graciously pleased for a ground of hope to bear in upon my spirit, that He would yet marry sons

and daughters to Himself in this land, and "rejoice over them as a bridegroom over his bride."

In the entry of public worship in the afternoon, the cxvi. Psalm was sung :

"I love the Lord, because my voice
And prayers he did hear;
I, while I live, will call on him,
Who bow'd to me his ear," etc.

I thought none had more cause to love the Lord than I had, for He had both heard and answered my prayer. O the astonishing love and condescendency of God in what followed! I am afraid, in speaking of such divine mysteries, that I "darken counsel by words without knowledge." It pleased the Lord to draw aside the vail, and to discover a glorious Trinity of Persons, three in one and one in three, shining brightly in the person of the man Christ Jesus—in Him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person." This glorious sight almost swallowed me up in wonder, and there was no strength like to remain with me while I beheld it, which made me cry to the Lord for more strength to behold these divine mysteries. These divine mysteries had two sweet effects upon my soul: they filled me with a holy awe and dread of God, and fear of sinning against Him; and then I was filled with a sweet and joyful wondering. When I was musing on these divine mysteries, these words ran in my mind, "Will God in very deed dwell with men?" Behold the tabernacle of God is with men!

These glorious and delightful discoveries had some impression on my spirit till next Sabbath morning. When I awakened out of my sleep, I found my Beloved was gone. Oh, the sad change that took place! I thought all the vermin of hell was a-foot, and that hell itself could not have bred such a wicked creature as I was in my own sight. I essayed private duties, but I found the Lord in none of these. Then I said, O to be at the public ordinances again! possibly I will find Him there. Mr. Cock preached on the foresaid text; but it was very tasteless to me, for I could not take up God reconciled in Christ. When the sermon was over, I wist not what to do, nor where to find Him: it came into my mind that the disciples went to the place where Jesus was wont to resort; then I went to the place where I found Him the day before in prayer. I durst not bow a knee before Him, His awful Majesty made me afraid, my heart was filled with such vile, abominable, and unbecoming thoughts of God. O how glad would I have been of deliverance from them! Then came the enemy with His old temptation, but with His hook covered with a new bait on it. He first represents the secrecy of the place, and the water therein, saying, thereby you would put an end to indwelling sin: all former proposals of this temptation I instantly abhorred; but this one was agreeable to my inclination to have an end put to indwelling sin: but ere ever I could well draw a

conclusion about it, the Lord seasonably stepped in for my relief with these words, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." There I got another new proof of the Lord's faithfulness, in not "suffering me to be tempted above what He made me able to bear;" this afforded me a new ground of praise to Him for my deliverance.

On another Sabbath morning I was much perplexed with the fears of apostacy; I often feared that one day or other I would fall by the hand of the enemy. While I thought upon the great dishonour that would be done to God thereby, it pleased the Lord to bear in that sweet word, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; He that keepeth thee will not slumber." This Sabbath Mr. Cock preached on these words, "In Him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, and in Him shall they glory." He mentioned many seasons that believers were to glory in, such as temptation, trouble, desertion, etc.: these seasons were very sweet to my soul. And the relation that the Lord stood in to me of being my Keeper, exceedingly added thereunto.

The four years before, my trouble did far exceed my former years, for much sweet communion and fellowship with the Lord in public ordinances; and I had the happy privilege of attending upon them every Sabbath. I often got the secret wickedness of my heart laid open, and former experiences confirmed, that I might say of a truth, "The watchman found me out." The matchless glory and excellency of our Lord Jesus also often ravished my soul by His love; yea, pained my soul for the want of full possession. I longed often to be gone, that I might get to the immediate embracements of Jehovah and the Lamb in the upper sanctuary.

Mr. Cock delivered several sweet sermons from Rev. xix. 7, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." He spoke of its being a great day upon three accounts? First, he said it is a festival day: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Secondly, it is a marriage-day: "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." Thirdly, a coronation day. He observed that in the day of believing, the believer set the crown upon king Solomon's head; and it was the day of the gladness of his heart, and the day of the gladness of the believer's heart: "Behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him." He also spoke largely of what sort of a bride the Lamb got her: and said, "He got her a blind bride, a deaf bride, a naked bride, a polluted bride; and withal, she was unwilling: nay, she is, so to speak, tied neck and heel to the covenant of works; he got her a divour, and he left her so: for she was no sooner out of arrears to law and justice, than she was sunk deep in arrears to the sovereign grace of God." He gave a very large and extensive offer of the worthy and glorious Lamb, to all within the walls, and without the walls of the house; and

beseeched us all, by the joys of heaven and terrors of hell, to match with the glorious and worthy Lamb. I felt a divine power coming along with the offer, by which my soul was drawn out to embrace the living Lamb of God, and to acquiesce in Him as all my salvation, and all my desire. My soul was filled with a sweeter sense of the love of God than it is possible for me to express.

It hath pleased the Lord, under my trouble, sometimes to give me a sweet meal upon these, and many other sweet visits. It was often impressed on my mind, before my trouble commenced, that I had some great trial, or death itself to meet with. When I considered the Lord's way with the saints formerly, I was more confirmed of it, that by singularly appearing to them, by His love visits, He was either preparing them for great duties, or great dangers; and that His design thereby was that they might be the better in case to perform duty, or to bear up under dangers. And sometimes He anoints them by the Spirit beforehand, for their being suitably prepared for the duty or trial. Sometimes, in the duty of meditation, it pleased the Lord to draw aside the veil, whereby I got a discovery of the love of God in Christ from eternity; and saw, as it were, my name written in the Lamb's book of life. O what an enriching portion I saw a God in Christ to be! I thought they could want nothing that had Him for their portion. I saw also, that let them have what they would, who wanted the blessed God, they enjoyed nothing but shadows, without the substance.

Under these glorious discoveries the Lord often filled my mouth with arguments, and said unto me, "What would ye that I should do unto you?" There came both a heart-melting and a humbling power along with it; which laid me in the dust before Him, under a sense of my vileness, and want of knowledge what to ask of Him. I often said unto Him, "Lord, thou who taught Thy disciples to pray, teach me to ask what is for Thy glory." I often opened my mouth to this purpose, "Lord, I desire to be content with any trial that Thou seest fit to appoint me for Thy glory." I was very often induced to put up these two requests, "Keep me about Thy own hand under the trial; and keep my interest in Thyself clear to me." I must say to His praise He has granted me my request hitherto.

I was often made to believe that the faith of an interest in our Lord Jesus would be the best support under any trial. I was impressed with the thoughts of a trial from several scriptures, by which I apprehended the Lord called me to prepare to meet Him in the rod of affliction: but some of them were very dark, and also wreath-like; particularly Exod. xxxiii. 5, "Put off thy ornaments that I may know what to do unto thee." Amos iv. 12, "Because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." A little before my trouble began, I could not take a thought about my lawful calling, further than the present day;

but my thoughts were hedged in by these words, *Exod. xix. 9*, "Be ye ready against the third day." *Mal. iii. 1*, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come." Those words had such an impression on my mind, that I ordered all my outward concerns, as though I had been instantly to die.

The next day, however, after all this, I found a great aversion in my mind to meet with trouble, from several considerations: in my former trouble, I had my father to sympathise with me; but now he was removed by death. Another reason was, my present circumstances in the world, in regard I had little but what was in the promise; for, in the year 1752, I lost all my worldly substance by the hand of thieves. Before this time, the Lord taught me, in some measure, a dependance on Himself for a covering of His own righteousness to cover my naked soul with; but, till now, I never knew what it was to depend upon Him for a covering to my body, and for all I needed in time and for eternity. At this time it pleased the Lord to bear in those sweet words, *Phil. iv. 19*, "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." These words were sweeter to me than thousands of gold and silver, or any riches the world could afford.

But to return where I was, to my present trial. I must say, to the praise of God, I have been in all my straits revived by His word. At this time He supported me by these words, *Exod. xxxiii. 19*, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee." *Genesis xxii. 14*, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen, the Lord will provide." O what of His goodness has been made to pass before me, both spiritual and temporal! During these six years of my trouble, viz., since 1757, many a display of His faithfulness have I seen, in His opening the hearts of His people to supply my wants, which hath often set me a wondering that any of them took notice of me, so vile and unworthy a creature, and less than the least of His mercies. While I was meditating, these sweet words came into my mind, "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's: You shall see greater things than these" (*John i. 50*). By those streams I was led to the fountain head, to view the love of God from eternity, and the glorious display of the covenant of redemption; and how that with Christ He would freely give us all things. "O the height and the depth, the breadth and length of the love of God, it passeth knowledge!"

But I return where I was. Again, those words ran much in my mind, "Take this rod in thy hand, therewith thou shalt do signs." I think it implied a call in it to take the staff of the promise in the hand of faith; and sure I am, there is much need of the staff of the promise in the hand of faith, to walk upon a sea of troubles.

Having now gotten a clear view of a lengthened-out rod, I was much afraid of security and stupidity under it: this made me often cry to the Lord, that He would make me somehow active for His own glory, and not to lie an idle and useless prisoner.

On the back of this, there was a concern laid on my spirit for the Church, and for some particular persons, with whom I was acquainted. I got a clear view of their natural state, in Genesis i. 2, "And the earth was without form, and darkness was upon the face of the depth; and God said, Let there be Light." Man's understanding naturally is a dungeon of darkness, and without the image of God. I got much liberty in pleading, that the Spirit of God might move upon their souls, and give them "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." I thought I got a sweet view of that word concerning them, "And it shall be said of Zion, This man and that man was born therein." After this, when I knew them commit sin, or omit duty, it was matter of exercise to me some whole nights at the throne of grace. There was little I heard or saw for some time but it was matter of prayer to me, that God, who ruleth in the kingdom of providence, would dispose all the dispensations of providence to His own glory.

(To be continued.)

The Free Church Declaratory Act of 1892.

*Remarks by the late Mr. DUNCAN CRAWFORD, Elder, Oban, and
the late Mr. JOHN HAMILTON, Student, Oban.*

TO our own loss we are too prone to forget our past history. Extracts from speeches delivered prior to and after the formation of our Church may help to remind us of the subjects then under discussion. The testimony of the Free Presbyterian Church is one that must be maintained in its entirety in the love of the Spirit, if we are to enjoy the favour of heaven. The early years of the Free Presbyterian Church were years of spiritual fervour and love—seasons of close fellowship with the Triune Jehovah—times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The following remarks by the late Mr. Duncan Crawford, a much-respected and talented elder of the Oban congregation, and the late Mr. John Hamilton, student, Oban, show clearly our duty as custodiers of the oracles of God. The remarks were made at a meeting of the congregation of Oban when steps were being taken to secure the site upon which the present church buildings are erected.

D. M'K.

(1) MR. DUNCAN CRAWFORD.

I was a little hopeful that something might have been done by either of the parties in the Free Church which would remove the cause of our separation. The decision of last Assembly (1894) has settled that matter as far as I am concerned. It has been said that had the Assembly of 1892 done what the Assembly of 1894 did, there would have been no separation. This is a misrepresentation. Although the Assembly of 1892 had done what the

Assembly of 1894 did, that would not have affected our relation to the position we took up. It is said the Church has not gone further than she did at the time of the passing of the Declaratory Act—the questions and formula not having been altered. Well, there is no great advantage in that. The mere fact of the questions and formula not having been altered removes no difficulty; it only intensifies the immorality of men who answer the questions and sign the formula. The questions have reference to a well-defined system of doctrine agreeable to the Word of God. These questions every minister and elder must answer in the affirmative; but the Declaratory Act is said to be a relieving Act. The Assembly says the Act is not binding upon me, but they allow others to believe and teach the doctrines covered by said Act. The declaration and promises by every office-bearer are definite—no ambiguity about them—and are subscribed to as in the sight of Jehovah. But here comes one forward for licence or ordination: he has not to sign a different formula or answer different questions, but he is entitled “to answer the questions and sign the formula in view of the Declaratory Act,” which relieves him from holding and teaching the whole system of doctrine to which he has subscribed. Could anything be more immoral? Men vowing to God to uphold, teach, maintain, and defend the whole doctrines of the Word of God as laid down in the Confession, and at the same time relieved by the law of the Church from fulfilling that to which they have subscribed! If I am a party to such proceedings, I involve myself in an immoral deed. For the sake of illustration, say that a man promises to pay £20: according to the principles of the Declaratory Act he is justified in paying only £10. The Declaratory Act does not bind me to pay £10 instead of £20, but it gives liberty to those who are disposed to do so. Dr. Rainy at last Assembly said the Act was imposing in this way—that the relief which it gave must be recognised in the Courts of the Church. It is no great relief to me that I am not bound myself to swallow the Act when I must allow others to do it. Suppose one teaches views contrary to those to which he subscribed, I am bound to recognise the relief which the Act gives him. That is done in the Free Church.

In view of that I feel fully convinced that our position as a congregation—maintaining and defending Free Church principles—justifies us in going forward to build a place of worship. I am afraid this generation will see no improvement in the Free Church which will justify us in returning to her. The Free Church has now two doors of admission into her communion. She has two classes of signatories—one believing one set of doctrines, the other believing doctrines vastly different. I, therefore, remain where I am. Year after year the Free Church has been conceding doctrine, principle, and worship. Protesting and dissenting against these concessions had little effect. She has at last crowned all her declensions by an Act which has entered into her statute

book as a binding law and constitution. Faithfulness to our own solemn vows demanded of us that we should go no farther along the course of declension. It is said that men of unsound views entered the Church before the passing of the Declaratory Act. True; but these were men who crept in unawares and on their own responsibility. Now the case is different, for the Church freely admits such men into her communion, and she is therefore responsible for the errors taught within her pale.

We did not separate from our former congregation on account of any personal feeling towards them; not because of any animus or quarrel with the office-bearers; no personal matter entered into it. It was entirely done in the interests of the truth of God.

In going forward to build, our object is not a rival church or body. It is and should be—*first*, God's glory connected with the maintenance of this truth and the full, free, and faithful testimony which He gave to the Free Church 50 years ago; and *second*, the salvation of immortal souls. If these be what animate our whole being, and what we value most, we need have no fear as to our undertaking. We do not mean to compromise a single iota of God's truth for the sake of company, however dear such company may be to us.

(2) MR. JOHN HAMILTON.

I could not possibly remain in office in the Free Church under the Declaratory Act. To remain in a Church which has minimised the doctrines of the word of God to such an extent as the Free Church has done, is something for which I was not prepared. The great doctrines, which cost our forefathers their heart's blood, are now lightly treated. In the providence of God we have a standard raised in defence of His truth. I have no hesitation in saying that my conscience is at ease as to the step taken by the few in our land in defence of the word of God, and as to the testimony that they have raised. The cause is the Lord's. If we are not faithful to it, the fault is ours. If we are faithful, the Lord will yet acknowledge His own word, and make the little one a thousand. A godly man, once speaking to the "question," said—"I would rather part with all I have in the world, friends and relations, than part with the Bible." What else is the Free Church doing but parting with some portions of the Bible, as if there were some refuse in it to be thrown away. We must have a whole gospel or none at all. "The Scriptures cannot be broken." Some say to us—"You think yourselves better than other people." We think nothing of the kind. Others say—"You think none faithful but yourselves." Well, we say that we are ashamed of our unfaithfulness; we desire to be even more faithful.

It is said by many that the Declaratory Act is not binding on them, and that for all the time they are to be here, it is hardly worth their while severing their connection with the Free Church. We might all say the same; but, if all acted in like manner, what

would be left to rising generations? Are we to leave such doctrines as are covered by the Declaratory Act and cherished within the walls of the Free Church? If so, we leave a legacy brimful of error, for which coming generations will condemn us.

Monuments are raised in memory of noble men. If we are desirous of leaving a monument of lasting benefit behind us, let it be nothing short of the whole doctrines of the word of God. It is the only monument which will be of real benefit to our children and children's children.

Eachdruidh mu Aindrea Mac-ille-Dhuinn,

PAPANACH EIRIONNACH; AGUS M'AN CHO'-CHAINNT A BH' EADAR
E FEIN AGUS AN SAGART.¹

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"Iarradh iad chum an lagha agus chum na fianuis: mar labhair iad a reir an fhocail so, 's ann a chionn nach 'eil solus anna."—ISAIAH viii. 20.  
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CAIB. V.

Tha teaghlach Sheumais Nòlain air an iompachadh, etc.

A CHIONN gun d'amuis Seumas air an nèamhnuid ro-luachmhor, bha e ro-dheonach gum biodh còir aig a theaghlach air an t-sochair cheudna. Uime sin dh' earlail e iad gu dol maille ris do thigh Aindrea, aig an àm shuidhichte. Dhiult iad rè seal dol ann, ag ràdh, gum bu chiatach a shealladh e iadsan a dhol gu ùrnuigh fir a thuir an Sagart nach bu mheas an companach an deamhan fein na e. Gidheadh cha'n fhaodadh iad gun a thoirt fainear an t-atharracha mòr a thainig air Seumas. Cha robh e ni b' fhaide gu misgeach tuasaideach mar bu ghnà leis, ach a' fuireach aig an tigh, ag oirpeachadh sonas a theaghlach. Cha b' urrainn doibh àicheadh nach d'rinn Aindrea ann am beagan sheachduinean tuille mùghaidh air Seumas (oir cha do thuig iad gur e gras De a rinn e), na b'urrainn an Sagart a dheanamh rè fichead bliadhna, le shearmoinibh, le *pheanasaidh*, agus le *uisge coisrigte*. Cha robh iad a' tuigsinn so; agus air leo gun rachadh iad a dh' aon-obair chum tighe Aindrea. Chaidh iad ann, agus bha ùrnuigh Aindrea gu dùrachdach, drùighteach, agus cha robh sùil thioram san éisdeachd. Dh' aontaich iad uile ann am moladh Aindrea 'nuair a chaidh iad dachaidh; agus air an ath-oìche dha d'fheum iad earail sam bith a dhol ann, ach 's ann a bha iad a' gabhail fadail gus an d'thainig an t-àm. Gun tuille seanachais a ràdh m'an chùis, cha b'fhada gus an do mhothaich teaghlach Sheumais cumhachd na fìor dhiadhachd air an anam, le'm peacaidh a thréigsinn, agus teannadh ri nuadhachd beatha. Bha so na mhòr aobhar mhisnich agus bhuidheachais do

¹ Air athleasachadh le L. Mac-Illean—1840.

Aindrea. Bha nis de thoileachadh aige gun d'iompaicheadh a nighean bu shine, chum na firinn; ionnas gun robh an aonachd bu chaidriche na theaghlach beag. Air laithibh na Sàbaide, bn ghnà leo-san agus le teaghlach Sheumais coinneachadh mochthra agus feasgar chum aoraidh, agus bha an gnàthachadh air an dòigh so. An déigh do Aindrea ùrnuigh ghearr a chur suas, ag as-luchadh beannachadh air an saothair, leughadh aon diubh caibdeal as a Bhìobull; agus dheanadh Aindrea caileiginn de mhìneachadh air a chuid a b'araidh dheth, agus chàireadh e riu fein iad chum an creidimh a neartachadh, agus an caithe-beatha a leasachadh. 'Nuair a bhiodh crìoch air sin, dheanadh iad an athùrnuigh, 'san deigh sin sgaoileadh iad. Cha robh aig an da theaghlach sin, c'ar tamuill, de bhathais na dhùraigeadh bhi sonraichte san aite; a chuir cùl ri riaghailtean faoine, agus ri deas-ghnathaibh gun seadh anns an d'araicheadh iad. Bha sgàth air muinntir eile aontacha leo, air egal droch ghuidheachain an t-Sagairt, agus bha iad buailteach do ioma beum agus tuaileas sgainnileach arson an toil a bh' aca gu deanamh a réir focail De. Ach an deigh de'n cheud othail mu bhagraidh an t-sagairt dol seachad, thòisich cuid ri smaointeachadh air an atharracha shoilleir a thainig air teaghlach Aindrea agus Sheumais. Cha'n fhaodadh iad gun a thoirt fainear co caoimheil chàirdeil 'sa bha iad r'a chéile, seach mar bha teaghluchean eile: bha ioghnadh orra cuideach ris mar bha soirbheachadh leo ann an nithibh aimsireil. Shaoil leo, leis mar thuirt an sagart, gun nochdadh Dia, ann an cursa a fhreasdail, a chorruich an aghaidh Aindrea arson ana-creidimh. Ach an àite sin a thachairt, 'sann a shoirbhich le Aindrea gu mòr ni b'fhearr na le aon neach a bha 'n co'-inbh ris fein. Cha robh iongantas air bith ann an so. Thionndaidh fìor chreidimh a mach dha-san na ghnòthach tarbhach a thaobh na beatha so, co math ris an ath-bheatha; oir dh'fhàs a bhean agus a chlann a nis gu deanadach dìchiollach, ged a bha iad roimhe gu leisg lunnadach; agus bha nis an t-am a b'abhaist doibh a bhuileachadh ann am faoin-eachd agus an diomhanas air a chosg ri gnìomh feumail mathasach. Cheannaich iad innealan snìomh, agus fhuair iad lìon a shnìomh agus a reic iad le sàr-bhuannachd: am feadh a bha e fein ag obair aig an Uachdaran, bha a mhac ag àiteachadh a bheagan fhearainn a bh' aca, agus bha a bhean agus a nigheanan a 'snìomh gu sùr-dail. Leis na nithe sin fhaicinn, bha 'm barail mu Aindrea a fàs ni' b'fhearr; agus ghlac cuid diubh de mhisnich na rachadh air maduinn na sàbaid chum tighe Aindrea a dh' aontacha leo nan aoradh; agus bha cuid eile fo fhiamh leis na thuirt an sagart, nach deanadh ach éisdeachd taobh muigh an doruis gun a dhànadas a ghabhail na rachadh a stigh; ach an ceann ùine bheag rachadh impidh orra dol ann. Leis mar bha Aindrea gun bhi gabhail air fein ach focal De a leughadh, agus ro-bheagan min-eachaidh a dheanamh air, agus a sheòladh dhoibhsan a thigeadh ga éisdeachd iad a ghabhail nan scriobtuire mar riaghailt beatha agus beusan; mhothaich e gun robh fhann oirpean air am beann-

achadh, agus nach robh a shaothair lag an diomhain. Shoillearich e dhoibh nach robh esan ag oirpeachadh teagasg ùr sam bith a mholadh dhoibh, ach dìreach a nochda dhoibh na bha air a chuir sìos ann am focal De; agus gum bu chòir dhoibh am focal sin a leughadh, agus foghlum a ghabhail uaithe, agus nan deanadh iad sin, gum faigheadh iad ann gach nì a bhiodh feumail do shlainte shiorruidh an anama.

Fhuair Aindrea m'an àm so leabhar Shalm agus Laoidhean, a mheas e bhi ro-luachmhor; agus dh'fhoghlum e cuid de na fuinn a bha iomchuidh gu'n seinn, agus chuir e seinn shalm ris a chuid eile d'a aoradh. Mheas e gun robh so a reir nan seolaidh a thug an t-Abstol Pòl seachad. Eph. v. 19. Bliadhna no dha roi'n àm so b'abhuist de Aindrea agus da theaghlach a bhi air thoiseach gach coinneamh, a' seinn *orain dhraosta*; nithe, mar a tha'n t-Abstol ag ràdh, nach robh air an seinn le *gràs* nan cridheachaibh do'n Tighearna, ach gan seinn air doigh pheacach do'n droch-spiorad. Mhottaich iad a nis co cunnartach 's a bha na nithe sin; agus le bhi cuimhueachadh mar a b'abhuist doibh a bhi, thigeadh deòir air an sùilibh, le taingeachd arson gun do shaoiradh o sin iad le maithas comharaichte Dhe.

Bu toil le Dia, air impidh laig Aindrea, muinntir eile a bhrosnachadh suas o'n neo-chùram, agus an aomadh chum fhocal beannuicht' a leughadh. Bha iad fo loghnadh an toiseach, agus an uine ghearr thuig iad gur briathra firinneach a bh' anna; sguir an anamhruis m'an timchioll; agus bha gnàthacha taitneach aig Aindrea, le ceistean cuid-eiginn a fhreagradh, misneach a thoirt do dhream eile, agus le aontachadh dlùthachadh le muinntir eile ann an cliùthachadh am Fear-saoraidh a ghairm iad o dhorchadas gu solus iongantach a Shoisgeil. Nach iongantach slighean Dhe, theireadh e, a ghnàthaich cnuimh mar mise ann an obair co glòrmhor! Ach air dha na briathra so a chuimhneachadh, 1 Cor. i. 27. *Ròghnaich Dia nithe amaideach an t-saoghail so, chum gu'n cuireadh e nàire air na daoineibh glìce, agus ròghnaich Dia nithe anmhann an t-saoghail, chum gu'n cuireadh e gu nàire na nithe cumhachdach*; theireadh e, Air an doigh so, 's ann do Dhia a bhios a ghloir; gu ma h-amhuil a bhitheas e; do Dhia biodh cliu siorruidh agus urram. Bha nis tigh Aindrea air a lionadh moch agus anamoch gach là sàbaid; agus ge nach robh an t-aoradh a a rinn iad aon chuid riomhach no mòr-chuiseach o'n leth a muigh, bha e measai aig Dia, *ann an spiorad agus ann am firinn*; agus mhothaich iadsan a choinnich ann, o'm fiosrachadh taitneach, nach 'eil meas aig Dia air ionaid, nì's mò no air pearsaibh. 'Nuair a sguireadh seirbhis na maidne, chruinnicheadh iad beagan a tuarasdal na seachduin; agus 's ann an earbsa ri Aindrea agus ri Seumas a bha'n tabhartas, chum a riarachadh air na feumaich: agus leis mar bha gach neach toileach na dh' fhaodadh iad a thoirt seachad, rinn e ioma feum sa choimhearsnachd. Bha iad fritheailteach air uireasbhuidh nam bochd, agus air dol a dh' fhaicinn nan daoine tinne. Air an doigh so, *bha 'n solus a' deal-*

radh an làthair dhaoinibh, agus dhearbhadh iad nach ann an cainnt, no 'an cuir am fiachaibh a bha'n aidmheil-san, ach ann an creidimh a dh' oibricheas tre ghràdh.

Ainmichidh mi cùis bheag a thachair m'an àm so. Bha duine bochd air a thuras tre'n dùthaich sin a thuit ann am fiabhras. Co luath 's a thuig muinntir an tighe san robh e gur e sin galar a bh' air, chuir iad rompa gu'n cuireadh iad a mach e. Chual' Aindrea an sgeul, dh' fhalbh e chum an tighe san robh an duine tinn, agus a mhac maille ris. Bha iad ullamh gu chuir a mach; agus an deigh dha an-ìochd an rùn a leige ris doibh, thug e fein agus a mhac leo air ghiulan e chum an tighe fein, far an do fhrithheil iad da uireasbhuidh co math s' a dh' fhaod iad. Cha 'n e mhain gun do bhuilich iad air na bha feumail da chorp; ach leughadh Aindrea dha earrannan as a Bhiobull, agus dheanadh e ùrnuigh ri taobh a leapach. Bha'n duine, trid beannachadh Dhe, air aiseag 'an ùin' iomchuidh chum a shlainte; agus theireadh e, Gu cinnteach ma tha aon Chriosduidh san tìr so, tha iad san fhràdoich so; thug iad a stigh mi 'nuair bha mi tinn gun chobh-air; agus le 'm beatha fein a chuir an cunnart, thug iad a stigh mi, agus ghabh iad cùram dhìom. Ga bu mhac, no bràthair dhoibh mi, cha b' urrainn doibh a bhi ni bu chaomhaile riumsa. 'Nuair chunnaic Aindrea gun robh e co mothachail air an caoimhneas, ghabh e'n cothrom sin air cùram anama a mholadh dha, agus trid beannachadh Dhe cha robh a shaothair caillte. Air an doigh so chaidh an duin' ud a thoirt chum eolas na firinn; 's an uair a rainig e thigh fein, cha mhòr nach robh e co dealasach as leth na firinn, agus co buadhar na choimhearsnachd fein, 's a bha Aindrea na sgìreachd-san.

M'an àm so, chual' Aindrea gun robh an Sagart air leabuidh a bhàis. Agus an deigh iomad teagamh, chuir e roimhe dol ga fhaicinn: agus an uair a thuig an luchd-frithealaidh cò bh' ann, dh' innis iad do'n t-sagart e, a' baraluchadh gur ann a thainig e a dh' iarruidh maitheanais air an t-sagart m'am faidheadh e bàs. Chaidh Aindrea a leige stigh, agus chuir mar chunnaic e an sagart mòr dhuilichinn air. 'Nuair a chunnaic e Aindrea, dh' éigh e mach, Och, Aindrea! tha mis a dol eug, ach cha'n e sin cùis is cruaidhe; tha eagal orm gu bheil m' anam caillte' gu sìorruidh! Na h-abruibh sin, a deir Aindrea, fo mhòr iomaguin, am feadh a tha Focal De ag ràdh, *gu'n glan fuil Chriosd o gach peacadh*. Och, Aindrea! nan gabhainnse mud' chomhairle dhìleas an là a bha sinn a' co-riasunachadh r'a chèile aig do thigh, dh' fhàodadh a chùis a bhi gu math. Dh' innis thu dhomh, gum bu ghnòthach cudthromach cùram anama; tha mi nis a' tuigsinn gur e sin a th' ann; is goirt an cunntas a tha agamsa r'a thoirt seachad aig cathair breitheanais De arson call anama a chaidh a dhith le m' neo-chùram agus le m' aineolas. Och, 's eagalach an nì tuiteam ann an lamhaibh an De bheò! 'Nuair thuit e sin, thainig earrasan 'na chliabh agus laigsinn air, leis an d' fhàs e neo-mothachail, agus an ùine ghearr thug e suas an deo. Dh'

fhalbh Aindrea dhachaidh cho luath 's a dh' fhaodh e, a' sìle nan deur mar bha e 'g imeachd, a' smaointeachadh air staid eagallach na muinntir a chuireas dàil ann an ullachadh arson siorruidheachd, gus an d' thig tinneas a bhàis orra! Thug e buidheachas do Dhia na chridhe, gun do mhosgail e o neo-chùram, agus o staid neo-iompaichte; agus bha a smuaintean air an roinn eadar a bhi duilich arson an t-sagairt, agus taingeil do Dhia arson na staid bheannuichte san robh e fein.

Cuiridh mi crìoch air an eachdruidh so le cunntas m'an staid shonadh air an deachaidh Seumas Nòlan gu bàs, ni nach do thachair gu ceann dà bhliadhn' an deigh an àm so. Thainig fios aon o'ch a dh' ionnsuidh Aindrea gun robh Seumas gu tinn, agus gun robh toil aig fhaicinn. Fhreagair e an teachdaireachd gu luath, agus an uair a chaidh e steach do thigh a charaid euslaintich, labhair e ris air a mhodh so. Aindrea, tha mi ga m' fhaireachduinn fein gu ro-thinn, ach tha m' anam làn sòlais. Cha'n fhios domh am bi no nach bi an galar so gu bas, ach is aithne do m' Fhear-saoraidh e, agus is leoir sin. 'S ann chum glòir Dhe a bha, o cheann tamuill, mi a' caitheamh mo bheatha; agus ma chuireas mo bhàs am barrachd glòir air seach na ni mo bheatha, b' fhearr leam dol eug na bhi beo. Bha aiteas mòr air Aindrea sin a chluinntinn, agus ghabh a leis gu neo-chealgach ann am moladh gràdh an Fhir-shaoraidh. O! a deir Seumas, is prìseil do m' chridhe, geallaine sòlasach an t-Soisgeil! Is caomh leam ainm Iosa! Anns an t-suidheachadh inntinn so bhuaich e rè seal. Cha chuireadh Aindrea stad air a sheanachas, ach an uair a stad e, thairg e gu'n cuireadh e suas ùrnuigh, agus gun leughadh e earrann de fhocal De. O dean, a deir Seumas, Leig leam guth m' Fhirshaoraidh a chluinntinn; is esan a tha labhairt; tha m' anam ro-fhurachair. Leugh Aindrea, 1 Cor. xv., 's an sin chaidh e air a dhà ghluin ri taobh na leapach, agus thaosg e mach anam le buidheachas dùrachdach do Dhia arson a mhaitheis da charaid, agus dh' asluich e gràs chum a ghnà chumail suas. Phill e'n sin dachaidh; ach chaidh e gu moch air maduinn an ath-là a dh' fhaicinn Sheumais. Fhuair e a chorp ni bu laige, ach laidir na spiorad. Bha e soilleir gun robh a thinneas a meudachadh, agus bha e fein agus na bha ma thimchioll a' mothachadh gun robh e gun dàil gu dol air imirich do ionad còmhnuidh nan ionracan. Beagan man do chaochail e, bhris e mach ann an gàir éibhinn, 's a cantuinn na ranna is deireannaich a th' anns a chaibdeil a chaidh leughadh an raoir. *O a bhàis, thuirt e, c'àit a' bheil do gath? O uaigh! c'àit a' bheil do bhuaidh? Buidheachas do Dhia, a thug dhuinne a bhuaidh trid ar Tighearn Iosa Crìosd.* Seadh, a deir e, thug mo Shlanuighear le bhàs buaidh air an nàmhuid dheireannach, agus tha e ceadachadh dhomhs' am faobh a thogail. Air dha fhaicinn gun robh theaghlach a' caoineadh, thuirt e, Na deanaibh bròn air mo shonsa, a mhuinntir chridhe; ach deanaibh gàirdeachas leam, agus cuidichibh mi ann an cliuthachadh ain an FHIR-SHAORAIDH. Tha mis a' dol far am faic mi e

dìreach mar tha e, agus bithidh mi gu siorruidh maille ris. Och, an cudthrom anabarrach de ghlòir shiorruidh, air a bheil m'anam saorta a' dol a dh' fhaighinn co'-roinn! Cha robh toil, no comas aig aon neach stad a chuir air le focal a ràdh; bha iad uile nan tosd le ioghnadh ri ro-oirdheirceas gràs Dhe, a neartuicheadh cnuimh dhìblidh bhochd gu gairdeachas a dheanamh 'an dlù bheachd air a bhàs, agus le nàmhuid co cumbachdach a dhì-armachadh gun chomas aige dochoir a dheanamh air. Na smuaintichibh, a bhean mo ghaoil, agus a chlann mo ghràidh, theireadh e, gur ni faoin leamsa am bàs; is fad a ghabh e uaithe sin. Tha mi ga mheas na chùis ro-eagallach: ach am feadh is urrainn domh amharc air CRIOSD tre chreidimh, cha 'n ion domh eagal a bhi orm roi'n bhàs; agus is ion domh fiuthair a bhi agam ris gach àgh le mi dh' fhàgail an t-saoghail so, chum na staid bheannuichte sin a chaidh a chosnadh agus a sholar dhomh an taobh thall de 'n uaigh. Bha neart a sior fhàs ni bu laige; ach bha anam a' sealbhachadh am beachd a b' àghmhoire air sonas. Air dha bhi tamull beag na thosd, ghlaodh e. Haleluia! beannachd, agus urram, agus gloir, gun robh do'n Uan gu siorruidh! B' iad sin na briathra ma dheireadh a labhair e; ach bha 'n fheith ghàire néamhuidh a bh' air a ghnuis a' leige ris do gach neach a bha m' an cuàirt da gun robh sìth na inntinn; agus bha 'n doigh thùrail air an togadh e suas a shuilean agus a làmhnan ri nèamh, 'nuair nach robh e 'na urrainn labhairt, na làn dearbhadh gun robh a cheud-faithean ann am fonn cràbhach, agus gun robh a bhuaidh air a bhàs iomlan. Ann an uine ro-bheag, bha a spiorad sona air a ghiulan gu phàrras De. *Gum faigh sinn bàs an ìonracain, agus gun robh ar crìoch dheireannach mar a chrìochsan!* Air. xxiii. 10.

(*Ri leantuinn.*)

Notes and Comments.

A Popish Priest Commending the Protestant Bible.

—*The Protestant Observer* calls interesting attention to a very unusual thing on the part of a Roman Catholic priest and scholar, George Hitchcock, D.D., of Tunbridge, Wells. Dr. Hitchcock in a recent article in *The Universe* describes the Roman Catholic Bible, known as the Douay and Rheims version, as “often obscure and sometimes unintelligible” and “as of little service as a means of studying the Biblical writers scientifically, or of referring people in general to their statements,” not being known by Catholics or Protestants. He further praises our Authorised Version as “the first classic in the language” and “indispensable to an English education,” and advises the Bible students of his Church to obtain a copy of the Cambridge Bible which embodies the readings of the Authorised and Revised Versions. Dr. Hitchcock shows considerable daring in view of the declared principles of his Church, which has been accustomed to burn all Protestant Bibles and their readers together. Is Dr. Hitchcock entirely sincere and

are his objects wholly good, or is he in the service of the Jesuits with a view to win Protestants to the Romish faith? If his objects are really good we earnestly trust that the Lord may bless his labours and lead him more and more into the light.

The Home Rule Movement.—As far as can be seen at the present moment, this movement has received a check, and the Government are beginning to pause and consider. The general opinion of the press, both secular and religious, seems to be that the Government now feel that it is impossible to force through the Home Rule Bill without any regard to the opposition of the men of Ulster. Suggestions of conference and compromise, even from the Liberal side, are in the air. May the Most High have respect to the prayers of His people and avert the feared calamity! The present signs are encouraging.

Statistics re Britain and Roman Catholic Ireland.—A contemporary magazine computes that our State gives a million and a half pounds a year to the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland for educational purposes. It is feared that much of this money never reaches the persons who are employed in the work of education, but simply enriches the coffers of the so-called Church. Statistics are also given of pauperism in Ireland. In Belfast, for example, "1 in every 42 Nationalists is a pauper, while the ratio for Unionists is only 36 per 10,000, or 1 in every 278." Some people have thought that it was "the land" question in Ireland that kept the people poor. The land conditions have greatly improved, but the people continue poor. The real cause is the incessant and excessive demands of "the Church" upon the people from the cradle to the grave, and even in view of what is supposed to be beyond it, purgatory. Scottish Protestants have very little conception of the extent of Popish exaction.

Literary Notice.

Turton's Pillar: *A Memorial of the Wonders of Grace in the Regeneration and Pilgrimage of James Turton.* London: C. J. Farncombe & Son, Ltd., 30 Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, E.C. Paper covers, 4d.; postage, ½d. Cloth, 7d.; by post, 8½d.

We have read this "Memorial" (edited by Mr. J. K. Popham, minister, Brighton) with much interest and appreciation. James Turton, who is still alive at the age of seventy-four, writes a very lively narrative of his experiences in grace and providence. Brought up by godly parents, he did not, in his youthful days, pay much heed to their example and instructions, but ran riot in the ways of sin and death. At last the Lord arrested him in the very midst of his ungodliness, when he was about twenty-three years of age, and for two years "the arrows" of the Almighty sank deep into his soul and filled him with utter shame and confusion

of face, afraid that at any moment he should "drop into the pit." At length he heard "the joyful sound" of the Gospel under Mr. Thomas Bradbury of London, and saw by faith "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." After this date he had many seasons of spiritual enjoyment and of sharp trial. His painful experiences in providence were not small. At the beginning of his book he gives some interesting details of his father, John Turton. "My dear old father would read no book but the Bible. . . . He used to sing the Psalms to his heart's delight. . . . He lived ninety-two years in one house, died in the same corner of the room he was born in, and never slept a single night in any other room; never rode in a cab, coach, or carriage in all his long life, and never required a doctor. He was a born slave, and yet he was God's free man; I should say, the freest man I have known." "Turton's Pillar" is written in a humble, sincere, godly manner, with a freshness and vivacity that leave a very pleasing effect upon the mind. We commend it to our readers as a suitable and edifying gift-book for old or young.

Church Notes.

Communion.—Oban, first Sabbath of November; St. Jude's, Glasgow (Jane Street, Blythswood Square), second; Fort William, and Halkirk (Caithness), third; Edinburgh (Hall, Riego Street, near Tollcross), fifth.

Meeting of Synod.—The Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland will (God willing) meet in the hall of St. Jude's Church, Glasgow, on Tuesday the 11th November. The Moderator, Rev. Neil Macintyre, Stornoway, is expected to conduct public worship at eleven in the forenoon.

Acknowledgments.—Mr. Angus Clunas, Treasurer, 35 Ardconnel Terrace, Inverness, begs to acknowledge, with thanks, the following donations:—*For Sustentation Fund*—£30 16/ (balance of expenses), from Deputy (Rev. J. R. Mackay) to Canada; 10 dols. from "Friend," Lobo, Canada, 5 dols. from "Friends," Williams, Canada, 5 dols. from "Friend," North Newton, Canada, 5 dols. from "Friend," Lochalsh, Canada, 5 dols. from "Friend," Canada, 5 dols. from "J. M.," Campbeltown, Canada, 5 dols. from "Friend," Detroit, U.S.A., 1 dol. from "Friend," Lochaber, Canada—all per Rev. J. R. Mackay; £5 from Miss M., New York, per Rev. N. Cameron; £5 from "A Friend," per Mr. Wm. Macdonald; £1 from "Anon," (Calderbridge P.O.) *For Matabele Building Fund*—£100, equally for this Fund and Kaffir Psalms, "In memory of a beloved sister who took a deep interest in the Matabele Mission"; 20/ from "A Free Presbyterian," Daviot; 5/ from "A Free Presbyterian," Stratherrick; 2/6 from "A Friend," Inverness; and 5 dols. from "Friend," Wardsville, Ont., 5 dols. from "Friend," Canada, 5 dols. from "Three Friends," Detroit, U.S.A., 2½ dols. from "Two Friends, East

Williams, Ont., per Rev. J. R. Mackay. *For Kaffir Psalms*—10/ from "Oban," and 3/ from "A F.P. Member," Arran, per Rev. N. Cameron; and 5/ from "Well-wisher to Cause," per Rev. J. S. Sinclair. *For Foreign Missions*—20/ from Miss M., New York, per Rev. N. Cameron. *For Missionaries and Catechists*—10/ from "A Friend," Tain, per Rev. J. R. Mackay.

Rev. N. Cameron begs to acknowledge, with sincere thanks, the following donations in aid of Bembesi Building Fund—"A Friend," Tighnabruaich, £1; Mr. T. M'D., Brock, 15/6; "To help wipe out debt," 10/; "A Friend," Liverpool, £1; "Two Friends," Resolis, £1; "A Friend," Gairloch, 10/; "Well-wisher," Gairloch, 5/; "A Free Presbyterian," Arran, 10/; "A Friend," Thurso, 10/; Miss K. M., 2/6; "Clydebank," 5/; "A Lady Friend," New York, £1; Mr. M. M'Leod, U.S.A., £1; Mrs. M., Cathcart, 10/; "Queensland," 10/; F. P., Edinburgh, 5/. For St. Jude's Building Fund—"F.P. Member," Arran, 10/; Mrs. M., Thurso, 10/; "A Friend," Swansea, £1; "Lady Friend," Glasgow, 10/.—Rev. D. N. Macleod, Harris, acknowledges, with thanks, 20/6 from "A Reader," for Harris Building Fund.

The Magazine.

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