

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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Steadfastness.

IN writing to the Corinthians, Paul refers, in that remarkable fifteenth chapter, to the sad circumstance that some among them called in question the fact of the resurrection of the dead. (And we to-day are accustomed to hear of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ questioned by doctors of divinity.) The Apostle at the close of the chapter counsels the beloved brethren to be steadfast and unmoveable, knowing full well the methods of Satan in using false brethren and erroneous doctrine to undermine the faith of some, if possible, and thus disturb the unity and tranquillity of the Church.

Steadfastness is a great, essential, and gracious characteristic which the believer upon Christ Jesus is repeatedly called upon, in Scripture, to exercise by the aid and sufficiency of divine grace. The things which are surely believed among us and are embraced within the faith once delivered to the saints and were held and practised by the Apostles, are surely worthy of the believers established, fixed, firm and constant adherence thereto. The doctrines, form of worship and practice of the Christian Church set forth in the Word of God, and as believed, accepted, loved and adhered to by our pious and eminent forefathers and fathers, do not alter and change with the passing of time.

As we note elsewhere in this issue, it has been said "that to express the full Christian faith and gospel there must be some hymns and music." We repudiate such a suggestion, and do not need these innovations for which the Christian Church has no scriptural warrant, to express the full Christian faith and gospel. Sufficient to think of the day of Pentecost; Paul and Silas praying and singing praises to God in the prison; the Covenanters on the moors and hills of Scotland; and the "days of the fathers" in Ross-shire—and no uninspired hymns or organs required to give full expression to *their* Christian faith. Therefore let us be steadfast in our adherence, as in other matters, to the form of worship in the public worship of God as handed down to us from the Apostles and our godly forefathers who enjoyed so abundantly the presence of the Lord and days of heaven upon earth.

In part, steadfastness is the refusal of God's people to defile themselves with beliefs and practices contrary to the Word and mind of God. Because to embrace and give place to such, means the defilement of the conscience with guilt in the sight of the Holy One of Israel. Daniel affords us a precious example of this feature of steadfastness, when at the outset of his career in Babylon, he and his companions were to be required to partake of the King's meat and wine (see Daniel i). "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (verse 8). He firmly refused to depart from the practices laid down by God in His law and Word for His church among the Jews. The meat may have been "unclean" and the meat and the wine offered to idols before presentation to the King and then to Daniel. New circumstances in captivity and worldly proposals left Daniel unmoved in his adherence to the faith delivered to the Church of God in his day.

For a child of God to fall temporarily from his steadfastness exposes him to chastisement. The Lord will visit His people's transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with stripes, as surely as they may at any time depart from His commandments and break His statutes. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth" (Heb. xii, 6). For one who has a good hope through grace to become unsteadfast by reason of temptations, worldly influences and a desire to compromise with such as are not true friends of the Truth of God or His Cause, is most dishonouring to the Great Head of the Church, a grief to others of the Lord's people, and an occasion to the enemies of the Gospel to blaspheme. Take for instance the case of godly Jehoshaphat, briefly. He was entangled into giving assistance to godless Ahab in going up against Ramoth-Gilead (see II Chronicles xviii). He nearly lost his life in this uncalled for collaboration. "And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the King of Israel: Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him" (chapter xviii, 31). But later, when Jehu the seer was sent to him, Jehu said, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord" (II Chronicles xix, 2).

Then there are those who are outwardly steadfast for a time, but ultimately abandon the faith they once upheld. The Bible and the history of the Church of Christ right up to the present day, provide grievous instances of this nature. Paul writes to Timothy with respect to "holding the faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy i, 19, 20). He writes in another place,

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." Those who were never "born again" of the Holy Spirit and never had true faith or love to Christ and His Word and ways, may appear among the true children of God as genuine believers, and may outwardly adhere to the faith of the gospel for a time and appear steadfast therein. But in cases, God will test and expose such by means and providences of His own ordering, so that the real man appears openly, and discovers to the Church and the world that he has no love to "the faith once delivered to the saints," to "the old paths," and to the pure and scriptural standards and practices of the Church of Christ in the midst of an evil world.

Finally, there are two foundation elements in spiritual and persevering steadfastness. One is, a deep and constant sense of one's own weakness. "Without me ye can do nothing," says Christ: And the other is, a humble and living desire that God would, out of the fullness of His Son Jesus Christ, grant grace for grace, to keep one's feet from falling and one's eyes from tears.

Justification.*

Article in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, July, 1880.

THE justification of a sinner is a Divine transaction full of wonders. It is emphatically and eminently "the doing of the Lord" for "It is God that justifieth," and "It is marvellous in our eyes." Nor can it be understood with that spiritual intelligence which calls forth our admiration and gratitude and praise, without our being led to see, as a first principle—what is three times stated in the compass of a single verse (Gal. ii, 16), that "a man is not justified by the works of the law."

The justification of an unfallen, ever-dutiful creature and holy subject of God is an act most simple, involving not the slightest moral difficulty, and illustrating no marvellous or peculiar principles. It consists simply in judicially declaring the obedient and righteous one, whose case is to be disposed of, to be what he really is—obedient and righteous. It acquits of all blame or charge him who by stainless purity and innocence has incurred none; and it pronounces to be worthy of reward or entitled to the promise, him who by his own merit and service according to the stipulated condition, has earned his right and title and reward to the full. Nothing can be more simple in its procedure, or more obvious in its principle, than justification in such a case as this. The innocence of the innocent is investigated and admitted: the righteousness of the righteous is brought to light and acknowledged and rewarded. The just is pronounced to be just, and accepted and dealt with as such. The just is justified.

But when we pass from the justification of the holy and unfallen to contemplate the justification of the *sinner*, it immediately becomes clear that if such a thing is not an utter impossibility—if it is not, as reason would at first sight pronounce, a contradiction in terms—it must be through

* The author of this article, although written under a pen-name, is considered to be Dr. Hugh Martin, D.D.—*Editor*.

the introduction of other principles—principles otherwise unnecessary and inadmissible, and indeed altogether new and astonishing.

For, let it be observed that justification in this case, precisely as in the other, is to consist in a judicial announcement that the party is free from blame and righteously entitled to reward. This is to be the import of the act performed or privilege conferred—a full acquittal from all charge or condemnation, and a full acknowledgment of a perfect right and title to all honour, inheritance, and life eternal. This is to be the deliverance from the tribunal of the Holy One—the tribunal from which no error can proceed, and from which no appeal can be taken; and this deliverance, accurate, final, irresistible, is to be anent a sinner—a sinner guilty before God and his mouth stopped—declaring that sinner, notwithstanding that he is such to be free from blame and entitled to favour and blessing and heaven. Here we again repeat, is a marvellous thing; and the marvel is that it is not an impossibility, an unrighteousness, a contradiction. To save it from being such, it is requisite that certain principles be introduced, unknown in the simple transaction of justifying the holy and unfallen.

These principles are three—namely, Grace, Suretyship, and Faith.

We shall, in the first place, notice the manner in which they are introduced, rendering the justification of a sinner possible, holy, and real; and, in the second place, we shall show how each of these three principles excludes the presence and influence of works or merit from this same act of a sinner's justification—thus demonstrating the thrice repeated declaration or doctrine of Gal. ii, 16, that “a man is not justified by the works of the law.”

I. In the first place, we propose to give a sketch of the manner in which these three principles, unnecessary and unknown in the justification of the innocent and obedient, become requisite and indispensable in justifying the ungodly.

1. And first, Grace must appear, else the sinner lies unpitied, unrelieved, beneath the sentence due to his iniquity; for “cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them,” and “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men.” Hence grace must interpose.

In justifying the holy and unerring, grace is not required nor admissible. “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” Omniscient accuracy in examining his work or obedience, and then inflexible justice announcing and rewarding its faultless perfection—this is all that is required where the law has been fulfilled and its reward been earned. Justice, simple and alone, rules this simple case. But where the subject is a sinful man, confessedly rebellious and apostate, alienated by an evil heart and by wicked works from God, and worthy of the Divine abhorrence and wrath—if the penalty, righteously incurred, is nevertheless to be remitted, and the reward not earned is nevertheless to be conferred, this result must accrue from the grace of God; and the grace thus coming into action must obviously be absolutely sovereign and free. For the sinner, having broken a law that is holy and just and good, is in the hands and at the disposal of an offended righteous lawgiver; justice awards to him the wrath of God and the second death; it does so with unimpeachable righteousness. There can be no principle of holy government traversed, no

rights in God's whole creation violated, no rightful claims dishonoured or neglected, if this guilty and condemned transgressor be forsaken to the doom he has incurred. And the Sovereign Lord is in the position therefore—a position standing out in bold relief against the dark background of the sinner's dreadful doom, strongly and sharply delineated in the light of unanswerable justice as it fills the court of heaven and discloses the rectitude of the sinner's condemnation and the terrors of the sinner's peril—the Sovereign Lord is in the position to vindicate his pure sovereignty and the free good pleasure of his will, and to declare that "he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion." Any dislike to his sovereignty, any appeal against his mere sovereignty in such a case, is an infatuated retreat into the hands of justice, as it is offended by our sin, and demands our death. The one door of hope here, in this valley of Achor, is the good pleasure of the will of God—the introduction and inbringing of singular, signal, sovereign grace; the only grace, free, sovereign, and unfettered, that can be seasonable or suitable, or sufficient for the crisis. The grace of God must appear, bringing salvation. For while the sinner stands condemned, shut up to the righteously deserved wrath of God, sovereign grace holds the key of the position, the key of David that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. Save for the introduction of grace, the sinner must go down into the pit.

If you are saved from going down into the pit, if you are acquitted and accepted notwithstanding your demonstrated and acknowledged guilt, if after lying in the hands of Divine justice you nevertheless appear at liberty again no more condemned but justified of God, most obvious it is that you are justified freely by his grace. In proportion to the force with which you realised the fact and the righteousness of your former condemnation must you now be ready with the deeper emphasis to say, "According to his mercy he saved me, that being justified by grace, I might be made an heir according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. iii, 7). Thus all throughout Holy Scripture the sinner's acquittal from guilt and acceptance as righteous are attributed to the grace, the mercy, the free love of God. "According to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. i, 5, 6, 7). Expressly, indeed, to illustrate the existence, in the glorious depths of his own nature, of this lovely attribute of grace, does God justify the ungodly revealing at the same time its unsearchable riches, its infinite fulness, its absolute all-sufficiency, which can meet the case of literally the chief of sinners. He willeth to make known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy. His heart is set on demonstrating the boundlessness of the mercy he hath kept in store for them. Yea, and his grand design is not merely to show his grace in this life and in this world, during the ages of this world only, or to the inhabitants of this world only, but that in the ages to come, and unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places; in coming ages and in other worlds; he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ (Eph. ii, 7). Hence, while we were yet without strength, while we were ungodly, while we were enemies guilty and condemned, God commendeth his love to us, in that he made provision to save us from wrath, to justify us freely, to reconcile us to himself as

righteous and pleasing in his sight. And herein "God is rich in mercy, even for the great love wherewith he loved us, when we were dead in trespasses and in sins: for by grace are ye saved" (Eph. ii, 4).

Hence, the saints in Scripture, in seeking relief from the sentence of condemnation and the sense of sin, are found betaking themselves to the mercy, the grace, the loving kindness of God. "Hear me, O God; for thy loving kindness is good: turn into me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies" (Ps. lxi, 16). "Remember, O Lord, they tender mercies and thy loving kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions; according to thy mercy remember me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord" (Ps. xxv, 6, 7). "Where is the sounding of thy bowels and of thy tender mercies towards me?" (Isa. lxiii, 15). "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions" (Ps. li, 1). And having found relief, to this attribute of God and this principle in his procedure towards them, to the sovereign and free introduction of this principle of grace, of gratuitous compassion, of unclaimable, unexpected love, they uniformly attribute all the glory. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. cvii, 1, 2).

Thus in the justification of the ungodly, Grace is conspicuous. It is a free gift that comes upon sinners unto justification of life; abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness. And under the reign of grace alone could the ungodly be acquitted or accepted as righteous. But this principle of Grace *has* been introduced, to the praise of the glory of God, and in a measure of full sufficiency for every hearer of the gospel: for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v, 20).

(To be continued.)

Thomas Boston, of Ettrick.*

By REV. D. BEATON.

I.

OVER two hundred years ago on the first day of May, Thomas Boston entered on his Ettrick ministry. The day is memorable in the history of Scotland as that on which the Union between England and Scotland was finally consummated. In his *Memoirs*¹ Boston makes reference to the two events. The Union was regarded with anything but favour by the great majority of the Scottish people, though it proved an incalculable blessing to Scotland, and two hundred years after its consummation we are being

* This series of articles are reprinted from the *Princeton Theological Review*.—Editor.

1. "On the first day of May I was admitted minister of Ettrick; a day remarkable to after ages as the day in which the Union of Scotland and England commenced, according to the articles thereof agreed upon by the two parliaments. And on that very account I had frequent occasion to remember it! the spirits of the people of that place being embittered on that event against the ministers of the church; which was an occasion of much heaviness to me, though I never was for the Union; but always against it from the beginning unto this day." *Memoirs*, p. 208. The edition of the *Memoirs* quoted is that edited by Rev. G. H. Morrison and published by Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, Edinburgh, 1899.

reminded by able articles in our leading journals of the feelings with which the people of 1706 and 1707 received the proposals for union. But the Scotland of to-day is more inclined to commemorate the event with rejoicings than to regard it as a calamity. Synchronising as has been noticed with this important event was the induction of the Rev. Thomas Boston to the parish of Ettrick. It, too, is an event that claims the attention not only of Scotsmen but of Presbyterians the wide world over. And already steps are being taken to commemorate the bi-centenary of the induction of Boston to the parish which was privileged to enjoy the oversight of one of the most renowned pastors that ever stood in a Scottish pulpit. But renowned as Boston was as a pastor and preacher, his fame as a student and scholar travelled beyond the bounds of his own church and country. Dr. James Walker, who is a competent judge, has borne eloquent testimony to Boston's scholarship.² And even such a writer as the late Rev. Henry G. Graham in his *Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* is constrained to bear testimony to Boston's remarkable influence though he refers to his theology in the flippant style common to writers of his school. "Notwithstanding much that seems extravagant to us," he says, "and melancholy in Mr. Boston, he was a man of ability and of great influence in his day; he was a powerful preacher of the grim school, the representative of a prominent type of thought and feeling; he moved the hearts and expressed the faith of a large proportion of the people throughout the country, who thumbed his *Crook in the Lot* and his *Fourfold State* with endless edification. Peasants and farmers read them by their peat fires, and shepherds on the solitary silent hills; his smaller works were the favourite chapbooks of pedlars, and the twelve portly tomes that contained his theological expositions were found in many a manse library and on the bookshelves of every Seceding minister long after the century was closed." (Vol. II, p. 80.)

II.

This may be regarded as a fitting time and place to make some reference to his place among Scottish preachers and theologians and to the part he played in some of the great controversies that agitated the Church of Scotland during his day.

At the outset some reference must be made to his remarkable *Memoirs*, for, after all, it is here we find Boston as he was. Scottish religious literature is by no means barren in autobiography. The *Autobiography and Diary* of James Melvill is invaluable to the student of Scottish ecclesiastical history for the period which it covers and the *Memoirs* of the Rev. James Fraser of Brea is a rich storehouse of spiritual experience, fragrant still with the sweet incense of prayer. But it may be said that Boston's *Memoirs* combines in a remarkable degree the distinguishing features of Melvill's

2. "At Simprin he had mastered the French language that he might have an entrance into French theological literature; but he seems to have been yet unacquainted with Hebrew. At the time he came to Ettrick, he tells us he borrowed a 'piece of the Hebrew Bible containing the books of Samuel and Kings' and with that set himself to the study of the 'Holy Tongue.' After a while he bought for himself the whole Hebrew Scriptures. 'This,' he says, 'was the happy year wherein I was first master of a Hebrew Bible.' And now he 'plied the Hebrew original close and with great delight.' I need not tell at length how he ran the course of Hebrew scholarship till he became an enthusiast on the subject of Hebrew accentuation and wanted to publish it . . . He was the best Hebrew scholar in Scotland as he was the freshest and most powerful of Scottish living theologians. And I have been told by the most competent scholar of our country that he regards Boston's work as one of sterling value and not yet out of date." Walker's *Scottish Theology and Theologians*, p. 321.

Autobiography and Fraser's *Memoirs*. The graphic pen pictures of persons, the happy descriptions of events in which Melvill was such a master are all characteristic of Boston's *Memoirs*, while on the other hand the deep religious experience of Fraser of Brea combined as it is with rare power in spiritual analysis and sane outlook on the remarkable phenomena of the spiritual life will be met with in Boston's autobiography. The *Memoirs* was published in 1776, forty-four years after his death. It has been said that the *Memoirs* was probably edited by his son, Thomas Boston, who succeeded his father at Ettrick and was latterly minister of the Relief Church at Jedburgh. But, as the Rev. George D. Low has pointed out, this could scarcely be the case, as Boston the younger died in 1767. In all likelihood it was the grandson of the elder Boston, Michael, who prepared the *Memoirs* for the press.³ In the "Address to his Children," which is prefixed to the *Memoirs*, Boston tells us that he left two autobiographic manuscripts.⁴ The one was entitled, *Passages of my Life*, and the other, *General Account of my Life*. The first was begun shortly after his settlement at Ettrick, and additions were made to it from time to time during his ministry till it was completed in October in 1730. In this he incorporated passages from a diary and other incidents he had previously taken note of. The second manuscript, the *General Account*, was begun in December, 1729, and completed in October, 1730. To both of these Boston added some passages afterwards. In the first edition of the *Memoirs* (1776), Michael Boston states in a note, "in preparing this work for the press, it was judged absolutely necessary, in order to prevent repetition, and references from the one volume to the other, to reduce both into one continued narrative or history, taking care all along to insert the *Passage of His Life* in the *General Account* in their proper places, according to their respective dates and years and as the nature of the subjects treated of required."

III.

The manuscripts of these two works were to remain in Boston's family—"the property thereof to be vested from time to time, in such an one of them, if any such there shall be, as shall addict himself to the holy ministry." In accordance with this wish, the manuscripts passed to his son Thomas, and from him to Michael Boston, who died in 1785. Brown of Whitburn had evidently perused one of the manuscripts, and from the materials gathered by him it is now known that it was the *General Account* he had seen. But from 1785 nothing was known of what had become of this manuscript. The Rev. George Low, already referred to, having heard that the manuscript was still in existence, took steps to procure it, and was successful in his search. A number of changes, not improvements in all cases at least, were made by the editor in the first edition.⁵ A number of

3. See a very interesting article in *British Weekly*, Nov. 28, 1906, entitled "Thomas Boston: His Memoirs—Original Manuscripts," by Rev. Geo. D. Low, M.A., Edinburgh. A full account of the manuscripts of the *Memoirs* is given in this article, to which we are much indebted for the above. Mr. Low has decided to publish the *General Account of My Life*, and in all likelihood it will appear in the autumn of this year.

4. Morrison ed. of *Memoirs*, p. 1.

5. Boston wrote "dovering," his grandson substituted slumbering; river becomes tear; allanerly, solely; coupling over, falling down; moyen, interests; din, noise; spunk, spark; bent sail, bent; feckless mints to duty, silly essays at duty. Of the errors of the first edition perpetuated in the subsequent editions one instance may be given: "convened in the mass," whereas Boston wrote "convened in the manse." Other interesting omissions are given in the *British Weekly* in the article already referred to.

editions of the *Memoirs* has appeared since. They constitute the twelfth volume of his collected works published in 1854. Probably the best edition is that edited by Rev. G. H. Morrison and published in 1899.⁶ The *Memoirs* is addressed to his children, and in the address, as originally written, there are a few sentences that do not appear in the printed editions. "Let not my recording the lowness of my beginning offend you," he says; "for the lower I perceive the same to have been, it affords me the greater joy and rejoicing in that God, who hath done all things for me . . . As to what you may find recorded concerning any of ourselves; that ye would not wish; they were steps of providence to me, and may be useful to you through grace. The manuscripts, you will easily perceive, are not design'd for public view; and they are left in your own power. Moreover you would consider me writing them, as leaving this world, to have no more a portion in what is done under the sun, and as going into the other world, where many things here reckoned considerable, are of no weight nor value at all."

Thomas Boston was born in the little town of Duns, which has the honour of being the birthplace of men renowned in the ecclesiastical world. Tradition says John Duns Scotus was a native of the parish; it is also the birthplace of Thomas MacCrie, the well-known biographer of Knox. It was in 1676 that Boston first saw the light. While still a boy his father was cast into prison for nonconformity, and Thomas spent a night with him; the memory of which often haunted him in after years. He was early sent to school, "and having a capacity for learning and being of a towardly disposition," was kindly treated by the good dame who taught him first to master the mysteries of the alphabet. At the age of seven, he tells us, he read his Bible and had delight in reading it.⁷ In 1684 or 1685 he went to the grammar school of his native town, and while at this school he was a diligent attender at public worship, and gave what attention would be expected from a boy to the ministrations of the Episcopal incumbent. In 1687 he was taken by his father to a Presbyterian meeting in the Newton of Whitsome. The preacher was the Rev. Henry Erskine, the father of Ebenezer and Ralph, the two famous Secession preachers, and Boston heard for the first time a voice that called him to the consideration of eternal realities.⁸ The sermons that most impressed him were preached from the texts, "O generation of vipers who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" and "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." After this, he regularly attended Henry Erskine's ministry at Revelaw, which was about four miles from Duns. "In the summer-time," he says, "company could hardly be missed; and with them something to be heard, especially in the returning, that was for edification, to which I listened; but in the winter, sometimes it was my lot to go alone, without so much as the benefit of a horse to carry me through Blackadder water,

6. *Memoirs of the Life, Time, and Writings of the Reverend and Learned Thomas Boston, A.M.*, sometime minister at Simprin, afterwards at Ettrick. New Edition with Introduction and Notes by the Rev. George H. Morrison, M.A., Dundee. Edinburgh, and London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1899.

7. "Meanwhile I know nothing induced me to it, but the natural vanity of my mind; and curiosity as about some scripture histories. However, I am thankful, that it was at all made my choice early; and that it hath been the study of my ripest years, with which I would fain close my life if it were His will." *Memoirs*, p. 7.

8. Years afterwards, in referring to this event, he says: "Little wast thou thinking, O my soul, on Christ or thyself when thou went to the Newton of Whitsome to hear a preaching. When Christ first dealt with thee; there thou got an unexpected cast." *Soliloquy of Man Fishing*. Works V., p. 11.

the wading whereof in sharp frosty weather I very well remember. But such things were then easy, for the benefit of the word, which came with power." In the maturer experience of after years, he looks back and reviews the fervent feelings of these early days, and found that he was "raw and unexperienced, had much weakness and ignorance, and much of a legal disposition and way, then, and for a good time after, undiscerned," but yet he could honestly say that he "was in good earnest concerned for a saving interest in Jesus Christ." It may be interesting at this place to quote Boston as to the progress he had made at the grammar school and the subjects that were taught in such schools in his time. "I learned Latin rudiments, Despauter's grammar, and all the authors, in verse or prose, then usually read in schools; and profited above the rest of my own class, by means of whom my progress was more slow. And before I left the school, I, generally, saw no Roman author, but what I found myself in some capacity to turn into English: but we were not put to be careful about proper English. Towards the end of that time, I was also taught Vossius's *Elements of Rhetoric* and 15th May 1689 began the Greek, learned some parts of the New Testament, to wit, some part of John, of Luke, and of the Acts of the Apostles."⁹ Boston was at this time only between thirteen and fourteen years of age, so that it will be admitted that he had made fair progress in education. Young Boston's mind was now set on the ministry, but his father not having sufficient means to give him a university education, the door seemed shut in his face. But neither father nor son gave up hope altogether. Sometimes the way looked so dark that Boston thought of turning to a trade, but his father would not hear of it. At length, after two years, the way was opened and Boston entered Edinburgh University in 1691. Of his life at the University we know little, except that he applied himself with diligence in the pursuit of knowledge and practised economy to such an extent that at the end of his Arts course his expenses only amounted to £11. The result of this rigid economy bore fruit in after years in the weakly constitution that made life a heavy burden to him many a day. In 1694, he graduated in arts, and in the same year he received the bursary of the Presbytery of Duns. In the following year he began his theological course, and spent one session at the university.

(To be continued.)

Providence with Respect to Conversion of Sinners.*

By REV. JOHN FLAVEL (1677).

THE next remarkable performance of Providence for the people of God, which I will instance, shall be with respect to its ordering the occasions, instruments, and means of their conversion.

In nothing doth Providence shine forth more gloriously in this world, than it doth in this performance for the people of God. How curiously soever its hand hath moulded your bodies, how tenderly soever it had preserved them, and how bountifully soever it had provided for them; if it had not also ordered some means or other for your conversion, all the

9. *Memoirs*, p. 12.

* From Flavel's *Treatise on the Mystery of Providence*.—Editor.

former favours and benefits it had done for you had signified little. This, oh this, is the most excellent benefit you ever received from its hand! You are more beholden to it for this, than for all your other mercies. And, in opening this performance of Providence, I cannot but think your hearts must be deeply affected. This is a subject, which every gracious heart loves to steep its thoughts in. It is certainly the sweetest history that ever they repeated; they love to think and talk of it. The places where, and instruments by whom this work was wrought, are exceedingly endeared to them for the work's sake; yea, endeared to that degree, that, for many years after, their hearts have melted, when they have but passed occasionally by those places, or but seen the faces of those persons, who were used as instruments, in the hand of Providence, for their good. As no doubt but Jacob's Bethel was ever after that night sweet to his thoughts, so other saints have had their Bethels as well as he. Oh blessed places, times, and instruments! Oh the deep, the sweet impressions, never to be razed out of the memory or heart, that this providence has made upon those on whom it wrought this blessed effect at years of discretion, and in a more sensible way!

But lest any poor soul should be discouraged under the display of this providence, because he cannot remember the time, place, instruments and manner wherein, and by which conversion-work was wrought, I will therefore premise this necessary distinction, to prevent injury to some, whilst I design benefit to others. Conversion, as to the subject of it, may be considered two ways; either as it is more sensibly wrought in persons of riper years, who, in their youthful days, were more profane and vile; or upon persons in their tender years, into whose hearts grace was more insensibly and indiscernibly instilled by God's blessing upon pious education. In the former sort, the distinct acts of the Spirit, as illuminating, convincing, humbling, drawing them to Christ, and sealing them, are more evident and discernible; in the latter, more obscure and confused: they can remember that God gave them an esteem and liking of godly persons, care of duty, and conscience of sin; but as to the time, place, instruments, and manner of the work, they can give but a slender account of them. However, if the work be savingly wrought in them, there is no reason they should be troubled because the circumstances of it are not so evident to them as they are to others. Let the substance and reality of the work appear, and there is no reason to afflict yourselves, because the evidence of such circumstances is wanting.

But, yet, where the circumstances as well as substance are clear to men; when we can call to remembrance the time when, the place where, the instrument by whom that work was wrought, it must needs be exceedingly sweet; and they cannot but yield a fresh delight to the soul every time they are reflected upon.

There are many of the following occasions which, it may be, we took for stragglers, when they first befell us; but they proved scouts sent out from the main body of providence, which they make way for.

Now there are divers things in those providences, that are connected with this work, are exceedingly sweet and taking, as:—

1. The wonderful strangeness and unaccountableness of this work of Providence in casting us into the way, and ordering the occasions, yea, the minutest circumstances about this work. This you find in Acts viii, 26-30,

etc. The eunuch, at that very instant when he was reading the prophet Isaiah, hath an interpreter, one among a thousand, that joins his chariot just as his mind was, by a fit occasion, prepared to receive the first light of the knowledge of Christ.

And how strange was that change, how far soever it went, upon Naaman the Syrian! recorded II Kings, v. 1-4, that the Syrians, in their incursions, should bring away this girl (likely her beauty was the inducement), and she must be presented to Naaman's wife, and relate to her the power of God, that accompanied the prophet; though you find in that particular case there had never been an instance given before, Luke iv, 27. Doubtless the whole of this affair was guided by the signal direction of Providence.

So for the conversion of the Samaritans it is observed, John iv, 4. Christ must needs go that way, because it lay just in the road betwixt Judea and Galilee, and that at the sixth hour, that is, high noon, he rests himself upon Jacob's well, still seeming to have no other design but his own refreshment, by sitting and drinking there; but, oh! what a train of blessed providences follows this, which seemed but an accidental thing! First, the woman of Samaria, and then, many more in that city, are brought to believe in Christ, as you find in verses 29 and 41.

It is noted by Melchior Adam, in the life of Junius, how very an atheist he grew in his younger years; but, in order to his conversion to God, first a wonderful preservation of his life, in a public tumult at Lyons, in France, must make way, which forces from him the acknowledgment of a Deity; then his father sends for him home, and with much gentleness persuades him to read the scriptures; he lights upon the first of John, and with it, he sensibly feels a divine, supernatural majesty and power seizing his soul, which brought him over by a complete conversion to Jesus Christ. Thus, as the woman of Tekoa told David, "doth God devise means to bring back his banished."

Lavater tells us, that many Spanish soldiers, going into the wars of Germany, were there converted to Christ, by falling into the cities and towns inhabited by godly ministers and Christians.

Mr. Robert Bolton, though an excellent scholar, yet in his younger years was a very irreligious person, and a jeerer of holy men; but, being cast into the company of the godly Mr. Peacock, was, by him, brought to repentance, and proved a famous instrument in the church of Christ.

A scrap of paper accidentally coming to view hath been used as an occasion of conversion. This was the case of a minister in Wales, who had two livings, but took little care of either. He being at a fair, bought something at a pedlar's standing, and rent off a leaf of Mr. Perkin's catechism to wrap it in, and reading a line or two in it, God set it home so as it did the work.

The marriage of a godly man, into a carnal family, hath been ordered by Providence for the conversion and salvation of many therein. Thus we read, in the life of that renowned English worthy, Mr. John Bruen, that, in his second match, it was agreed that he should have one year's diet in his mother-in-law's house: during his abode there that year (saith Mr. Clark), the Lord was pleased, by his means, graciously to work upon her soul, as also upon his wife's sister, and half-sister, their brothers, Mr. William and Mr. Thomas Fox, with one or two of the servants in that family.

The reading of a good book hath been the means of bringing others to Christ. And thus we find many of the German divines converted by reading Luther's books. Yea, and what is more strange, Mr. Sleyden, in his Commentary, tells us, that Vergerius, though he were present an eye and ear witness to that doleful case of Spira, which one would think should move a stone, yet still continued so firm to the Pope's interest, that when he fell into some suspicion among the cardinals, he resolved to purge himself by writing a book against the German apostates; but, whilst he read the Protestant books, out of no other design but to confute them, whilst he is weighing the arguments, is himself convinced, and brought to Christ. He, finding himself thus overcome by the truth, imparts his conviction to his brother, a zealous Papist also; this brother deplores the misery of his case, and seeks to reclaim him; but Vergerius, entreating him to weigh well the Protestant arguments, he also yields; and so both immediately betook themselves to preach justification, by the free grace of God, through the blood of Christ.

Yea, not only the reading of a book, or hearing of a minister, but, which is most remarkable, the very mistake or forgetfulness of a minister hath been improved by Providence for this end and purpose. Augustine, once preaching to his congregation, forgot the argument which he first proposed, and fell upon the errors of the Manichees, beside his first intention; by which discourse, he converted one Firmus, his auditor, who fell down at his feet weeping, and confessing he had lived a Manichee many years. Another I knew, who, going to preach, took up another Bible than that he designed, in which, not only missing his notes, but the chapter also in which his text lay, was put to some loss thereby; but, after a short pause, he resolved to speak to any other scripture that might be presented to him, and accordingly, read the text, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (II Peter iii, 9), and though he had nothing prepared, yet the Lord helped him to speak both methodically and pertinently from it: by which discourse a gracious change was wrought upon one in the congregation, who hath since given good evidence of a sound conversion, and acknowledged this sermon to be the first and only means thereof.

The accompanying of others, in a neighbourly, civil visit, has been overruled to the same end. Thus many of the Jews accompanied Mary into Bethany, designing only to manifest their civil respect, but there they met Christ, saw the things which he did, and believed on him (John xi, 45).

Mr. Firmin, in his *Real Christian*, tells us of one who had lived many years in a town where Christ had been as clearly and as long preached as in any town in England. This man, when he was about seventy-six years of age, went to visit a sick neighbour. "A Christian friend of mine," saith my author, "came to see him also; and finding this old man there, whom he judged to be one that lived upon his own stock, civility, good works, etc., he purposely fell into that discourse to show how many persons lived upon their duties, but never came to Christ. The old man, sitting by the bed-side, heard him, and God was pleased to convince him, that he was such a person, who had lived upon himself, without Christ, to that day; and would say afterwards, Had I died before threescore and sixteen, I had perished, for I knew not Christ."

The committing of a godly man to prison hath been the method of Providence to save the soul of a poor keeper. So Paul was made a prisoner,

to make his keeper a spiritual freeman (Acts xvi, 27). The like success had Dr. Barnes, in Queen Mary's day, who celebrated the Lord's supper in prison with his converted keeper.

The scattering of ministers and Christians, by persecution, from cities and towns, into the ignorant and barbarous parts of the country, hath been the way of Providence to find out and bring home some lost sheep that were found there to Jesus Christ (Acts viii, 1, 4). The like signal event hath since followed upon the like scattering of godly ministers, whereof there are many pregnant instances at this day.

A servant running away from his master, likely upon no other design but to live an idle life, yet falling into such places and companies as Providence ordered in a design to him unknown, hath thereby been brought to be the servant of Christ. This was the very case of Onesimus, who ran away from his master Philemon, to Rome, where, by a strange providence (possibly a mere curiosity to see the prisoners), he falls into Paul's hands, who begat him to Christ in his bonds (Philemon 10-16).

Going to hear a sermon in *jest* hath proved some men's conversion in *earnest*. The above-named Mr. Firmin, in the fore-cited book, tells us of a notorious drunkard, whom the drunkards called father, that one day would needs go to hear what Wilson said, out of no other design, it seems, but to scoff at that holy man: but, in the prayer before sermon, his heart began to thaw, and when he read his text, which was, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John v, 14), he could not contain; and in that sermon the Lord changed his heart, though so bitter an enemy, that the minister, on lecture days, was afraid to go to church before his shop door. "Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how small a portion is known of him!"

The dropping of some grave and weighty word, accidentally, in the presence of vain, carnal persons; the death of a husband, wife, or child; a fit of sickness, with a thousand other such like occasions, have been thus improved, by Providence, to the conversion of souls.

And no less remarkable and wonderful are the designs of Providence, in ordering the removes, and governing the motions of ministers, from place to place, in order unto the conversion of souls. Thus, oftentimes, it carries them to places where they intended not to go; God having, unknown to them, some elect vessels there, who must be called by the gospel.

Thus Paul and Timothy, a sweet and lovely pair, when they were travelling through Phrygia and Galatia, were forbid to preach the word in Asia, to which probably their minds inclined (Acts xvi, 6), and when they essayed to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not (verse 7), but a man of Macedonia, that is an angel in the shape or habit of a man of that country, appeared to Paul in a vision, and prayed him, saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (verse 9), and there did God open the heart of Lydia.

I knew a pious minister, now with God, who, falling in his study upon a very rousing subject, intended for his own congregation, was strongly moved, when he had finished it, to go to a rude, vile, profane people, about five miles off, and first preach it to them. After many wrestlings with himself, not being willing to quench any motion that might be supposed to come from the Spirit of God, he obeyed and went to this people, who had then no minister of their own, and few durst come among them; and

there did the Lord, beyond all expectation, open a door, and several profane ones received Christ in that place, and engaged this minister to a weekly lecture among them, in which many souls were won to God.

The same holy man, at another time, being upon a journey, passed by a company of vain persons, who were wrestling upon a green near the road; and just as he came against the place, one of them had thrown his antagonist, and stood triumphing in his strength and activity. This good man rode up to them, and turning his speech to this person, told him, Friend, I see you are a strong man, but let not the strong man glory in his strength: you must know, that you are not to wrestle with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses: how sad will it be, that Satan should at last trip up the heels of your hope, and give you an eternal overthrow! And, after about a quarter of an hour's serious discourse upon this subject, he left them, and went on his journey; but this discourse made such an impression, that the person had no rest till he opened his trouble to a godly minister, who, wisely following the work upon his soul, saw at last the blessed issue thereof in the gracious change of the person, whereof he afterwards gave the minister a joyful account. Oh! how unsearchable are the methods of Providence in this matter.

A Letter to our People on Sabbath Observance.

Issued by the Sabbath Observance Committee, by order of the Synod,
and instructed to be read in all our Congregations.

DEAR FRIENDS,

We live in a generation which shows little or no respect for the Sabbath of God. Its observance such as it is, is not in accordance with the Commandment, and therefore an offence and an insult to Him who is Lord of the Sabbath. As a plea for their profanation of the Lord's Day, many advance works of necessity and mercy. But God will not be mocked. Among this class of hypocrites who are heading towards the Sabbath-breaker's doom in a lost eternity, are all who cater on the Lord's Day for godless hikers and tourists who trample underfoot the Sabbath Day. God in His holy commandment holds us responsible for the strangers within our gates. If they refuse to keep the Sabbath holy as God requires, God will hold us guilty if we keep them within our gates. Popular opinion may hold us innocent, but not the Judge of all. Better to be poor and honour the Commandment of God, than wax rich on Sabbath gain and go to hell. This also applies to all engaged in pleasure boats which run on the Sabbath, to the owners and employees of hotels, youth hostels, boarding houses, etc., catering for Sabbath tourists. When or where was a God-fearing man or woman ever found so dishonouring the law of God? "If ye love Me," said Christ, "keep My commandments."

All engaged in the running of trains, trams, buses, cars, etc., for gain, in systematic disregard of the Lord's Day, openly declare whose they are and whom they serve. The eminent Rev. Lachlan MacKenzie, of Lochcarron, said, "Judas sold his religion and his soul for thirty pieces of silver, and many would sell their religion for a creel of sea-ware, for a stoup of whisky, and for a small pendicle of land. The man that takes money for the hire

of his boat upon the Lord's Day sells his religion and his Saviour for a few shillings. Judas sought an opportunity to betray Him, and how small is the excuse that will make many turn their back upon Him. How trifling is the thing that will keep them from the precious means of grace. And we may notice that all these deviations from our duty to our Saviour are so many lesser species of the sin of Judas. As far as we are kept back by a covetous heart, we follow that unhappy traitor. When people give up the means of grace the language of their conduct is, What will I get and I shall desert my religion. And whatever profit or pleasure may be promised them, they have but Judas's pennyworth at last" (*Sermons*, Vol. II, page 206). Let those who work on Sabbath on housing schemes, hydro-electric schemes, take solemn warning.

Another large class of Sabbath-breakers are those who neglect the means of grace. To neglect the means of salvation is tantamount to neglecting the salvation itself. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" We would lovingly urge our young people to give obedience to the command of Him who is our Maker and who will one day be our Judge. "Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord" (Lev. xix, 30). We are warned not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together to the worship of God. It is in connection with the sin of forsaking the public means of grace that the following solemn warnings are given. "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews x, 26-31).

We would warn against the widespread evil of profaning the Sabbath by worldly or common conversation. Those who trifle away the sacred hours of the Sabbath in this manner are guilty before God. Such persons cannot be in earnest in seeking after God, nor can they have much concern about their soul's salvation. "Sabbath profanation," wrote the saintly Rev. Gavin Parker, of Aberdeen, "is a transgression of the First Table of the Law which prescribes our duty to God; robbery is a transgression of the Second, which prescribes our duty to man. The most able and judicious theologians agree with the standards of our Church, in affirming that sins committed more immediately against God are more heinous in their own nature than sins committed more immediately against man. All sin is committed against God; but Sabbath profanation is more directly against Him than robbery. He who knows the law, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,' and yet employs a part of the day in common conversation, offers a direct insult to God and provokes Him to anger. By persevering in this practice, the everlasting ruin of the soul is rendered inevitable. No rational hope of salvation can be entertained by one who voluntarily and presumptuously persists in violating any statute of God's law. He who pollutes the Sabbath by habitually employing any part of it as a common day is chargeable with self-destruction." In the light of the above, how terribly guilty before God of polluting the Sabbath and of destroying their own souls for eternity are the sellers and readers of the "Sunday" newspapers, etc., etc. As the Monday newspapers involve Sabbath labour, we would warn our people from buying the Monday papers. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day;

and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it'' (Isaiah lviii, 13, 14).

In conclusion, we would remind our people that while there are organisations and churches professing a regard for the Sabbath in Scotland, the Synod, after due deliberation, unanimously resolved that owing to the glaring inconsistencies between their profession and practice, it was our duty as a church to cease to co-operate with such. The glory of God and the honour of His Day leave us no other course to pursue on the matter.

May grace be given to each and all of us to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints in the light of the exhortation which says, "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy" (Isaiah viii, 12).

Yours faithfully,

THE SABBATH OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE OF THE
FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

REV. D. R. MACDONALD, Tarbert, *Convener*.

Searmon.

Leis an Urr. R. SIBBES, D.D.

(*Air a leantainn bho t.d. 132.*)

Feum. Gu crìoch a chur air a phuing so, tha mi guidhe oirbh, saothraichibh a chùim a bhi beo tre'n chreidimh so. Ann an so tha fianuis, ma's urrainn sinn a bhi beo da reir. Cia mar sin? Gach latha a bhi deanamh feum do fhìreantachd Chrìosd, mar a tha sinn gach latha a ruith a stigh ann am peacadh. Bithibh cinnteach gu'm bi 'ur coguisibh air an crathadh le fuil Chrìosd, chùim agus mar a tha sinn a meudachadh cionta as ùr, mar sin gu'm bi maithneas as ùr againn. Uime sin, gach latha saothraichibh gu bhi faicinn Dhé air a dheanamh reidh rìbh, agus Chrìosd mar 'ur fear-tagraidh maille ris an Athair. Tha Chrìosd a nis ann an neamh. Ma pheacaicheas sibh deanamh feum dheth. 'S e so a bheatha bu chòr a bhi aig a Chrìosduidh, a bhi deanamh feum de fhìreantachd Chrìosd. 'N uair a gheibh sibh bhuir nàdur truailte, theirigibh gu Dia, agus abraibh, Thighearn, ged tha mo nàdur truailte ann fein, gidheadh tha e naomh agus fìor-ghlan ann an Chrìosd. Ghabh e annhaineachd nàdur na daonnachd ga ionnsuidh fein chum agus gun comh-phàirticheadh e luach agus eifeachd nàdur na Diadhachd ruinne. A thaobh mo ghnìomharan, is peacach mi, ach phàigh Chrìosd m'fhiachan uile agus tha e nis air neamh. Choinhilion e gach uile fhìreantachd air mo shon-sa. Na amhaire orm mar a tha mi annam fein, ach amhaire orm mar a tha mi ann an Chrìosd. Is aon Esan agus mise. Bu chòr gu'm b'e so ar n-obair gach latha, a bhi'g iarraidh a bhi ga'r faicinn fein ann an Chrìosd, agus a bhi ga fhaicinn-sa agus sinne na'r n'aon. Bu chòr dhomh leudachadh air a phuing so ni's fhaide ach labhruidh mi focal air an aobhar.

Ciod e'n t-aobhar air son am faod agus an toir an Comhfhurtair seachad dearbh-shoilleireachd mu fhìreantachd. "Do bhrìgh gu bheil mi 'dol a chùin an Athar." Ciod e an neart a tha 's an aobhar sin? tha so: ghabh Crìosd air a bhi na urras dhuinn, agus feumaidh e ar saoradh bho ar n-uile pheacaidhean ma's urrainn e dol a chùin an Athar. Na'm bithheadh aon pheacadh gun riarachadh air a shon cha b'urrainn e 'dhol a chùin Athar, ach a nis tha e air dol a chùin Athar, uime sin tha riarachadh air a thoirt air son ar n-uile pheacaidhean. Mar sin tha dol suas Crìosd na bharantas gu leoir dhòmhsa gu bheil mo phearsa air gabhail ris agus mo pheacaidhean air am maitheadh; do bhrìgh gu bheil e air dol a chùin an Athar, gu bhi ga thaisbeanadh fein an làthair an Athar air ar son-ne, ni nach b'urrainn dha dheanamh mar a robh e air gach uile fhìreantachd a choimhlionadh.

Ach e'ar son a chaidh e chùin an Athar? Air son co-chur a dheanamh air an ni a dh'oirbich e. Mar a robh Crìosd air dol a chùin an Athar cha b'urrainn e'n Spiorad Naomh a chur do ar n'ionnsuidh-ne. Uime sin, tha feum mòr ann e bhi dol a chùin Athar. Tha Satan a tagradh an làthair Dhe gu bheil sinn mar sud's mar so, ach a deir Crìosd, dhoirt mise m'fhuil air an son; agus, mar sin, tha e deanamh cùbhraidh ar n-uile ùrnuighean laga. Mar a' robh sinn neo-iomlan, ciod e'm feum air Eadar-mheadhonair air neamh? Uime sin, tha e air a 'dhol gu neamh gu bhi toirt na brìgh a uile chasaidean Shatain, agus gu bhi'g ullachadh aite dhuinn. Faigh-mid bàs, ge b'e cuin, tha ar 'n aite ullamh.

An sin a ris, tha e 'dol a chùin an Athar gu bhi ga'r còmhdaich le dàimh mhilis, gu bhi deanamh ar n-Athair-ne dhe'n an Athair. Oir tha e ag ràdh an Eoin xx, 17: "Tha mise 'dol suas a chùin m'Athar fein agus bhuir n-Athair-se," agus, mar sin, cha nàr leis bràithrean a ghairm dhìnn. Do bhrìgh so faodaidh sinn a dhol a dh'ionnsuidh Dhé agus ar n-Athair a ghairm dheth; agus, 'n uair a gheibh sinn bàs, faodaidh sinn gun ladurnas a ràdh, "Athair tha mi tiomnadh mo spioraid ann ad làimh-sa"; oir tha gràdh aig an Athair dhuinn mar a thug e gràdh do Crìosd, ach ann an tomhas tur eadar-dhealaicht'. Ciod e chomfhurtachd a tha'n so, 'n uair a gheibh sinn bàs gu'm bheil sinn a dol a chum ar n-Athar, a tha ni's fearr na athair talamhaidh air bith. Uime sin, bhuineadh oibhneas a bhi oirne 'n uair a thig am ar siubhail. Chi sinn mar a leum eridhe seann Iacob 'n uair a chunnaic e na carbadan a tighinn a mach as an Eiphit, do bhrìgh gu'n rachadh e a dh'fhaicinn a mhic Ioseph, mar sin tha'm bàs air a chur a chùin a giulain gu Crìosd, agus gu neamh, agus na'm bitheadh creidimh làidir againn bhitheadh-mid ro-oibhneach.

Agus foghlumadh-mid ann an so cleachdadh a chreidimh bho Crìosd, oir tha e'g ràdh, "Tha mi 'dol a chùin an Athar." Bha mòran uine fathasd ri 'dhol seachad, cha robh ni bu lugha na da fhichead latha an deigh ais-eirigh, mu's deachaidh e chùin an Athar, gidheadh tha e'g ràdh, "Tha mi 'dol a chùin an Athar," gu bhi nochdadh gu bheil creidimh a cur nithean ri teachd mar gu'm bitheadh iad ann: tha creidimh a faicinn neamh an làthair, latha bhreitheanais an làthair, agus na nithean sin a toirt buaidh air an anam mar gu'm bitheadh iad a nis an lathair. Na'm bitheadh spiorad a chreidimh againn chuireadh e mar so nithean a tha'm fad as mar gu'm bitheadh iad dlùth air làimh. Uime sin 'n uair a choinnicheas sibh ri ni 's am bith a tha fàgail 'ur slighe gu neamh fada, na trioblaideach, cleachdaibh 'ur creidimh, agus mar sin deanamh ceann bhuir turuis na ni a tha làthair do 'ur spioradaibh. Ged a tha e fada bho

'ur faireachadh abraibh, "Tha mi 'dol a chùim an Athar.'" 'N uair a tha duine air a thoirt aon uair gu bhi creidsinn gur e Dia Athair ann an Criosd, bheir e air coiseachd a dh'ionnsuidh neamh roimh'n am.

Feum. Deanadh-mid feum do'n phuig so, Criosd a dol a chùim an Athar. A luchd mo ghràidh, cha'n eil puig do dhiadhachd anns nach eil tobar iongantach do chomhfhurtachd; agus 's e ar beag creidimh is aobhar nach eil sinn a tarruig barrachd comhfhurtachd bh'uatha. Uime sin, 'n uair a tha sinn a dealachadh ri'r càirdean aig a bhàs, smuaintichibh orra air dol a chùim an Athar. Na'm bitheadh gràdh agaibh dhòmhsa, arsa Criosd, bhitheadh aoibhneas oirbh a chionn gu'n d'thubhairt mi ribh, Tha mi 'dol a chùim an Athar. Na'm bitheadh gràdh againn da'r càirdean dheanadh-mid aoibhneas 'n uair a gheibheadh iad bàs. A luchd mo ghràidh, bu chòr dha so comhfhurtachd a thoirt dhuinn, gu bheil Criosd air dol a chùim Athar. O, ciod i'n fhàilt a fhuair Criosd 'n uair a chaidh e do neamh, agus bithidh an fhàilt cheudna againn 'n uair a theid sinn a chùim an Athar. Ciod i'n aoidheachd oibhneach a gheibh sinn bho'n Athair agus bho'n a Mhae, uime sin cha bu chòr do'n bhàs a bhi na thrioblaid dhuinn. Abraibh, Is leamsa fireantachd Criosd, uime sin tha fios agam gu'n teid mi chùim an Athar. Ciod e 's motha leamsa, uime sin, ciod e'n seorsa phiantaibh a theid mi troimhe. Ma tha duine a dol do'n àite is miannach leis, ge b'e cho trioblaideach 's a bhitheas an t-slighe bheir mìlseachd na crìche air mì-mhisneachd na slighe a dhì-chuimhneachadh. Faodaidh gur eigin dhuinn 'dol do neamh tre chuan fala, ach cha dean e cron, ni a chrìoch suas uile e. Ged a chailleadh-mid ar lannan 's ar casan air an t-slighe, 's fearr a dh'ol crùbach do neamh na bhi dannsa a dol do ifrinn. *Eadar-theangaichte le Iain Mac a Chombaich, Gleann-dail.*

(A' chrìoch.)

Notes and Comments.

Free Church Minister and Restrictive Form of Worship.

Rev. Ian M. MacRury, Free Church Minister, of Strathpeffer Congregation, intimated publicly at the beginning of October that he was leaving the Free Church of Scotland, after serving that Church for eight years. His application for admission to the Church of Scotland was to be dealt with by their appropriate Committee on the 4th October. Mr. MacRury stated, "I have been approached to become Minister of certain Church of Scotland charges and will likely consider one from Glasgow." Why we are taking notice of this matter is because it was "front-page" news in the daily press and more especially on account of the reasons given by this young minister for leaving the Free Church. In a farewell sermon he declared that he felt handicapped by the present form of worship in the Free Church and thought that his ministry would be better exercised in a sphere in which the expression of the faith would be "less restricted." The sphere referred to is the Church of Scotland. Later, he stated, "In the Free Church we use psalms exclusively. I feel that to express the full Christian faith and gospel there must be some hymns and music." It seems that Mr. MacRury by his way and in his view of "the full Christian faith and gospel," cannot worship God nor preach the Gospel of Christ to sinners and saints without the aid of hymns of human composition and music.

What a deplorable confession and hollow excuse this is for joining the Church of Scotland! Who is Mr. MacRury to infer by implication, that those who have nothing but the singing of the psalms, prayer, reading the Word of God, and the preaching of the whole counsel of the Gospel of the blessed Saviour, are not giving expression to the full Christian faith and gospel? We are perfectly aware that Mr. MacRury was speaking for himself in this matter, but we are at liberty to argue that *if he is right* (which he is not), then the holy Apostles and the godly fathers throughout the history of Christ's true and faithful Church in Scotland, were sadly lacking in their witness and in their mode of expressing the full Christian faith and gospel. Did Alexander Henderson and James Renwick, Thos. Boston, Dr. Kidd, the Cooks, Dr. Kennedy, of Dingwall, and a mighty host of others, need hymns and music to give full expression in their worship to the Christian faith and gospel? Certainly not. But what they possessed was grace and godliness and the divine and wonderful presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit. Then the Lord's people were made joyful in the Tabernacles of His grace, and sinners were converted. It is not hymns and organs that the Church in Scotland needs, but the pouring forth upon us all of the Holy Spirit; for they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Further, it appears to be only too true that there are two parties in the Free Church, a modern, advanced party, and a more conservative section in relation to the "old paths." Mr. MacRury substantiates this. He, in referring to his work regarding co-operation between various denominations, said, "In the Free Church there is a section of the more old-fashioned members who do not approve of this idea." Mr. MacRury does not seem yet to understand that the worship and gospel of the apostolic Church is for all ages and can never go out of fashion as long as sun and moon endure.

The Free Church and the Sabbath.

Prof. A. M. Renwick, on being interviewed by the press on Rev. Ian MacRury's resignation from the Free Church, made statements regarding his Church's attitude to certain practices regarding the Sabbath. He was mis-reported as to "Sunday" newspapers, to which he did not refer. But he *re-affirmed* in the daily press and in a Northern weekly paper, that his Church has no strict rules against members using tramcars and buses on Sabbath for going to Church, but that it is a matter left to the individual conscience. He stated this as a member of the Free Church General Assembly, and of the Lord's Day Observance Society. In his letter to the Northern paper, he writes, "I have often been a party to resolutions condemning the reading of Sunday newspapers and the use of transport for pleasure on Sunday." From what Prof. Renwick has declared regarding his and his Church's attitude to the use of trams and buses on Sabbath, we are at liberty to conclude that he has in view these modes of transport operating, very especially in the cities of the South, *in systematic disregard* of the Lord's Day. Prof. D. MacKenzie, of the Free Church Committee on Public Questions, stated when interviewed on the question, "that the Free Church does not condone either reading Sunday newspapers or travelling on public transport on Sundays." So now we have two views upon this question of Free Church members using public transport on Sabbath. One, that there is no strict rule against such a practice when travelling to Church; and two, that the Church does not *condone* the

practice. But let it be noted that the views expressed say *nothing of forbidding* members of the Free Church (and this includes office-bearers and Ministers) travelling on transport run principally for financial gain and for the pleasure of the general public on God's holy day. We presume where Sabbath trains are available to Free Church members, they may venture to use these also, if necessary, to get to Church services. Without going further into details or the implications raised by professing Christians travelling on Sabbath by public transport; we would make it clear that the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland *does not permit* its members in full communion and those receiving baptism, to travel by public transport on Sabbath, which transport being run in systematic disregard of the requirements of the Fourth Commandment. And as to the Lord's Day Observance Society of Scotland, if Prof. Renwick and other Free Church leaders are prominent members of the said Society and expressing the views they do, then it is well that the Synod of the Free Presbyterian Church ceased a few years ago to support that Society. We must be consistent and out and out in our witness for a scriptural observance of the Day which is a memorial of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Free Presbyterian Church may be counted "narrow" in a broad-minded generation. This is no time for laxity in relation to Christian principles, but a day which calls us to hold fast that which we have.

This Year's Harvest.

Seed time and harvest time have been promised by the God of Providence; and in our own land once more the seed which was sown in the earth by the farmers, grew and ripened in the most of cases. But the in-gathering of the crops throughout the country was rendered difficult and disappointing by the adverse weather conditions, especially during the month of September. Much rain and strong winds ruined a proportion of the crops and held up harvest work in most districts. Floods inundated fields in places and destroyed hay and corn cut and ready for taking home. All this is not surprising, seeing that we as a people are increasingly forgetful of God our Creator and Sustainer. There are reports again this year of work being done in the fields on the Sabbath Day. The public worship of God is altogether neglected by the vast majority throughout the land; and even when a *week-day* is appointed in some counties for Harvest Thanksgiving, year by year, a number of churches are never open on this day but have their Harvest Thanksgiving Services on the Sabbath, revealing in the case of some, that they have no mind or time on a week-day to acknowledge the Lord's kindness to them. They grudge, too, and withhold from their divine Benefactor one *week-day* in the year for this honourable purpose. Yet in face of all this, the Most High is providing for the temporal needs of all the millions in our nation, from various quarters, far and near; and although He has indicated His displeasure in one direction, He has shown much mercy in providence in other ways. The daily portion we receive day by day to sustain body and mind, is given us by the Lord as surely as the breath we breathe. Forgetfulness of God and unthankfulness are great sins. May we obtain out of the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ, grace to repent of these and all our other sins, and grace to glory in the Saviour, the bread which came down from heaven. Then shall we appreciate aright and seek humbly to bless God for all the mercies we enjoy in providence, for Christ's sake. "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Ps. cvii, 8).

Recent Pit Disasters.

Coal-mining communities, one in Scotland and the other in England, have again been visited with grievous and solemn providences. During the month of September, first of all, 129 men were trapped at Knockshinnoch Castle mine, New Cumnock, Ayrshire, by a gigantic fall of sludge; but 116 of these were rescued and 13 miners lost their lives. Then, nearly three weeks after this, on the 26th of September, 80 miners lost their lives at Cresswell Colliery, Derbyshire. Fire was the cause of this second calamity in the mining industry in so short a time. From the King and Queen downwards keen sympathy has been felt and expressed towards the stricken and bereaved families concerned. But what the widows, the fatherless children and other sorrowing relatives need most of all is the comfort afforded by the precious and saving truths of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was "a man of sorrows" that He might procure the joys of a full and everlasting salvation for poor, guilty and miserable sinners of our race. It appears that however much men may improve upon standards and conditions of work and safety (and these were needed in the mining industry) God in His providence permits and also brings to pass, sad calamities upon men engaged in their peaceful callings. He knows why such breaches are made upon communities and families. It would be well for us to study the words of the Lord Jesus in reply to others: "And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii, 2, 3).

Success in the Korean War.

At the time of writing, Seoul, the capital of Southern Korea, has been retaken by the United Nations Forces, as a climax to successes on all fronts against the North Korean armies. A complete victory is now considered to be in sight, in the view of General MacArthur. The American action is specially praiseworthy in this campaign against aggressors. It is a cause of great relief and deep thankfulness to the Lord Himself should bloodshed cease now on the Korean peninsula. Before this better state of affairs has become a reality, the other problems of Korea have been raised. Is Korea to be supervised as a whole and not as divided into North and South? What will be the wisest and best policy for U.N.O. to adopt with respect to Korea? Truly the rulers of the nations to-day are confronted with a world-wide shaking of foundations and much confusion in political, economic and social conditions. They are struggling away at conferences and talks, endeavouring to put indeed the world in order—and as far as one can judge—without any reference at all to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, or to the counsel of God's Word. To the enlightened and alert Christian, these politicians and diplomats are spending their strength for nought, although they may be conscientious men in the tasks they undertake. The Desire of all nations will one day come into His own and be given the honour due to His infinitely worthy Name.

Communions.

Church Notes.

November—First Sabbath, Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk; third, Edinburgh and Dornoch. *December*—First Sabbath, London. *January*—Last Sabbath, Inverness.

Any corrections to be notified at once to Editor.

London F.P. Communion Services.

The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, London Congregation, Eccleston Hall, Eccleston Street, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1. In connection with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper on Sabbath, 3rd December, the following services have been arranged (D.V.), to be conducted by the Rev. Finlay MacLeod, Dornoch, and the Rev. James A. Tallach, Kames:—Thursday, 30th November, 7 p.m.; Friday, 1st December, 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 2nd December, 3.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 3rd December, 11 a.m., 3.45 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m.; Monday, 4th December, 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m.

Services are held every Sabbath at 11 a.m., 3.45 p.m. (Gaelic), and 7 p.m. Weekly Prayer Meeting, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Uig Communion Cancelled.

Owing to the fact that the new Church of the Uig Congregation, Lewis, has not been finished in time, the Communion dated for the third Sabbath in November, will not be held.—WILLIAM MACLEAN, *Interim Moderator*.

Sabbath Observance Letter to be Read Publicly.

Ministers and Missionaries should note that the letter on Sabbath Observance from the Church's Sabbath Observance Committee, printed in this issue, is to be read to our congregations throughout the Church, by order of the Synod, which met last May. Where there is no Minister or Missionary, but an office-bearer conducting services in a congregation, this duty should be carried out by him.—ROBERT R. SINCLAIR, *Clerk of Synod*.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, General Treasurer, acknowledges with grateful thanks the following:—

Sustentation Fund.—Mr. J. R. McL., 36 Morey Street, Hillsdale, Michigan, U.S.A., £5 1/6; Friend of the Cause, Skye post-mark, £1.

Home Mission Fund.—Mr. J. R. McL., 36 Morey Street, Hillsdale, Michigan, U.S.A., £4; Mr. E. M., 1 Carrigrie, Tarbert, Harris, £2.

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Synod Proceedings Fund.—Mr. E. M., 13 Inverarish Terrace, Raasay, 5/-; Mr. C. McL., Lochinver, per Rev. A. McAskill, 8/6; Mrs. McA., Inverkirkaig, per Rev. A. McAskill, 8/6; A Friend, North Tolsta, 2/6.

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Edinburgh Manse Purchase Fund.—The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. H. MacDougall, S.S.C., 15 Gloucester Place, Edinburgh, has much pleasure in acknowledging the following donations:—A Friend, Seoraig, per Mrs. Macdonald, £5; Miss A. McL., Edinburgh, £5; A Friend, Glasgow, per Mr. A. H. Pottinger, £1; A Friend, Ness, £1; Nurse M. McK., per Mr. James Mackay, £1.

St. Jude's South African Clothing Fund.—The Committee acknowledge with grateful thanks contributions amounting to £22 15/-, with the following amounts direct to Treasurer:—Miss B. G., Edinburgh, £1; C. and W. S., Halkirk, per Mrs. Matheson, £1; Friend, St. Jude's, 10/-; Miss A. McK., Glasgow, 10/-. Forwarded to Ingwenya on account of the Rev. E. Radasi, £1, from Mr. Thos. McBae, Glasgow.