

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.*

CONTENTS

	page
Duty and Devotion in Relation to Christ ...	295
By what Means may Ministers best win Souls? ...	297
David Steven and an Anxious Sinner ...	303
Natural Ability and Biblical Truth ...	305
Lionel Thomson, Oban ...	307
The late Miss P. Macleod, North Harris ...	308
Aonadh ri Criosd ...	308
Literary Notice ...	310
Notes and Comments ...	314
Church Notes ...	316
Acknowledgment of Donations ...	316
Contents ...	319

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Duty and Devotion in Relation to Christ.

MEN will spend and be spent in worldly tasks, and will hazard their lives, even in devotion to friends, human ideals and earthly duty. Yet, how few, comparatively, to-day know anything of the divine, spiritual and gospel claims of the Lord Jesus Christ to have a seed to serve Him in the world and to be the object of gracious and loving devotion, on the part of men. The natural man, in which the carnal mind reigns, although situated in the very midst of gospel and spiritual privileges is entirely ignorant of and indifferent to duty and devotion with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ personally. Some may in a limited way, and in certain respects appear to be interested in Christ's cause, within the bounds of the visible Church; but, known or unknown to them, there are sinful, selfish and ulterior motives operating secretly in their hearts—the heart of man being deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Diotrophes, who loved to have the pre-eminence, and Demas, who ultimately revealed that he loved this present world, although in the Apostolic Church, never knew what willing, humble, spiritual devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, meant. Self, sin and a sensual world claimed their devotion. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (I Cor. ii. 14). And so it did not surprise us to hear recently of a man who objected to a minister debarring from the Lord's table, any who *would* come to this table, merely for a place in the Church. Thus the religion of the carnal and unconverted sinner has other ends than obedience to Christ and devotion to Him.

To speak of the Christian's duty and devotion to the Redeemer and adorable Head of His body the Church is another matter. For those who have had in the amazing grace of God, implanted in their hearts, faith in and love to Christ, by the powerful and saving operations of the Holy Ghost, are a people whose duty to Christ is made clear in the Scriptures. And we refer not here to what savours of legalism, but to the works of faith and labours of love, the out-goings and

fruits of grace in the souls of genuine, exercised believers, which are regulated by divine directions and counsels, in relation to Christ's own Person and Saviourship, His Word and the doctrines thereof, the Gospel, His commandments, His people, His Kingdom, and so on. The believer is to have regard to the Saviour in the first instance, and then inevitably to all that emanates from, and is linked to Him. And thus there are spiritual, evangelical, moral and practical obligations devolving upon the living disciple of Christ. Assuredly, without the Lord's own grace and help they can do nothing and shall fail in devotion to Him; but their sufficiency is of Him. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. xii. 9), were words from the Lord which brought not only strength but gladness to the heart of Paul. And then the Apostle himself writes to Timothy thus, "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. ii. 6).

Varied are the particular duties to which the believer is called. Of these we may mention the following:—They are to *confess* the Lord Jesus Christ, before men, by witnessing unashamedly in Scriptural ways to the hope that is in them, that He saved them by His grace and blood from their sins, the divine wrath, and everlasting destruction, and brought them to taste of heavenly mercy, pardon and peace with God. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 8). That they are not only to hear, but to *keep* His Word. They are to hide it in their hearts, to meditate upon it, pray over it, walk in the light of it in the midst of a godless world, and worship the Father of mercies as directed by it. And they are to value it above gold most fine and defend it against all the attacks upon it by atheists, modernists and traitors in the professing Christian Church. "Yea, rather, Blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it" (Luke ii. 28). Then further, the believer as his duty and in devotion to the Lord Jesus, is to *endure* hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The devil and wicked men brought to bear upon the Church of Christ many a hard and sore trial and experience down through the ages, and the warnings of Jesus still stand, "In the world ye shall have tribulation": "Marvel not if the world hate you." They are not to be offended with Christ and His testimony for Truth on this account. They are to seek support and patience out of His fullness. The hardness is to be suffered but for a little while here—and then they are to obtain the complete and final victory at last through their Captain of salvation.

Then the Lord Jesus Christ has uttered certain injunctions and warnings regarding the matter of following and serving Him with gracious devotion. He declared, that any man who loveth those to whom he is bound with natural and earthly ties more than Christ, is not worthy of Him. The Lord and Saviour must have the pre-eminence

in the affections of the believer if there is to be unqualified devotion to His Person and the things concerning His Kingdom. "He that loveth father or mother more than me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 37, 38). Another solemn observation by the Lord concerns those who appear to have had a real attachment to Christ, His Cause and Kingdom; and who outwardly, at anyrate, manifested some devotion to the Lord's service; and then very soon show signs of hankering back after the world and a worldly mode of living. Worldliness, unspirituality, pride, aloofness from the fellowship of the disciples of the Lord began to appear, and also other such evils as effect a looking back from duty and devotion to Christ. Turning back is the next phase in this case. And so Jesus says, ". . . No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven" (Luke ix. 57-62). We read of many who seemed to be disciples of the Lord and who went back and walked no more with Him. Then what did Christ say to His believing and living followers, having in view the enmity and malice of their enemies toward them? "Be not afraid." He would have them to conquer this fear of man, in His divine strength and by a right view of the limitations of the wicked. "But I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do" (Luke xii. 4).

And finally, the heavenly Master gives a precious and full promise of reward to His believing and devoted followers, which more than compensates for self-denial, losses and trials in His service. To Peter, He said, "Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting" (Luke xviii. 28-30).

By what Means may Ministers best win Souls?

A Sermon preached by ROBERT TRAILL, London, in October, 1682.

"Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine: continue in them: for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy, iv. 16).

THE words are a substantial part of the good counsel and direction the apostle giveth unto Timothy, and in him unto all the ministers of the gospel.

In them are two things.

1. A three-fold duty laid on gospel-ministers, *Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them.*
2. A double advantage consequent upon the discharge of this duty: *For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

1. Ministers duty is in three things here.

1st, *Take heed unto thyself.* Thou art set in a high office, in a dangerous place; take good and narrow heed, look well to thyself, thy heart and way.

2dly, *Take heed unto thy doctrine.* Though thou be ever so well gifted, and approved both of God and men; though thou be an extraordinary officer (as Timothy was); yet take heed unto thy doctrine. These two we pass at present; because we shall resume them at greater length, when we take their help to the resolving of this question.

3dly, *Continue in them.* This hath relation, it appears, unto ver. 12 and 15 as well as unto the preceeding part of this verse. I shall dismiss this part of the verse with these:

(1.) Continue in thy work. Thou who art a minister, it is a work for thy lifetime; and not to be taken up and laid down again, according as it may best suit a man's carnal inclinations, and outward conveniences. The apostles that laboured with their hands, have, by that example, set the conscience of a minister at liberty, to provide for the necessities of this life by other employments, when he cannot live of the gospel; yet certainly no man that is called of God to this work, can with a safe conscience abandon it wholly. Paul, for example rather than necessity, both preached and wrought in a handy-craft. As preaching doth not make working unlawful, so neither should any other business of a minister make preaching to cease.

(2.) Continue in endeavours after greater fitness for thy work. No attainments in fitness and qualifications for this work can free a man of the obligation that lies on him to increase and grow therein more and more. It is not enough that a man study and be painful ere he enter into the ministry, but he must labour still to be more fit for his great work.

(3.) Continue in thy vigour, and painfulness, and diligence. Young ministers, that are sound and sincere before God, are usually warm and diligent in the first years of their ministry; and many do decline afterwards, and become more cold and remiss. This exhortation is a check thereunto: *Continue in them.*

2. The second thing in the word is the double advantage proposed to encourage ministers to this hard duty.

1st, *Thou shalt save thyself.* Thy own salvation shall be promoted and secured thereby.

How becoming is it for a minister to mind his own salvation! and to mind it so heartily, as to be animated from the hopes of it unto the greater diligence in his ministry!

But how doth faithfulness in the ministry of the gospel further the minister's salvation?

(1.) Faithfulness is a man's generation-work, is of great use and advantage to salvation. *Well done good and faithful servant*, from the Lord's own mouth, is a great security; and diligence and faithfulness in improving the talents we are entrusted with, through grace, procure that testimony.

(2.) Thou shalt save thyself from the guilt of other men's sins and ruin, if thou be faithful in the ministry: Ezek. xxxiii. 9. *Thou hast delivered (or saved) thy soul*, saith the Lord to the prophet in the case of

unsuccessful faithfulness. So Paul, Acts xviii. 6. *I am clean, your blood be upon your own heads:* and Acts xx. 26, 27. *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.* Every minister pledgeth his soul to God, that he shall be a faithful servant; and he that is such may freely take up his stake, whatever his success on others be.

(3.) Faithfulness and painfulness in the ministry of the gospel, promotes a man's own salvation, in so far as the work of Christianity is woven in with the right discharge of the office of the ministry. Many ministers can say that if they had not been ministers, they had in all appearances lost their souls. The subject of the minister's work is the same with that of a Christian's; and above all men should he be careful of his heart and intentions, that all be pure and spiritual. No man in any work he is called to, is under so strict a necessity of dependance on the influence and assistance of the Holy Ghost, both for gifts and grace. And are not all these great helps unto our own salvation?

2dly, The second advantage is, *Thou shalt save them that hear thee.* There is little hope of that man's being useful to save others, that minds not his own salvation; and therefore the apostle puts them in this order, *thyselves*, and then, *them that hear thee.*

This description of the people, *them that hear thee*, saith, That the principal work of a minister is preaching; and the principal benefit people have by them, is to hear the Lord's word from them; though there be a *seeing* (i.e. of their holy conversation) that is also useful, Phil. iv. 9. But the apostle knew no such ministers as were only to be seen in wordly pomp and grandeur, and seldom or never heard preaching.

Thou shalt save them. The great end of both preaching and hearing, is salvation; and if salvation were more designed by preachers and hearers, it would be more frequently the effect of the action.

Thou shalt save them. Thou shalt, by the Lord's blessing on thy ministry, be successful in converting sinners, and in building up of saints in holiness and faith unto salvation. Not that ministers are of themselves able by all their endeavours to carry on this great end; they are only God's tools and instruments, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Concerning this,

(1.) We find that the Lord hath appointed this great ordinance of the gospel-ministry for this end, the saving of men, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. It is *through their word that men believe*, John xvii. 20. And divine appointment of the means, declares both it to be useful, and the end to be hopeful.

(2.) He hath also given many promises of his presence, blessing, and success, to follow and attend them whom he sends on this great errand. Christ's first calling of the apostles had this promise in it, *I will make you fishers of men:* which not only declared what that employment was he called them unto, but it assured them of success in it. At his leaving of them, Matth. xxviii. 20, he promised to be *with them unto the end of the world.* And this promise is as good to us as it was to them.

(3.) He hath also revealed much of his mind about ministers duty, in order to this end of saving men. This also makes the end more hopeful.

(4.) We find, that the Lord doth qualify and fit them whom he makes successful. He makes men *able ministers of the New Testament*, the word of

Life, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. And still, according to the success the Lord hath a mind to bless a man with, gifts and qualifications, and assistance, are proportionably given. The apostles, that had the greatest harvest to gather in, were made the strongest labourers: and, though in a far inferior degree, the same method is observed by the Lord in dealing with and by ordinary ministers. It is true, that always the most able and learned ministers are not most successful; yet, generally, the most skilful labourers are most blessed. Neither are the most learned and able men for parts most fit and skilful in dealing with souls at all times.

Now, having opened the words, we shall return to the question to be resolved,

BY WHAT MEANS MAY MINISTERS BEST WIN SOULS?

In speaking to which, I shall,

I. Shew what this text saith unto this purpose. And then,

II. Give some further account thereof from other scriptures. And,

III. Apply it both to ministers and people.

I. *What this text speaks about this matter.* It looks two ways upon this question. 1. It gives a direct answer unto it: and points forth duty. 2. It gives an encouraging promise of the good effect and fruit of the discharge of the duty. I shall carry on both together.

1. *Take heed unto thyself.* Wouldst thou be a saved and successful minister? *Take heed unto thyself.* Such warnings imply always a case of difficulty and danger wherein he is that gets them.

Take heed unto thyself in these things:

1st, Take heed that thou be a sound and sincere believer. The importance of sincere godliness in a minister, is written in the deep wounds that the church of Christ hath received by the hands of ungodly ministers. It hath been made a question, Whether an ungodly man can be a minister? but it is none, that such men are in a most desperate condition: Matth. vii. 22, 23. *Depart from me;* not because you ran unsent, or preached error instead of truth, or preached poorly and meanly (all great sins in themselves); but because *you work iniquity;* the usual expression of entire ungodliness. What use the Lord may make of the gifts (for great gifts he gives to the worst of men) of ungodly men, even in the ministry of the gospel, is one of his deep paths. But no man can reasonably imagine, that a walker in the way to hell can be a fit and useful guide to them that mind to go to heaven. If a man would have peace in his conscience, and success in his work of the ministry, let him take good heed to this, that he be a sound Christian. There is a special difficulty for a minister to know his grace. Gifts and grace have deceived many with their likeness; although the difference be great, both in itself, and to an enlightened eye.

2dly. Take heed to thyself, that thou be a called and sent minister. This is of great importance as to success. He that can say, "Lord, thou hast sent me," may boldly add, "Lord, go with me, and bless me." It is good when a man is serious in this inquiry. It is to be feared that many run, and never asked this question; so is it seen in their speed and success. Jer. xxiii. 32. *I sent them not, therefore they shall not profit this people at all,* is a standing rule to this day.

These things, if found, may serve to satisfy a minister's conscience, that Jesus Christ hath sent him.

(1.) If the heart be filled with a single desire after the great end of the ministry, the glory of God in the salvation of men. Every work that God calls a man to, he makes the end of it amiable. This desire sometimes attends men's first conversion. Paul was called to be a saint and an apostle at once, Acts ix.; and so have many been called to be saints and ministers together. If it be not so, yet this is found with him that Christ calls, that when he is most spiritual and serious, when his heart is most under the impressions of holiness, and he is nearest to God in communion with him; then are such desires after the serving of Jesus Christ in the ministry most powerful. And the sincerity of his desire is also to be examined: and when it is found, it adds greatly to a man's peace: when his heart bears him witness, that it is neither riches, nor honour, nor ease, nor the applause of men, that he seeks after, but singly Christ's honour in the saving of men.

(2.) It helps to clear a man's call, that there hath been a conscientious diligence in all the means of attaining fitness for this great work. That love to the end that doth not direct and determine unto the use of the appointed means, may justly be suspected as irregular, and not flowing from the Holy Ghost. Even extraordinary officers seem not to have been above the use of ordinary means, 2 Tim. iv. 13 old dying Paul sends for his books and papers.

(3.) A competent fitness for the work of the ministry, is another proof of a man's call to it. The Lord calls no man to a work for which he doth not qualify. Though a sincere humble man (as all ministers should be) may and should think little of any measure he hath, whether compared with the greater measures of others, or considered with regard unto the weight and worth of the work; yet there must be some confidence as to his competency, for clearing a man's call, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. What this competency is, is not easy at all times to determine. Singular necessities of the church may extend or intend this matter of competent fitness. But in general there must be, 1. A competent knowledge of gospel mysteries. 2. A competent ability of utterance to the edifying of others. This is *aptness to teach*, required of the apostle in 1 Tim. iii. 2: and Titus i. 9, that a minister be *able by sound doctrine, to exhort and to convince gainsayers*.

(4.) The savour of a man's ministry on the hearts and consciences of others, both ministers and people, helps much to clear a man's call. So that indeed ordinarily a man can never be so well confirmed in the faith of his being called of God, until he make some essay in this work. Deacons must first be proved, 1 Tim. iii. 10; much more ministers. A single testimony given by ministers and Christians, that the word dispensed by the man is savoury, and hath effect on the conscience, is a great confirmation; especially if sound conversion of some follow his labours. That is indeed a seal of his ministry, 2 Cor. iii. 3 and 1 Cor. ix. 2.

3dly. Take heed unto thyself, that thou be a lively thriving Christian. See that all thy religion run not in the channel of thy employment. It is found by experience, that as it fares with a minister in the frame of his heart, and thriving of the work of God in his soul, so doth it fare

with his ministry both in its vigour and effects. A carnal frame, a dead heart, and a loose walk, makes cold and unprofitable preaching. And how common is it for ministers to neglect their own vineyard? When we read the word, we read it as ministers, to know what we should teach, rather than what we should learn as Christians. Unless there be great heed taken, it will be found, that our ministry, and labour therein, may eat out the life of our Christianity. Not that there is any discord betwixt them; but rather a friendly harmony, when each hath its place and respect. The honest believer meditates that he may excite his grace; and ministers too often meditate only to increase their gifts. When we preach, the sincere hearer drinks in the word; and it may be we seldom mix faith with it, to grow thereby. O how hard is it to be a minister and a Christian in some of these acts! We are still conversant about the things of God; it is our study all the week long. This is our great advantage. But take heed to thyself, lest ordinary meddling with divine things bring on an ordinary and indifferent impression of them; and then their fruit to thee, and thy benefit by them, is almost gone, and hardly recovered.

4thly, Take heed unto thyself in reference to all the trials and temptations thou mayest meet with. Be on your guard, *watch in all things*, 2 Tim. iv. 5. No men are shot at more by Satan than ministers, and he triumphs not more over the foils of any than theirs. And Christ is liberal in his warnings of dangers, and in his promises of help in them.

2. The second word in the text to this purpose of directing ministers how to be useful to others, is *Take heed unto thy doctrine*. Art thou a minister? Thou must be a preacher. An unpreaching minister is a sort of contradiction. Yea, every sort of preaching is not enough; thou must take heed unto thy doctrine what it is.

Here is a warrant for studying what we are to teach and what we have taught people. But the great matter is to take heed, or study aright. Students commonly need little direction about ordinary study. But concerning the doctrine, I shall entreat to take heed unto it in these things:—

1st. Take heed unto thy doctrine, that it be a divine truth: *Let a man speak as the oracles of God*, 1 Pet. iv. 11. And therefore it is needful that ministers be well acquainted with the holy scriptures. A bad token of the temper of that man that relishes any book more than the word of God. The world is full of books written on pretence and design to explain the scriptures; and men's studies are full of them. There is also a blessing in them, and good use to be made of them; but also a bad use is made of them. Many ministers have found, that they have preached better, and to more profit to the people, when they got their sermon by meditation on the word, and prayer, than by turning over many authors. From this neglect of the word also come a great many doctrines, that are learned by man, and borrowed from philosophy; which though they may have some truth in them, yet since it is divine truth that a minister should bring forth to the people, he should not rest on such low things.

2dly, Take heed unto thy doctrine, that it be plain, and suited to the capacity of the hearers. Learned preaching (as it is called) is a vanity, pleasing principally to such as neither design nor desire edification. True

godly learning consists in preaching plainly; and therein is no small difficulty. Two things would help to plain preaching. 1. Clearness of knowledge. The alleged depth of our doctrine often proceeds from our own darkness. 2. Humility and self-denial. We must not seek ourselves, nor the applause of men; but God's glory, and men's salvation. It is found, that the holiest ministers preach most plainly, and the plainest preachers are most successful.

3dly, Take heed unto thy doctrine, that it be grave, and solid, and weighty; *sound speech that cannot be condemned*, Tit. ii. 8. Deep and weighty impressions of the things of God upon a man's own heart, would greatly advance this. A minister's spirit is known in the gravity or lightness of his doctrine.

(*To be continued.*)

David Steven and an Anxious Sinner.*

“IN the beginning of the year 1834, I was a farm servant in David Steven's neighbourhood, and attended his Sabbath school. Soon afterwards I became concerned about my soul, and that increased so as to put me from my sleep, and from my food, and also from vain company. I was in this state for weeks and months, and if I fell asleep, would re-wake with a scream that would frighten every one in the house. At length I went to David, and told him the state of my mind, and that I was going to wander through the world. He said—‘Where will you go? The evil is in yourself; it will follow you wherever you go, and you will find no place better than another.’ I remember he asked me how old I was. I told him I was 16. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘the Lord has waited 16 years and not cast you to hell, and it is a question if you ever waited one hour on him; now, I will give you my hand, if you wait on the Lord in the way of commanded duty as long as he has borne with you, you will not be as you are at present. So take my advice, and go back to your work until the term, and if you cannot stay with your work-fellows all night, I will give you a bed, and you can either sleep alone, or with Sandy Stewart.’ This I did, and was many a night under David's roof. Next term I left this place, and engaged at a farm about three miles distant, because the master was said to be a pious man, and I would see a godly example. This I did see; but I found by sad experience that what the man had of godliness was his own; he could give nothing to me. I envied him; indeed, I sometimes envied the creatures that had not a soul. We were watching one night a horse that was dying, and I felt I would rather have been that animal than should I get the whole world. In this man's service I had the privilege of being under the ministry of Mr. Munro, Halkirk, and sometimes would get a day on a sacramental occasion to go to the means of grace. I still went, also, to David's Sabbath school, although three miles from it, and the nights often dark and stormy. He would be speaking words of comfort to me, but I could find comfort in nothing, not even in secret prayer, which I sometimes attempted. There was a passage of Scripture all that year before my mind—‘But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?’ Job. xxiii. 13. That word was often like to break my heart, for I interpreted it in this way, that there was no mercy for me in

* David Steven was a pious worthy of Bower, Caithness. He died in 1873 in his 84th year.—*Editor.*

God—I was none of the elect, and, therefore, it was useless for me to pray or seek. And were it not the case of the lepers at the gate of Samaria, in the time of famine, I think I would have given up altogether. 2 Kings, vii. 3.

“But the evening before the first day of 1835 was a night I can never forget. The people of the house were lightsome and cheerful, preparing for New Year’s Day, so I was forced to retire to the barn to conceal my misery, and had strong temptations, which I will not mention. But the enemy was disappointed that night, for, when alone trying to spread my distress before the Lord, that passage of Scripture was set home with power and light upon my soul—‘But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.’ Galatians iv. 4, 5, and 6. This produced a calm in my soul, and I was enabled to meditate on the words, and got a glimpse of Christ’s engagements in the covenant of grace on behalf of sinners, and of His fulfilling of these in time in His active and passive obedience, until He could say, ‘It is finished,’ and before I came out of that barn, I thought, were the world on fire, I could go through it for the love of Christ. I went that night to David Steven’s, and he soon discovered my change of mind, and said, ‘Glory to His name, He has not kept you 16 years,’ and I spent New Year’s Day with him as happy as the people I left, although in a different way. David was to me as a ‘father’ in the Lord, and kept a special eye on me wherever I went, and whenever I came to see him would enquire as to the state of my soul.

One day he asked me, ‘Was I growing in grace?’ I said, ‘What is it to grow in grace?’ He answered, ‘To grow in grace is to grow in knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Sin is an infinite evil, because done against an Infinite God; to grow in knowledge of your own helplessness; and the longer one lives he grows more in knowledge of this—that he can neither will nor do any good. You may think just now you can do much good, but if you live to be as old as I am, you will think very differently, and your good deeds, in point of justification before God, will be on a level with your bad deeds. They grow, too, in knowledge of the preciousness of Christ and in dependence upon Him. Oh! man, if you were taught to live a life of dependence on Him, He would do all for you; He would make ditches and drains for you; He would rock the cradle for you; He would buy and sell your cattle for you. I remember once I had a cow to sell, and as there was a market in the neighbourhood I intended to go there, but there was a Sacrament in a neighbouring parish, and as I was considering what I would do, that Scripture occurred to me, ‘Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added upon you.’ Matt. vi. 33. So I set off to the Sacrament, trying to forget the other matter, and a few days after I returned, a man came to my house and asked if I had a cow to dispose of. I said I had, and he wished me to come out and make a bargain with him. But as I was engaged repairing a watch, I said the animals were in the field, go and look at them, and let me know which will suit you. He went, and came back in a little while, and said he would prefer one, and offered for it. This was the one I intended to sell, and so I got free of it without rising from my bench. They grow also in humility

and self-denial; in heavenly desire; hunger and thirst after righteousness; in faith and repentance; in fighting the good fight of faith against the devil, the world, and the flesh. They grow in love. I cannot say much about this, except that it is their burden that they cannot love Him more. But when the Spirit blows on their garden and the spices flow out, then they say, 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.' Canticles viii. 6.

"Another time I came to see him he asked me, 'How was it with me now?' I said, 'Poor, indeed.' 'What's wrong with you?' 'I am not getting in the Bible, in the closet, or in the means, what I used to get.' 'Has your sense of need of Christ left you?' 'That is what I am missing. I thought once I was finding Christ in His ordinances, but now they are empty.' 'Oh!' he said, 'your sickness is not unto death. I wish there were more troubled with your disease; your enjoyment will be like the ebbing and flowing of the tide, as He sees meet, but if your sense of need of Christ had left you, I would be afraid of you.' "

Natural Ability and Biblical Truth.*

THE following are extracts from a letter by "A. Former Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge":

"I remember when I first began to read the Bible, and though I was sincerely seeking the truth, I was miserable because I could not believe it. I dare not reject any statement I found there, but I could not fully believe it was true. My history was just this: I had read and studied deeply in mathematics, had mastered every fresh subject I entered upon with ease and delight, had become accustomed (as every exact mathematician must do) to investigate and discover fundamental differences between things which seem, to the uninitiated, one and the same; had seen my way into physical astronomy and the higher parts of Newton's immortal 'Principia,' and had been frequently lost in admiration of his genius till St. Mary's clock warned me that midnight was past three hours ago. I had, in fact, as we say, made myself master of dynamics, and become gradually more and more a believer in the unlimited capabilities of my own mind. This self-conceited idea was only flattered and fostered by eminent success in the Senate House, and by subsequently obtaining a Fellowship of Trinity, and enjoying very considerable popularity as a mathematical lecturer.

"It would have spared me many an hour of misery in after days had I really felt what I so often said, viz., that the deeper a man went into science the humbler he ought to be, and the more cautious in pronouncing an independent opinion on a subject he had not investigated or could not thoroughly sift. But, although all this was true, I had yet to learn that this humility in spiritual things is never found in a natural man.

TOOK ORDERS, BEGAN PREACHING.

"I took orders, and began to preach; and then, I found out the great deficit in my theology. I had not the Spirit's teaching myself, and how could I without it speak 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power'?

* These extracts of a letter appeared in the "Caithness Courier" of 30th January, 1952, a weekly paper published in Thurso; and are reprinted here by permission of the Editor of the aforesaid paper.—*Editor*.

"In vain did I read Chalmers, Paley, Butler, Gaussen, etc., and determine that, as I had mastered all the other subjects I had grappled with, so I would the Bible, and that I would *make* myself a believer. I found a poor ignorant old woman in my parish more than a match for me in Divine things. I was distressed to find that she was often happy in the evident mercy of the Lord to her, and that she found prayer answered, and that all this was proved sincere by her blameless and harmless walk amongst her neighbours, whilst I, with all my science and investigation, was barren, and unprofitable, and miserable, an unbeliever in heart, and yet not daring to avow it, partly from the fear of man, but more from a certain inward conviction that all my sceptical difficulties would be crushed and leaped over by the experience of the most illiterate Christian.

"I was perfectly ashamed to feel in my mind like Voltaire, Volney or Tom Payne. I could claim no originality for my views and I found they were no comfort, but a constant source of misery to me.

"It may now be asked how I came ever to view Divine truth differently. I desire to ascribe all praise to Him to whom power belongeth; I desire to put my own mouth in the dust, and be ashamed and never open my mouth any more, because of my former unbelief.

MADE WILLING.

"I cannot describe all I passed through, but I desire with humiliation and gratitude to say, I was made willing in a day of Christ's power. He melted down my proud heart with His love; He shut my mouth for ever from cavilling at any difficulties in the written Word; and one of the first things in which the great change appeared was that whereas before preaching had been a misery, now it became my delight to be able to say without a host of sceptical or infidel doubts rushing into my mind—"Thus saith the Lord." I am quite certain no natural man can see the things of God; and I am equally certain that he cannot make himself do so. 'It was the Lord that exalted Moses and Aaron,' said Samuel; and, 'By the grace of God, I am what I am,' said St. Paul; and so in a modified and humble sense, I can truly say.

"It used to be a terrible stumbling block to me to find so many learned men, so many acute men, so many scientific men—infidels. It is not so now; I see that God has said, 'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.' I see, as plainly as it is possible for me to see anything, that no natural man can receive the things of the Spirit of God. Hence I expect to find men of this stamp of intellect coming out boldly with their avowals of unbelief in the written Word of God.

"The only answer I can give to them is this: 'God has in mercy taught me better,' and never do I sing those beautiful words, but I feel my eyes filling with tears of gratitude to the God of all compassion:

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God."

"So it is with me; so it must be with any one of them, if ever they are to know the truth in its power or to receive the love of the truth that they may be saved.

"I feel very much for the young of this generation, remembering the conflicts I passed through in consequence of the errors of men of ability."

Lionel Thomson, Oban.

THIS dear little boy was only a little over five years of age when he died. He had gone to school at the end of last summer, and was making good progress with his lessons. But his love for the Bible captivated his youthful mind. In fact, he was like the nobleman who sold everything he had to become possessor of the greatest treasure of all. Little Lionel sold his childish pleasures and went away by himself to have the Bible read to him.

Both his parents belong to Lewis. Lionel went there some time before his mother's father died. His chief anticipation in going to Lewis was that his *seanair* (grandfather) would read the Bible to him.

Ever since he could make his thoughts understood, it was quite evident that this child was not like ordinary children. His mind seemed overshadowed by the reality of something beyond the things of time, and he began to ask solemn and wonderful questions.

When he heard Bible stories read to him, he seemed to conclude that it was through this Book an answer could be found to his many questions. His love for the Bible became so intense, that he would listen for hours to hear it read to him, and this at his own earnest request. But he did not worship the Bible as a book. The secret of his love for it lay in the fact that he had found Jesus in it. Its central figure to him was not Joseph, Moses, David, nor any of the saints, but Jesus, and he fell in love with Jesus. A few days before he died he was speaking about the Cross on which Jesus died. Yet to him, as to the Apostle Paul, Jesus was not dead. He was alive and in heaven. This knowledge led him to think and talk about heaven. And as Jesus was to him the central figure in the Bible, so now towards the close of his short life, Jesus was the central figure in heaven. As he formerly, and to the end, loved to have the Bible read to him, that he might *know* more about Jesus, so towards the end of his life he longed to go to heaven to *see* Jesus and be with Him for ever.

He had everything a boy of his age would wish to have in his home and among his neighbours. Everyone loved him, and his health was perfect. Yet he was, from time to time, expressing a longing desire to go to heaven. When he was asked why he talked like that: "Did he wish to leave his father and mother and the children who loved him so much?" His reply was that he loved them all very much, but that he loved Jesus more. A few days before he died, he was heard to say, in holding up his little hands, "Oh, take me to heaven now." Jesus heard His lamb's prayer, and took him to heaven to be with Himself.

He seemed to think that Jesus would come for him, for after returning from school one evening shortly before the end came, he said to a neighbour who loved him and to whom he used to speak freely about Jesus, "Maybe I will not be going to school for very long now, and then my little sister can get my books." His death came in the following wonderful manner. As he and his older brother left their home to return to school after dinner, a gust of wind knocked Lionel down outside their own gate. In falling he struck his head against the kerb, and the side of his head was badly cut. He returned into the house quite conscious. It was decided to take him to the Hospital and have the wound stitched.

His parents went with him, and he was himself brave and cheerful. The doctors told his parents to wait and that in a quarter of an hour they would have the wound dressed. They gave him an anaesthetic, but before they got the wound stitched Lionel passed away to be for ever with Jesus whom he longed to see.

We are apt to think, like the disciples of old, that children should not be brought to the Saviour. Maybe it is easier, humanly speaking, for the Holy Spirit, Who alone glorifies Christ, to communicate saving knowledge to children than to adults. In any case, we know that the Bible, from beginning to end, gives a wonderful place to children. The Psalms refer to babes and sucklings praising God. The Saviour quotes this Psalm when the children in the temple were singing His own praise. The place the Gospels give to children is also wonderful. That they were members of the visible Church under the New Testament is evident, for we find Paul addressing them as such and quoting the special commandment in the Decalogue which belonged to them. And he points out that the children's commandment is the only one that has a promise attached to it.

It is unnatural and unscriptural to exclude the children from the visible Church. The blessed Redeemer still takes them up in His arms and blesses them. The more we think of Lionel Thomson, his love for the Bible, his longing to go to heaven to see Jesus Whom he loved so much, the more convinced we are of this.

Our dear Lionel was buried on the 12th January, 1952, amid great sorrow and deep sympathy with his bereaved parents.—A. M.

The late Miss P. Macleod, North Harris.

TOWARDS the end of August, 1951, Miss Pennie (Penelope) Macleod was removed from the Church below. By her removal, the North Harris congregation lost its oldest member. She was about 90 years of age, and professing before 1893. For many years, most of the way to the meeting house at Stockinish left much to be desired, yet Sabbath after Sabbath she managed to come to the place of worship. Good attendance is characteristic of the district. For the last number of years, her hearing was much affected, but until within a year or so of the end, she was in her accustomed place. She made her home with her nephew and his family, who loyally nursed her in her time of need. To her nephew's children, it is pleasant to learn, she was a loyal friend. May the family and the whole community be followers of those who by faith inherit the promises.

—D. R. M.

Aonadh ri Crìosd.

Leis an Urr. IAIN MAC A' CHOMBAICH, D.D., Lìte.

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 289).

III. Tha mi nis a dol air adhart a dh'ionnsuidh an treas ceann coitcheann, agus b'e sin, a bli beachdachadh air banntaibh an aonaidh so ri Crìosd. Tha feum aig aonadh cho maireannach so air

banntaibh na ceanglaichean làidir. Do bhrìgh gu'r e Crìosd agus an creidmheach eadar am bheil an t-aonadh so, 's e am bann air taobh Chrìosd dheth, an Spiorad Naomh; agus air taobh a chreidmhich, creidimh naomh, air oibreachadh agus air a mheudachadh leis an Spiorad.

(1) Is e bann an aonaidh dhiomhair so air taobh Chrìosd an Spiorad Naomh. "Tre aon Spiorad bhaisteadh sinn uile do aon chorp." I Cor. xii. 13. "Oir is aithne dhuinn gu bheil sinn 'n ar còmhnuidh ann-san, agus esan annainne, do bhrìgh gu'n d'thug e dhuinn d'a Spiorad." I Eoin iv. 13. "Agus le so is aithne dhùinn gu bheil esan a fuireach annainne o a Spiorad a thug e dhuinn." I Eoin iii. 24. Air do Chrìosd am peacach bochd fhaotainn ceangailte ris a cheud Adhamh, am freumh marbhtach sin, le banntaibh co-cheangal na'n gnìomh, agus nàdur laghail a chreutair fein, tha e tighinn ga ionnsuidh anns an aimsir ghràidh, agus tha e ga aonadh ris fein le a Spiorad, mar spiorad beatha. Ged tha'm peacach taghta, na staid nàdur, air aonadh ris a cheud Adhamh, mar a cheann peacaidh agus bàis, gidheadh, mar a tha e aig a cheart am gu cùmhnaidh air aonadh ris an Tighearn Iosa, mar a Cheann fireantachd agus beatha, tha Crìosd a tighinn aig an am shuidhicht', agus a deanamh greim air le a Spiorad a the toirt beo. Tha'n dearbh Spiorad a tha ann an Crìosd, mar an Ceann beo, a nis air a cho-phàrtachadh ris a pheacach a tha marbh ann am peacadh, gun a bhi dol a dhealachadh ris gu bràth; ach gu bhi ann na Spiorad beothachaidh agus naomhachaidh. Mar sin tha Crìosd, mar Phrionnsa na beatha, ag aonadh a pheacaich ris fein, a gabhail greim dheth, agus ga chumail na làimh ghràsmhor fein. Nis tha'm bann so gu neo-chrìochnach cumhachdach, agus tha e deanamh an aonaidh eadar Crìosd agus an creidmheach do-sgaraichte, agus cho daingean agus gu-m bheil e eucomasach a bhriseadh. "Agus bheir mi a bheatha mhaireannach dhoibh; agus cha sgriosar iad am feasd, ni mo a spionas neach air bith as mo làimh iad." Eoin x. 28. 'N uair a theid an Spiorad Naomh aon uair a stigh do'n anam cha teid e gu bràth a' mach as, agus air son aon mhomainnt cha sguir e bhi gabhail còmhnuidh ann. Eoin xiv. 16, 17.

(2) Is e creidimh bann an aonaidh so air taobh a chreidmhich, eadhon creidimh air oibreachadh le Dia. "Ionnas gu'n gabh Crìosd còmhnuidh ann bhur cridhe tre chreidimh." Eph. iii. 17. 'N uair a tha'n Tighearn Iosa a deanamh greim agus a dlùth-ghabhail thuige anam marbh, le a Spiorad, mar spiorad a chreidimh, tha'n t-anam, mar so air a bheothachadh, agus air a chur ann an seilbh air prionnsabal creidimh, a dlùth ghabhail Chrìosd thuige le cleachdadh chreidimh, tre'm bheil an t-aonad air a dheanamh coimhlionta. "Air dhuinn an spiorad creidimh sin fein a bhi againn..... tha sinn a creidsinn mar an ceudna, agus uime sin tha sinn a labhairt." II Cor. iv. 13. Cha luaithe a theid spiorad a chreidimh a stigh do'n anam mharbh na thois icheas an t-anam air creidsinn. Tha'm peacach a tha mar so air a bheothachadh, an toiseach a creidsinn àitheantan an lagh mar cùmhnaanta, air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'm bheil dearbh-shoilleireachd aige gu'r e peacach e fein ann an cridhe agus ann am beatha; agus tha e creidsinn a bhagraidhean uamhasach, le co-chur ris fein, air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'm bheil mothachadh domhain aige air gu'm bheil e truagh thairis air cainnt. Tha'n Spiorad ag oibreachadh ann creidimh an lagha, a dearbhadh dha nach urrain e gu bràth a bhi beo ann an aonadh ris a cheud Adhamh, fodh co-cheangal nan gnìomh; tha e briseadh an aonaidh ris an lagh mar cùmhnaanta, agus a sgaradh cridhe a pheacaich

bh'uaithé; air a leithid de dhòigh agus gu'm bheil e faicinn gu'r a diamhain a bhi leantuinn ris ni's faide. Rom. viii. 2. Am feadh 's a tha e mar so air a dheanamh comasach a bhi creidsinn àitheantean agus mallachdan an lagha, tha e, air a leithid de dhòigh, air a dheanamh comasach a bhi creidsinn, mar an ceudna, tairgseachan agus geallaidhean an t-soisgeil, agus a bhi ann an eu-dochas a thaobh beatha tre oibribh an lagha, agus gu'm bheil e air a chuideachadh gu bhi co-chur an t-Slànuighear agus a shlàinte uile ris fein. A reir sin tha e co-chur Chriosd, mar Cheann a cho-cheangail nuaidh, ris fein, agus tha sùil aige ri fireantachd agus beatha bh'uaithé. Mar sin, tre Chriosd a bhi dlùth ghabhail thuige a pheacaich, le a Spiorad, agus am peacach a bhi dlùth-ghabhail thuige Chriosd, tre chreidimh, tha'n t-aonadh air a choimhlionadh. Is e creidimh tearnaidh, aonnta a chridhe ann an dùnadh ris an Tighearn Iosa, Fear-pòsda neamhaidh na h-eaglais, agus Ceann a chuirp. 'N uair a tha e, uime sin, air a chleachdadh, tha Criosd agus an creidmheach air an ceangal ri cheile ann an cùmhnant' pòsaidh. "Ni mo bhitheas tu aig fear eile; mas sin bithidh mise mar an ceudna agad-sa." Hos. iii. 3. Nis, tha'm hann so do-sgaraichte cho math ris an fhear eile, oir ged a tha oibreachadh a chreidimh gu minic air a stad, cha bhi e air a cheadachadh gu'm bitheadh an creidimh gu buileach a fàilneachadh. "Ghuidh mise air do shon nach fàilnicheadh do chreidimh." Na feoraicheadh neach, Cò dhe'n dà bhann so a tha'g aonadh an anama ri Criosd? dh'fhaodadh e bhi air a fhreagairt, gu'm bheil iad le cheile a co-aontachadh anns a ghniomh so. An uibhir sin air banntaibh aonaidh ri Criosd.

(R'a leantuinn.)

Literary Notice.

"The Claims of the Church of Scotland," by Prof. G. D. Henderson, Aberdeen.

WE have read through this book, and fail to see what are the "Claims" of this church, of which the writer is an honoured member. If the "Claims" were "the Praise of the Church of Scotland" that I think would suit better the object the Professor had before his mind while writing his book. We heard good reports of the book before we read it, and on that account were anxious to read it. However, after we read it with care and without prejudice, we were entirely disappointed with the book. One thing, the Professor refers to so many authors, ancient and modern, if he were to read them all, or examine them with care and understanding, he would need to live another seventy years beyond the allotted span of ordinary human beings! We remember meeting a student who was very severe and critical on Calvin's Institutes. We asked him, "have you read the Institutes?" "No," he said, "but I heard other people discussing his works." That is it, "I heard other people saying it." It is to be feared that many modern authors have the unfortunate habit of criticising the works of other men, and excellent divines on the same assumption, "I heard other people saying it." On page 118 the Professor says, "The Church of Scotland is once again in a very real sense the National Church. According Kenneth Grubb's latest statistics

it has 1,256,167 adult members or communicants out of a population of all ages amounting to 6,000,000." This is an error, and let us hope if another edition is produced that this exaggeration is duly corrected. The population of Scotland of all ages is 5,174,500! The Professor and Kenneth Grubbs should pay attention to strict accuracy in quoting figures. The Professor seems quite happy with the modern trend of events. He says, "That, even the Presbyterians* are not one in Scotland is a real scandal, and the reminder that these churches are so very small cannot suffice to make us comfortable." We shall deal with the "real scandal" later on. The professor glosses over the declensions that took place from 1863 to the present day as if nothing happened to interfere with the unity and harmony of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland! The Historian should state all the facts, and never attempt to hide the real issues with a cloud of words, which can only deceive the simple and deepen the ignorance of the ignorant. The "Claims" of the present Church of Scotland must begin with the Union of 1929. She is not and dare not "Claim" to be the Reformed Church of Scotland of Knox, Henderson, and Chalmers. She is in all reality a schismatic Church. "The real scandal" rests with her because she departed from the original foundation upon which the Reformed Church of Scotland was laid—the Bible—Confession of Faith, and the Subordinate Standards. She holds the Bible in her hand, but invites Karl Barth and Dean Inge to interpret the revelation of God to man so that she can meet modern "thought" however contrary to God's Word, the "thought," words, and actions of her ministers and members may be. "How is it then, brethren, when ye come together, every one of you has a Psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." I. Cor. xiv. 26. The Professor considers it a "scandal" that we are not all (Presbyterians) with Rev. Dr. George MacLeod on "Christmas Eve" at the Community Dance," or "Nativity Play," and members of the "World Council of Churches." At least some of the ministers of the Church of Scotland of 1929 refer to the Priests of the Church of Rome as their "Brethren." We have no hesitation in saying that John Knox, if alive today, would not be asked to preach in St. Giles, and supposing he did enter the pulpit of that Church, his first blast would be to clear out all the rubbish of the Romish brand that is now in that church, and Dr. Warr would be told where his "mellow" religion came from, the crosses, and the ritualism of Satan that is in evidence at "Christmas Eve," "Lent," and "Easter." Knox would tell Warr and his modern colleagues that their ritualism was from Rome. Either Dr. Warr or Knox would have to quit St. Giles! The people would say "we prefer to have our present Pastor, to that 'wild' man, John Knox!"

Who is foolish enough to doubt but that would be the decision of the poor people that are so long nurtured on the chaff of the Modernists. Samuel Rutherford would be kept "prisoner" in Aberdeen, as the worshippers could not understand the language of the Minister of Anwoth! Robert Bruce would not allow their church members to sit at the Lord's Table till they were "born again." It is questionable would Alexander Peden allow any of their ministers enter a pulpit in Scotland. Thomas Boston would not be allowed to preach in the pulpits of the Church of

Scotland of 1929, as Boston believed in an eternal hell, as positively as he believed in an eternal heaven. We can rest assured that Karl Barth and Dean Inge would be welcome, and praised as great scholars and very able divines! What a day on Scotland! "How is the gold become dim? How is the most fine gold changed, the stones of the sanctuary are poured out on the top of every street." Lam. iv. 1. We were wondering for years how was it that people of the Church of Scotland whom we came in contact with were so ignorant of the Reformers of Scotland, the great divines of the past as if they never lived. In recent times that riddle is plain enough to us now. Any one who will search diligently will find that the Reformers are so belittled, and made so insignificant in comparison to the mighty Scholars—learned divines of the present day that Calvin, Knox, Owen, Edwards, Boston, etc.,... disappear out of sight. The same is true about the men who wrote the Books of the Bible. They were rustic fellows that knew next to nothing of the great learning, supreme knowledge, and boundless self-confidence and self-importance of those who try to expound the Word of God to the people to-day. The effect of this is the obvious ignorance of the people of the Bible, the Reformers, and the divines of the past. Their minds are corrupted against the Bible and the Reformers, so that impudent Roman Catholic Writers can pour out their lies in the press, and no one is able to contradict, or rather, try to contradict their falsehood. Ah! Ministers of the Church of Scotland of 1929, you must all stand before the Throne of the Eternal and render your solemn account of how you have led men and women, boys and girls astray from the Word of God, and the blessed doctrines preached by the Reformers and the blessed divines of the past in our beloved Scotland!

It is cruel, wicked, "the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness." Lam. iv. 3. To say to unconverted souls that they are "the children of God, by birth and privileges, and that they need not any change but to go on as they are" is extremely callous; yea, it is monstrous. The wretched lying Priests send their miserable people to a place they call purgatory, but the ministers send their people to heaven without the blood, sacrifice, Mediator, righteousness, or peace of conscience, not knowing the terror of the Lord against sin that in its guilt has never been removed!

Let us imagine a soul fully believing (natural faith) that he was going to heaven at death because of his own goodness and opening his eyes in a lost eternity, and still remembering that the minister never told, or warned him of a lost eternity! The same wicked minister following the mortal remains to the grave, and there lying in the presence of all the living, that the departed friend was in heaven, with the saints of God and His holy angels—and thanking God for the blessing of having such a mother, son, wife, daughter, husband, or friend, and the soul of that departed mortal in the blackness of darkness for ever! Wicked Prophets, graceless ministers, and lying Priests will be more like the devil than any other, for their criminal conduct in this world was to deceive poor deluded sinners! This is the Church that "claims to be the only church, and that all the other Presbyterian Churches should be with them, and because they are not, it is a "scandal." Our people would like to know what is meant by "Nativity Play," and "Christmas Eve" services as held in

the Church of Scotland? I will endeavour to give you a description of this infamous blasphemy that is carried on in many of the Congregations of the Church of Scotland in the towns of Scotland to-day.

"The Christmas Eve" service is held at midnight on the 24th of December. Christ was supposed to have been born on the 25th of December. There is not the slightest authority to believe that it was on the 25th of December the Saviour was born. This was a date fixed by the Church of Rome. The authorities of the Church of Rome admit that they have no authority from Scripture, or history, to fix on the 25th of December as the date of Christ's birth. The Scottish Reformers banished it out of Scotland. During the régime of Cromwell the Parliament of England banished it as well. When Charles the Second came to the Throne, he restored the Romish Festivals, and among them the Christmas Festival. It is, therefore, on the authority of King Charles that the English hold the Festival of Christmas to this day. It was in recent years that any Protestant Church in Scotland (with the exception of Episcopalians) began to observe Christmas.

The "Nativity Play!" What is it? The minister of the congregation, along with his Office-bearers, give due intimation to the people that they have arranged to have a "Nativity Play" in the Congregation the Sabbath before the 25th of December, or on a week night if that may be more convenient to the Minister and people. Within the Church a place is prepared that might resemble in some crude way where the Saviour was born. There is a crib or cradle, fixed in a corner of the Church, straw is placed in the crib, the child is supposed to be in the crib. In fact, in one instance I read of (in recent times) a young woman with her living baby were present, the baby in the crib, and the mother sitting solemnly beside the crib. As the actors were performing their blasphemy the "wise men from the east" appeared, to present their gifts to the child. They were dressed in Oriental fashion—long loose garments, a hood covering the head, a long crook in hand, with gifts and presents to give the child. The audience were well pleased with the actors that carried on what they call the "Nativity Play." Now that is Christmas, and that is the "Nativity Play," as actually practised in the Church of Scotland to-day. And mind you, Professor Henderson says that it is a "scandal" that we were not all together, and that not one should be left in Scotland to protest and witness against the wicked prophets of Baal. See how the crafty hypocrites carry on the work of the devil in our Scottish Towns, and if this were done in Harris, North Uist, Lewis, Skye, Gairloch, etc., no doubt the people would rise in their wrath against them and expel the prophets of Baal out of their coasts.

The discipline of the Word of God is clean gone out of the Church of Scotland. The only unity that exists among them is the name of "The Church of Scotland." The ordinances of the Lord are given at random, without the least respect to the life, walk and conversation, knowledge, profession, faith, and practice of the individual. If he wants to sit at the Lord's Table, he is welcome, supposing he only attends once in the year at church. He may go away from the Lord's Table, buy the newspaper, and spend the rest of the day reading it or listening to the wireless. That is not the concern of the minister, elder, or Session. The church

member must have his liberty, and the minister will preach to him doctrines to suit his conscience and conduct, however inconsistent that may be to the Word of God. The Word of God is not binding on the conduct of the minister, member, court, or church. The Professor says that it is a "scandal" that we are not with them. No doubt the prophets of Baal considered it a "scandal" that Elijah was not in their camp to serve their Baal! God be thanked "that He has left His seven thousand" in Britain yet that will not bend the knee to the modern Baal of Modernism.

We wish it were otherwise with the Church of Scotland, and that we could recommend Professor Henderson's book to the public. Impossible! Their judgment is prejudiced against the truth, the Reformed Faith of the Church of God. They try to blot out of the minds of the youth the precious attainments of the Reformation—"forget it." That is what is going on in Russia—blot out religious from the hearts of the young, and in the course of a few years it will be forgotten. We deplore the divisions, parties, sects, and all that, but truth is of more value than any outward unity we might attain to. In the Roman Catholic Church they have scores and scores of divisions—"Black, Grey, White, Blue, Yellow"—among their Monkish Orders—all operating against each other. Nuns...how many different Orders? It is not likely that the Pope himself knows. In the Church of England of to-day they are divided, sub-divided, and the subs divided into other subs, so that that Christian Church is divided into fragments within her own borders. Any divisions in the Church of Scotland? Yes, thousands of divisions as each can do what they like. One minister can preach one kind of doctrine, one Elder can believe what he likes, another can do what he likes, and so on—endless divisions in that Church. Now, Professor Henderson, we cannot join your synagogue as you are too near the temple of Rome.

In the language of the Holy Spirit through the prophet Hosea this is the present Church of Scotland of 1929, "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight and her adulteries from between her breasts; Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst. And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms....." and so on to the end of verse 13. How dreadful her condition, how fearful her nakedness, and what terrible judgments that must overwhelm her before she will be again purified in the furnace of affliction! Free Presbyterians keep away from the Church of Scotland, for she is a backsliding Church.—James MacLeod, Greenock.

Notes and Comments.

Christian Youth Assembly and Communist Peace Festival.

Twelve hundred young people gathered in Edinburgh, at a Christian Youth Assembly, on Sabbath, the 17th February, caused an uproar when their Chairman, Mr. J. R. Paterson, divinity student, declared a motion carried by 173 votes to 131, to send delegates to the British Youth Peace Festival at Sheffield, sponsored by the Young Communist League.

Apparently most of the youths present were not entitled to vote, being only "observers." The mover of the resolution was Mr. George Mochrie, St. Nicholas Church, Sighthill, Edinburgh. The Christian Youth Assembly represents more than 4000 young Scottish Churchgoers. It appears to us that this organisation does not officially recognise the terrible fact that Communism goes hand-in-hand with Atheism. We are suspicious (we put it no stronger than that for lack of information) that this supposed Christian Youth Assembly is being used to further Communistic propaganda within the bounds of the professed Christian Church. True Christianity and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ are what Communism aims to undermine and destroy; and there are traitors within the camp. But Christ's blessed name shall endure forever.

Death Comes while viewing Royal Funeral.

Mr. William Caudle (71) and his wife (70) of Barnes, Surrey, died together while watching the late King's funeral procession on a friend's television wireless set. Mr. Caudle fell to the floor. His wife bent over him and she too collapsed. And within minutes they had died. How solemn! Many who attend or witness the funerals of others, day by day, throughout the land, never for a moment think that the messenger of death may be at their own side to usher them, in the twinkling of an eye, into the great eternity. Even those who truly fear the Lord have to smite upon their own breasts frequently, for the earthly mindedness and lack of spirituality they discover within themselves when confronted with the death and burial of their fellow men. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," are words of faithful warning from the Holy Scriptures. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Roman Catholic Bishop attacks B.B.C. gloom.

The Rev. Heenan, R.C. Bishop of Leeds, at a memorial service to the late King, is reported to have said that the British Broadcasting Corporation had wrapped the nation in organised gloom for more than a week and Roman Catholics hold that mourning does not mean misery. The death of a constitutional monarch need not paralyse the legitimate relaxation of the whole nation for so long. The Bishop also referred to old and sick persons depending on radio for relief. These observations are, in our view hypocritical in the extreme. What about the gloom of monastic and convent life; the gloom of hours of chanting in Latin in connection with varied R.C. services; the gloom cast upon the minds of bereaved Roman Catholics by reason of the teaching that all go to purgatory when they die, for not even the best Christian by R.C. doctrine goes straight to heaven; the gloom of uncertainty in the minds of R.C.'s regarding their own salvation and of those who have died in the R.C. faith; and the gloom of masses and prayers for the dead. Surely in time of national mourning it was well that sober action was taken by the B.B.C. to eliminate light and frivolous entertainment, that this Protestant nation should with a biblical and Christian respect, show sympathy with our sorrowing Royal Family? The R.C. Bishop of Leeds didn't like the world-wide sympathy and regard for merely a temporal King. That should be reserved for none but the Pope. And, of course, the world-wide and national respect was manifested towards a Protestant Monarch.

King of the Belgians and late King George's Funeral.

King Baudouin's decision not to attend the late King George's funeral in London, brough defeat to Belgium's all-Catholic Government on a vote of censure, although the Government did not resign. It was described by a former Prime Minister, M. Camille Huysmans, as a "grave error." We have not space here to enter upon details, but it seems to us that the present R.C. Government and Romanist Royal Family of Belgium have failed to hide their prejudice against Protestant Britain. The arguments employed in support of this young King's action were clearly exposed as invalid.

Communions.

Church Notes.

April—First Sabbath, Portnalong and Achmore; second, Fort William; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow and Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie and Broadford; third Edinburgh. *June*—First Sabbath, Tarbert, Applecross and Coigach; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Inverness and Gairloch. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaul; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Achmore, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar and Finsbay; fourth, Stornoway, Vatten, and Thurso.

Corrections regarding any Communion dates should be sent at once to the 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, 13th April, 1952, the following services have been arranged (D.V.), to be conducted by the Rev. William Grant, Halkirk, and the Rev. Donald Campbell, Edinburgh:—Thursday, 10th April—7 p.m.; Friday, 11th April—3.30 p.m. (Gaelic); and 7 p.m. (Fellowship Meeting); Saturday, 12th April—3.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. (Prayer Meeting); Sabbath, 13th April—11 a.m., 3.30 p.m. (Gaelic) (with corresponding English services in downstairs Hall, simultaneously), and 7 p.m.; Monday, 14th April—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.

Acknowledgment of Donations.

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

Sustentation Fund.—Mrs. R. C. H. Rodney, Ontario, £5 8/4; Mr. D. J. MacK., 43 E. 15th Ave., Vancouver, £3 10/-; Mrs. C. M'L., Ripley, Ontario, £1 9/7; Mrs. A. M. P., Scotstown, Strontian, £2; Friend of the Cause, Ross-shire, £1; Mr. D. M'K., 82 Victoria Street, Grafton, £2;

Miss A. M'K., 2 Pretoria Terrace, Inverness, 10/-; A Friend, Brora postmark, 5/-; Mr. D. G. Couldoran, o/a Shildaig Con., £2; D. C., Nairn, £1.

Home Mission Fund.—D. C., Nairn, £1.

Aged and Infirm Ministers' and Widows' and Orphans' Fund.—D. C., Nairn, £1; Mr. W. B., Stenhousemuir, 10/-.

College Fund.—Mr. J. R. M'K. Munro, Hamilton, Canada, per Rev. J. P. MacQueen, £1 13/4.

Organisation Fund.—M. G., Skye, £1.

Publication Fund.—The following received o/a Trinitarian Bible Society:—Kyle Congregation, £3 1/-; Waternish Congregation, £2; D. C., Nairn, £1.

Jewish and Foreign Missions.—An Anonymous Friend, o/a Shangani Mission, £100; An Oban Friend, o/a Mission Lorry, £50; Anonymous—"Psalm 87"—Inverness postmark, £20; A Scorraig Friend, £5; A Ross-shire Friend, £10; Mrs. R. C. H., Rodney, Ontario, £5; "C. M.," o/a Mission Lorry, £1; "C. M.," o/a Shangani Mission, £1; "D. C.," Nairn, £1; Mr. J. R. M'K. M., Hamilton, Canada, per Rev. J. P. MacQueen, £1 13/4; "Interested," Glendale, £5; Mr. and Mrs. L., Arrina P.O., o/a Mission Lorry, £2; Mr. and Mrs. L., Arrina P.O., o/a Rev. J. Fraser's House, £3; Mrs. J. M'L. Hermitage, Hawick, o/a Shangani Mission, £2 10/-; A Friend, Edinburgh, £1; A Friend, Daviot, o/a Shangani Mission, per Mrs. E. Fraser, Dingwall, £2; Nehemiah, 8-10 Fireside Collection, 10/-; Miss M. H., Dunalastair, Tobermory, 15/-; Mr. W. B., Stenhousemuir, 10/-; Mr. D. G., Couldoran, 7/2; A Friend, Shildaig, 4/-.

Synod Proceedings Fund.—Mrs. D. Matheson, North Strome, Lochcarron, 8/-.

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