

Thursday as a day of humiliation, and the law required Saturday services as a preparation for the Communion. What, then, was to be done with Friday? It would require to have some religious services, otherwise the impression made by the Thursday preaching, on the people, would be effaced, and they would be unfitted for the preparation and Communion days. Mr. McKenzie kept his Question meetings, and the effect was so agreeable that other Ministers followed his example so far that, in the course of no long time, Question meetings were held in almost all the parishes of the North Highlands. It is not believed that they ever extended to Argyleshire, neither did many of the Lowland parishes seem much in love with them, though much depended, of course, on the taste and disposition of the Ministers.

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### Ministerial Godliness.

EXTRACT FROM THE CLOSING ADDRESS OF THE MODERATOR OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

You are about to return, some of you, to your quiet, country homes, others of you to the din and bustle of our towns and cities, to pursue again and afresh the work that the Holy Ghost has given you to do. That is the great work of beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God,—of preaching salvation by Jesus Christ to perishing sinners,—and that, be it remembered, is the only salvation that sinners can reach or hear of in all the universe of God. You have been engaged in that work; some of you for many years already. And what has been your success? How many have you brought to Christ? I may assuredly be permitted to hope that there is not a minister now hearing me but has been made an instrument in the hand of the Spirit to convert a sinner from the error of his ways, and introduce life that shall never die into a soul previously dark and dead in trespasses and sins. But yet how little fruit do many, shall I not say all of us, see of our ministry! How few decided, indubitable conversions! One, two, three, or four such unquestionable cases in a year would fill the most of us with joy, with wonder,—the thing is so unusual. Now, the question that I put to myself and to you is, Is this a right state of things? Is there Scripture ground for the necessity of it,—Scripture warrant for our resting contented with it? I think there is not. When we look back to the first years of the Christian dispensation, we see men and women in successive multitudes receiving the truth, believing in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, evidently changed in their nature and dispositions, and living holy, joyful lives in the midst of many temptations and sufferings. The preaching of Christ and salvation by him then produced fruit that could neither escape notice nor be mistaken—so abundant in quantity it was, and so distinct in its character. Now, does Scripture teach us that such fruit of preaching,—such success in turning sinners to salvation, was intended by God to be confined to the primitive times of Christianity? I cannot find it so. The pentecostal period when apostles and evangelists travelled from province to province, and from city to city, unweariedly and faithfully preached salvation by Christ and Him crucified, and, despite the ignorance and prejudices which they had to encounter, and the persecu-

tion and opposition by which they were assailed, counted their converts by hundreds and by thousands,—that period is not to be regarded merely as a glorious morning of a Gospel day the light of which was to wax feeble as the day advanced, and the light spread more widely over a dark and sinful world. It cannot be the true nature of Christianity that, producing great effects at first, it should wax feeble as centuries roll over our world. Men opposed to it say that it is becoming effete,—that the nations need something new,—something fresher, with new life and power in it. And do not many of the friends of Christianity, many true Christians even, practically, to some extent, indorse this sentiment, when, either avowedly or by implication, they hold that we are not to expect such fruit from preaching as the preachers of primitive times expected, and so abundantly received?

True, we have not the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles. But it was not by these that men were converted in the times of primitive Christianity. For very many heard the tongues and witnessed the miracles, and opposed and blasphemed the more, instead of being converted. Everything through which the triumphs of the Gospel were achieved in pentecostal times remains to the Church, and belongs to her in all ages. The truth of God, which may be briefly summed up in the expression, "The doctrine of the cross," and the Holy Spirit,—it was by these that such multitudes of sinners were reconciled to God,—the doctrine of the Cross the instrument,—the Holy Spirit the sole power,—working the great change. The doctrine of the Cross then preached is the very same that we now have in the Scriptures, and there is not one word of the Holy Spirit being to be withdrawn, or of His power being to be restrained, as Christianity spread over the world. On the contrary, our Lord, when He promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples and Church, said that He should abide with them for ever. The gift of the Spirit, to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,—to quicken and give spiritual life to sinners, and to sanctify believers, is a permanent gift to the Church. It is a gift on which the very existence of a living, spiritual Church depends. It is a gift also by which the plainly and repeatedly promised triumphs of Christianity, in which we all believe, are to be accomplished. And if to be so accomplished, then will not the converting and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit need to be manifested many times more abundantly than it is seen working now among ourselves? And if the Holy Spirit wrought so evidently, and brought so many plainly into spiritual life in the early times of Christianity, and must and will do so again before the promised triumph of Gospel truth, where do we find warrant for believing that meanwhile it is vain to expect His mighty working,—that we are warranted to look only for drops, not for showers.

With such a warrant to expect a large and glorious work of the Holy Spirit in every age and period for the conversion of sinners, corresponds many a bright page of the Church's history. There are dark leaves upon leaves in the volume of that history, but there are bright pages intermingled. I go not very far away for them. Follow George Whitfield, John Wesley, Howel Harris, Charles of Bala, Rowland Hill (I might mention a host of others) in their preaching salvation by Christ crucified to perishing sinners. Did they expect no more fruit from their preaching than we expect from ours? Would they have thought

that it was all right if they had had as few conversions following their preaching as we have? Or go back to the earlier times of our own Church—for I speak not, though I might, of our own Church in later years. How was it with her under the preaching of Livingston at the Kirk of Shotts, or under the ministry of McCulloch at Cambuslang, of William Guthrie at Fenwick, of David Dickson at Irvine, and of John Welsh at Ayr? Of Dickson it is recorded that under his ministry multitudes were convinced and converted; that people under exercise and soul-concern came from every place about Irvine; that he had sermon every market-day for the country people resorting to the market, who crowded to hear him, and filled his church as on a Sabbath-day; that in a large hall in his house in Irvine there were often numbers of serious Christians waiting to converse with him. And yet, with all this life among his people, and fruit from his ministry Dickson was wont to say that the vintage at Irvine was not equal to the gleanings at Ayr in John Welsh's time. And if these things be so, then why so little of all this among us now? Ah! we may well ask why. What was the power that converted men in pentecostal times, or when Welsh, or Dickson, or Livingston, or Whitfield preached? Was it the eloquence or reasoning of the men who spoke? Was it the truths which they declared? It was neither the one nor the other. Eloquence never made a dead soul become a living soul. Truth, even God's own truth, never wrought that great change; for though that truth be good seed, it must needs be quickened. The Holy Spirit was that power; all God's children are born of the Spirit.

That ministers among us now have the Holy Spirit will not for a moment be questioned. For, verily, he is no true minister of Christ at all who has not the Holy Spirit. He may be endowed with natural talents, and have an intellect of a high order; he may have enjoyed the benefit of a thorough education, both elementary and professional; his mind may be stored with classic and philosophical lore, he may have made himself acquainted with the facts of Scripture, and be well read in systems of theology; he may mount the pulpit stamped with the *imprimatur* of the Church, and discourse eloquently to crowded and admiring audiences; but if he is not a new creature, and has not the Holy Spirit, he is no true minister of Christ. How solemn the thought to be a minister of Christ, thou and I have the Holy Spirit, my brother, else we are a walking every-day lie.

It is well when the Holy Spirit dwells in the soul at all,—takes possession of some of its chambers, and makes them a fitting habitation for Himself. But how much more desirable and glorious it is when He fills the whole soul—pervades all its affections and powers, and fills them, so that there is something lovely, gracious, holy, grave, spiritual, in all that the man says and does, in the very appearance of the man, and the atmosphere by which he is surrounded. It is this that I covet—intensely long for—for myself and for you, beloved fathers and brethren. For it is only through men thus full of the Holy Ghost that crowds of souls are brought to Christ and to salvation. Multitudes of immortal souls are perishing around us, and even in our own congregations. The power of the Holy Ghost, and no power else in all the universe, is able to quicken them—to give them spiritual life. That power usually acts through the instrumentality of the living preacher's voice. All the great