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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for May 9th, 2025

Electric Scotland News

My friend Nola Crewe was down in Windsor to attend a Knights Templar meeting. Apparently the order in Canada is in melt down. Windsor has decided to go it alone and look to build back up the organisation once things are clear.

She is going to ask if Windsor will share their reports with me to add to the site.

New Pope just been announced and from what I've been able to find out it's U.S. Cardinal Robert Prevost.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time.

Here is what caught my eye this week...

MSPs to sign off on Scotland's new electoral map

A new political map of Scotland's constituencies and regions has been submitted to ministers ahead of next year's Holyrood election.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9856191lk0o>

Ukraine in maps: Tracking the war with Russia

Fighting has raged in Ukraine since Russia launched a full-scale invasion more than three years ago.

Russian forces have slowly expanded the amount of territory they control over the past year, mostly in the east of Ukraine

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>

Nigel Farage is a 'real political threat' following English election victories, says John Swinney

The First Minister accused Nigel Farage of peddling "false hope" to voters.

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/jeqgT>

The UK Begins POWERFUL Revolt

Watch this video to learn how Reform UK is taking over in the UK

Watch this at:

https://youtu.be/xeCpkPSysiQ?si=uwxz2Gixi_1u3FZK

Australia's Election Results Explained

On Saturday, Australia's Labor party increased their majority in parliament in what was a crushing defeat for the Coalition. So in this video we'll explain how their funky electoral system works, the results so far, and how the opposition truly collapsed.

Watch this at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxhn_CYMark

Why NGOs are now more distrusted than business

ARE PEOPLE finally waking up to the great harm that NGOs do to our personal freedoms, economic prosperity, cultural values and safety from foreign powers or terrorists? That might seem like a long list of threats to our way of life because it is yet it is a simple reflection of the wide range of issues Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) seek to lobby government over to bring about change they want.

Read more at: <https://thinkscotland.org/2025/05/why-ngos-are-now-more-distrusted-than-business/>

Conrad Black: The future still belongs to Pierre Poilievre

The Conservatives missed it by a thread

Read more at:

<https://archive.is/oncyg>

Royals wave as thousands gather to watch VE Day flypast over Buckingham Palace

Official celebrations kicked off on Bank Holiday Monday with a military procession and flyover Buckingham Palace attended by the Royal family and Sir Keir Starmer.

Read more at:

<https://news.stv.tv/world/royals-wave-as-thousands-gather-to-watch-ve-day-flypast-over-buckingham-palace>

Israel approves plan to capture all of Gaza and remain there, officials say

On Sunday, Israel's military chief of staff said the army was calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers.

Read more at:

<https://news.stv.tv/world/israel-approves-plan-to-capture-all-of-gaza-and-remain-there-officials-say>

Criticising Judges

If a judge cannot tolerate public scrutiny, they have no business being a judge.

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/may-2025/criticising-judges/>

Brexit Britain signs massive trade deal with India

UK signs massive £4.8bn trade deal with India in huge boost to Brexit Britain

Read more at:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2051291/uk-india-trade-deal-brexit-britain>

Key points from John Swinney's Programme for Government

From scrapping peak rail fares to further investment in the economy, these are the main takeaways from the First Minister's legislative plans.

Read more at:

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25141749.main-takeaways-john-swinneys-programme-government/>

Danielle Smith just delivered a historic speech

This is in my opinion the best speech I've ever heard from a Canadian politician. You can watch it here at:

<https://x.com/MarcNixon24/status/1919510415329132783>

Why VE Day still matters

This year may be one of the last occasions when VE Day's anniversary is marked with such ceremony. Yet the Allied victory in 1945 remains the most important event in our nation's long history. However momentous previous turning points were, their meaning would have been obliterated had totalitarianism triumphed.

Read more at:

<https://capx.co/why-does-1945-matter-today>

Scotland's moments of remembrance to mark VE Day

Scotland is paying tribute to World War Two heroes with events around the country to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day. At dawn, Scotland's National Piper played a lament to the fallen on Portobello Beach in Edinburgh.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm23nvned99o>

Canada has been 'over reliant on the US for too long', says Joly

Her latest remarks come after she and Prime Minister Mark Carney met with US President Donald Trump in the Oval Office on Tuesday to talk about a new partnership.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cvg8gy6y8l4o>

U.S. Cardinal Robert Prevost elected as the new pope

Watch live feed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKGBI9KzyFk>

What is in the UK-US tariff deal?

The US and the UK have reached a deal over tariffs on some goods traded between the countries. US President Donald Trump's blanket 10% tariffs on imports from countries around the world remains in place and still applies to most UK goods entering the US. But the deal has reduced or removed tariffs on some of the UK's exports, including cars, steel and aluminium.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c15ng4g5g0eo>

Electric Canadian

Friend or Foe

American annexation threats date back to colonial times — but Canadians have resisted being "conquered into liberty." Written by Madelaine Drohan (pdf)

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/friendorfoe.pdf>

Canadian Journal of Industry, Science and Art
Added Volume X (1865) (pdf)

You can read this volume at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/magazines/canadianjournalr10.pdf>

Is Germany the Key Ally Canada Needs?

A video with The Agenda which I added to the foot of our Germany page.

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/germans.htm>

The Master's Wife

BY Sir Andrew MacPhail (1939) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/pei/Master-Wife.pdf>

Père Marquette

Priest, Pioneer and Adventurer by Agnes Repplier (1929) (pdf)

You can learn about him at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/P%C3%A8re-Marquette.pdf>

Metis Study Tour Report

December 1968 (pdf)

You can read this report at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/metis/metisstudytourre00albe.pdf>

Metis Settlements Land Registry

Alberta

You can read this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/metis/landregistry.htm>

The Métis in the Canadian West

By Marcel Giraud, Translated by George Woodrock in two volumes (1986)

You can read these volumes at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/first/metis/M%C3%A9tisinthCanadianWest.htm>

Immersive railway POV through Canadian Shield in 4K

Added this 3 hour video to our Industry & Transport page, the third video down.

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/index.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 4th day of May 2025 - Spring Cleaning
By The Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26614-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-4th-day-of-may-2025-spring-cleaning>

Discovering Muskoka's Cottage Paradise
Added a three hour video to the foot of our Muskoka page

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/ontario/muskoka/index.htm>

New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest
The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, Fur Trader of the Northwest Company and of David Thompson, Official Geographer and Explorer of the same Company 1799-1814. Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri, and Columbia Rivers, edited with copious critical commentary by Elliot Cours, Editor of "Lewis and Clark," of "Pike," etc., etc., in three volumes which I added to the foot of our page on David Thomson.

You can read these volumes at:

http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/thompson_david.htm

David Thompson
The Explorer by Charles Norris Cochrane (1924) (pdf)

You can read about him and learn something about how he drew up the border map between the USA and Canada at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/DThompson.pdf>

The Beaver Magazine
Added Volume 5 No. 4 (pdf)

You can read this issue at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/TheBeaver-September1925.pdf>

Electric Scotland

The Children's Portion
Entertaining, Instructive, and Elevating Stories selected and edited by Robert W. Shoppell (1895) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

https://electricscotland.com/kids/stories/The_Children_s_Portion.pdf

Scottish Society of Louisville
Got in their May 2025 newsletter.

You can read this edition at:

<https://electricscotland.com/familytree/newsletters/Louisville/index.htm>

Speeches of The Hon. Thomas Erskine

(Now Lord Erskine) when at the Bar, on subjects connected with The Liberty of the Press, Against, Constructive Treasons, and on Miscellaneous Subjects, collected by James Ridgway in four volumes (1813)

You can read these volumes at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/other/SpeechesThomasErskine.htm>

Scottish Canals and Waterways

Comprising State Canals, Railway-owned Canals and Present-Day Ship Canal Schemes by Edwin A. Pratt (1922)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/men/scottish-canals.htm>

British Mezzotinters

Edited by Alfred Whitman of the Print Room, British Museum, Thomas Watson, James Watson and Elizabeth Judkins (1904) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/art/thomaswatsonjame0000good.pdf>

Thomas Thomson

Advocate, President of the Bannatyne Club (pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/men/thomasthomsonesq00cockuoft.pdf>

The Tragedy of Paotingfu

An authentic story of the Lives, Services and Sacrifices of the Presbyterian, Congregational and China Inland Missionaries who Suffered Martyrdom at Paotingfu, China, June 30th and July 1, 1900 by Isaac C. Ketler, New York (1902) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/TheTragedyOfPaotingfu.pdf>

William Shepherd 1st Collection 1793

Sheet Music from the Highland Music Trust (pdf)

You can read this collection at:

<https://electricScotland.com/music/The-Shepherd-Collection.pdf>

The Scottish Soldier and Empire, 1854–1902

By Edward M. Spiers (2006) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/scotreg/the-scottish-soldier-and-empire-1854-1902.pdf>

Clan Gregg

Added a page for this name which you can get to at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/dtog/gregg.htm>

Scoto-Celtic Studies

Essays and Papers by Alex MacBain, M.A., FSAScot. (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/books/pdf/scotocelticstudimacb.pdf>

The Myth and the Reality of the "Men"

Leadership and spirituality in the Northern Highlands, 1800-1850 by David M.M. Paton, M.A.M.Ed., Ph.D.
(pdf)

You can read this article at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bible/themen.pdf>

The Scots Magazine

And Edinburgh Literary Miscellany, being a General Repository of Literature, History, and Politicd , for 1806
(pdf)

You can read this volume at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/articles/scotsmagazinean05unkngoog.pdf>

New Lights on Old Edinburgh

By John Reid (1894) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/edinburgh/newlightsonolde00reidgoog.pdf>

Memoirs of the Rev. William Wilson, A. M.

Minister of the Gospel at Perth, one of the four brethern - the founders of the Secession Church, and Professor of Theology to the Associate Presbytery; with Brief Sketches of the State of Religion in Scotland for fifty years immediately posterior to the Revolution; including a Circumstantial Account of the Origin of the Secession By the Rev. Andrew Ferrier, Glasgow (1830) (pdf)

You can learn more about him at:

https://electricscotland.com/bible/Memoirs_of_the_Rev_William_Wilson_A_M_Wi.pdf

Chapters from the History of the Free Church of Scotland

By the Rev. Norman I. Walker, D.D. (1895) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<https://electricscotland.com/bible/chaptersfromhist00walk.pdf>

Story

Life of Dugald Buchanan

Taken from the book..

Buchanan, the Sacred Bard of the Scottish Highlands,

His Confessions and His Spiritual Songs rendered into English Verse with his Letters and a Sketch of his Life
by Lachlan MacBean (1919)

WHEN the wide world comes to know DUGALD BUCHANAN it will never forget him. There is an attractiveness in the picturesque setting of his life, in the frank seriousness of his Poems, and in the intimate naivete of his Confessions. There is also a surprise in finding concealed in a Highland clansman a conscience-driven

Puritan, and in seeing themes of Miltonic grandeur set forth by a great bard, in the language of Ossian. There is, moreover, fruitful matter for thought in watching, under the microscope of a careful personal diary, the nervous progress of a lonely Celtic pilgrim on the Mystic Way. Above all there is a real satisfaction in discovering how a deep, strange, often overshadowed inner life may eventually emerge into the sunlight of a strong practical usefulness.

The scenes of his infancy did not lack romance. He was born in 1716 in the mountainous district of Balquhider, in Western Perthshire. His father's tribe—the Buchanans—owned at one time lands by the side of Loch Lomond in Stirlingshire, and neighbouring glens in Perthshire, and being a warlike race, they took part in the historic struggles of Scotland against the Danes and the English. One of the best known bearers of the name was George Buchanan, the great Latinist of the 16th century—historian, Principal of St. Leonard's College in St. Andrews, and educator of James VI. of Scotland and I. of England.

In the days of Dugald's youth the Scottish Highlands were disturbed by Jacobite plots. Around his birthplace dwelt the proud and rather turbulent Clan MacGregor whose ancient name was long proscribed by law. In the very year before his birth the rebellion of 1715 had seen Rob Roy and his caterans swarming through Balquhider, and for thirty years more the glens were seething with political disaffection.

But Dugald's father, John Buchanan was no outlaw. He tilled his little farm and attended to his little corn mill at Ardoch, near the banks of the sluggish Balvaig, almost opposite the spot where now stands the railway station of Strathyre. The miller was a quiet, God-fearing man, and he considered it his duty to give his son a sound education and a religious upbringing. But the greatest influence in the boy's life was that of his mother, Janet Ferguson. The six short years that he enjoyed her care sufficed to imbue his nascent mind with a sense of the awful import of life, of the reality of the spiritual world and of the claims of the Narrow Way. Then he lost her in his childhood, but for half a century her power over him never waned.

After her death he was sent to a school established in the district by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, and conducted by a capable teacher named Nicol Ferguson. Being a lad of mental gifts much above the average, Dugald did so well that at the early age of twelve years he was appointed tutor in a well-to-do family. In this new home also the mother was a pious woman, but unfortunately she lacked force of character. She had so little influence that her children were openly profane and rude. Easily impressed by his surroundings, young Dugald soon took on the manners of his new companions, but not without inward struggle. The memory of his mother's counsels and prayers was still fresh within him, and it was soon reinforced from another quarter. The house in which he found himself was well stocked with books, and he became acquainted with the English classics. Their influence on his mind and character was strong and lasting; in particular, as one may well divine, the influence of Shakespeare and Milton and Young's Night Thoughts.

The lad remained in this family only for a few months, and was then sent to complete his education at Stirling. Here he studied for two years and afterwards at Edinburgh for six months, his father being evidently ambitious, as many a Scottish father in days of old was ambitious, that his boy should not be kept down by the fact that fair science frowned upon his humble birth. But the Highland youth was quickly entangled in the snares of the city. He got into a wild set, and graduated only too swiftly in the school of vice. The opportunity so dearly bought for him by his father out of his hard-won earnings from mill and croft was thrown away, and in less than six months the lad, now aged eighteen years, was ordered home and sternly directed to choose a trade by which he might gain a living. The irresponsible days of youth were over.

Dugald was naturally very averse to the change, but in the end he obeyed, and chose the trade of a house carpenter. He was therefore apprenticed with a friend in the neighbouring district of Kippen, where he worked for two years. Thereafter he removed to the town of Dumbarton, on the river Clyde, and there laboured at the same trade. For a few years he moved freely through the surrounding districts as his work demanded, and thus found many opportunities of adding to his stores of general knowledge.

It was in those years that his thoughts were drawn more and more to the religious life, and his chief pursuit became the attainment of spiritual equilibrium, or as it appeared to him, of a right relationship with God.

He frequented many a parish church, sought the aid of many a preacher, took long journeys to be present at the celebration of the Lord's Supper at many a moorland communion, and seemed to be pressing on to take heaven by storm.

In one of these pilgrimages to the shrines of religious truth, Buchanan came under the influence of George Whitefield. This was during Whitefield's second visit to Scotland in the summer of 1742, when he was drawing audiences of over 30,000 persons in the district of Cambuslang, near Glasgow. Buchanan was very deeply impressed by the fervour of the great English preacher and became more eager than ever in his search for spiritual light and peace.

So absorbed did he become in this great quest that after he had entered on his twenty-fifth year he began to write down in a private book its successive episodes. This is the manuscript which is reproduced in the present volume under the title of his Confessions. Possibly, nay probably, he never intended it to meet any human eye except his own. His sole object was to have before him in black and white a plain statement of the facts so that he might weigh them aright. It was written in English, and having been found among Buchanan's papers, was preserved by his widow.

Long after her death, and after his poems had made his name famous, this English record was published in its entirety by an Edinburgh printer. The extracts here reproduced give a full and fair idea of the whole record. It will be compared with those other revelations of personal spiritual history—the Confessions of St Augustine and the Journals of Amiel. With them it shares the quality of an intense realisation of the spiritual realm. This realisation the Twentieth Century, otherwise so richly endowed, has to a large extent lost, and with it something of the dignity and the value of human life.

The record is sometimes called Buchanan's Diary, but it will be seen that it has none of the features of a diary. For the year 1741, when Buchanan was about twenty-five years old, it contains two entries, three for 1742, four for 1743, and the remainder may well have been written in or about 1750. It is likely that Buchanan did not intend to carry his record past the entry for August 1744—that critical period of his experience when, in his twenty-seventh year, he made full surrender to the Divine Love and accepted peace.

In this 'happy consummation the development of a rich inner life might be supposed to have found fit completion. But the event turned out far otherwise. The story of this man's conversion had a strange sequel.

He evidently expected that the new light now illumining his path would go on shining more and more unto the perfect day. But in less than three years it suffered eclipse under every circumstance of tragedy. The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745-46 came near to ruin the soul of Dugald Buchanan.

As an earnest searcher for spiritual truth at every shrine—church services, religious meetings, and great sacramental gatherings, he had already drawn to himself the attentions of the young Highlanders around him—nearly all Jacobites—and the scoffing remark was occasionally heard—There goes the Whig ! The insurrectionary movement of the '45 spread like wildfire through Balquhiddy, and the men of the moors and scattered hamlets donned belt and claymore, and marched away over the hills to follow Prince Charlie. But Dugald Buchanan would have nothing to do with the Rising. He was out of sympathy with the majority of his clan. Their ideal was the unfortunate Prince; his was already taking on the massive proportions of the Christian Hero, afterwards portrayed in his poem.

News came of victory after victory, and of a triumphant march into England, but he did not share in the elation of the hour. Then came rumours of the retreat from Derby, the capture of the Highland contingent left in Carlisle to delay the pursuing army, a last dicker of victory at Falkirk, and finally the black disaster of

Culloden.

Following the news of this awful debacle there arrived many tales of ruthless cruelties perpetrated against the brave and foolish followers of the Prince, tales that aroused the anger of their kinsmen, even of those who were Whigs.

In October 1746 the captives of Carlisle were tried as common criminals, found guilty, and made to suffer an ignominious death. Among them were many of Dugald Buchanan's own kith and kin, and of his neighbours. Their deaths brought him great grief, and along with the natural sorrow for their fate came resentment against the hideous cruelty displayed by many of the victorious party—the inhuman torturing and slaying of the simple Highland peasantry, both the innocent and the guilty. In particular Francis Buchanan, of Arncliffe, was arrested in his own house of Lechny, in Unitvay district, and in spite of his vehement denials of being implicated in the rebellion, he was hurried off to Carlisle and Penrith for trial. He was accused of holding the rank of Major in the Duke of Perth's Yeomanry, and the charge was supported by suborned evidence, with the result that the accused man was convicted and hanged.

Buchanan's whole nature revolted against such glaring wrongs, and his outraged feelings passed irresistibly into fierce anger and vengeful desires. Now at last the old Pagan clansman in his heart was aroused; the Whig-Puritan was swept away by the rushing flood of his wrath, and for a time he had room for nothing but dark thoughts of revenge.

Amid this wild moral upheaval Buchanan's peace of mind, so recently won after years of struggle, seemed to be utterly lost. His very soul was tossed on stormy waters and well-nigh suffered shipwreck.

Only those who find the moral and the spiritual intensely real can at all understand the living tragedy here revealed. A less earnest man would have felt the dilemma less keenly. But this Highland carpenter with the genius of a great poet was simple and direct in his faith, and believing himself a child of eternity, he found awful meanings in his conflict. On the one side were ranged the forces of the new, strong Christian life and on the other the elemental emotions of justice outraged and kinship betrayed. The storm of wrath and suffering is vividly described in the Confessions, but they also show how in Buchanan's heart the grace of forgiveness was finally victorious. Its remembrance of all that God had borne and pardoned of his former misdeeds let loose a flood of gratitude in which his hot resentment was at length fully quenched.

It was just at this period of spiritual stress that young Buchanan felt the stirrings of another new emotion. He was drawn by bonds of warm affection to a gentle and loveable damsel named Margaret Brisbane, daughter of the land steward of the Earl of Loudon, at the picturesque hamlet of Lawers, near Crieff. They were married in 1749, and settled down on the old family farm of Ardoch, the bridegroom being about 33 years old.

But a well-meaning and gifted young man like Buchanan was sure to hear sooner or later a call for social service. After the rebellion there was felt in the glens a new hunger for knowledge, and he began to conduct educational classes far and near, at the Braes of Balquhidder, at Strathyre, and Lochearnside. In those mountain journeys he was drawing in from wild scenery and from isolated human lives inspiration for future poems—the imagery of his poems on Winter, on the Day of Judgment, and The Dream.

This went on for two years, and then Buchanan, now 35 years old, was placed in charge of a school at Kinloch Rannoch, situated in a beautiful district at the head of a lake in Western Perthshire, about thirty miles north from his native Balquhidder. The appointment was made by the Barons of Exchequer as managers of the estate of Struan, confiscated for treason. To this northern district Buchanan removed early in 1757, and immediately plunged into his urgent and laborious but congenial task. That the district had few social, religious or educational attractions may be learned from the factor's report included in the Struan Estates MSS. for that very period:—"The situation of Rannoch rendered it very fit for carrying on the business of thieving, as it lies in the centre of the Highlands," whither resort "Macdonalds and Camerons, but not for

building kirks.”

As a teacher of the young, Buchanan won great success. It is true that his classes were ill-equipped with school books, but that want merely supplied an opportunity for new methods of oral instruction, while the general ignorance of the English tongue on the part of the children gave him an opportunity to devise a sound method of bilingual education. Having a good literary knowledge of Gaelic, he was able to train his pupils in translating, readily and correctly, from the one language to the other, and in order that the knowledge should be thorough, he got them to name all objects around them first in Gaelic and then in English, the exact pronunciation being given in every case. In this way useful vocabularies of the two languages were compiled with great care, and supplemented by short sentences formed upon these words. Reading and writing in both tongues were thus taught side by side. The Rev. John Sinclair, who has made minute enquiries into this matter, states that in Buchanan's classes, even arithmetic was first taught orally and on the bilingual system, and as there was at the time no translation of the Bible in Scottish Gaelic the children were required to translate long passages into that language. It is also narrated that though a strict disciplinarian, Buchanan possessed a personal charm that made him greatly beloved among the young.

Until the Rev. Donald Maclean unearthed from the Strowan manuscripts interesting contemporary tributes to Buchanan's work and placed them at our disposal for this book, even the Gaelic-speaking admirers of Buchanan's poetry were not aware of the practical services he had rendered to education and social advancement. In that wide important district there was in 1749 only one school with 24 scholars. Buchanan entered on his work in 1751, and by 1753 there were 6 schools with 350 scholars. Nor was the advance in manners and morals less marked—"many formerly noted for dishonesty and licentiousness" now becoming "sober, honest, and industrious." Later in 1758, Ensign Small, who was now factor, reported "a very considerable alteration for the better in the country of Rannoch within these few years, and that the unwearied diligence and application of Dugald Buchanan have not a little contributed to that end." He added that Buchanan was "a master of the Irish language," and every Sunday addressed above 500 people.

In a petition addressed by Buchanan to the Commissioners on Forfeited Estates, craving for improvements on his school, he wrote:—"In spring, summer, and harvest the people of Bunrannoch, and for two miles up the sides of Loch Rannoch, convene to worship God and are catechized by the Petitioner in the fields, but there is no house proper for, or that can contain the people who convene in winter to worship, which hinders many from attending, and endangers the health of those who do." (MS. Strowan papers.)

Reporting in 1753, the factor wrote:—"Dugald Buchanan, who I found after a year and a half's trial of such singular service in the country that, sensible of what a blessing he had been, and would likely prove to be, in that part of tire country, I granted him my personal obligation for the payment of £20 stg. for ten years."

At first Buchanan's little school was not at the village of Kinloch Rannoch but at Drum-castle, which is a mile further east. Here, according to Sinclair, he resided and taught for thirteen years and afterwards for four years in Kinloch Rannoch.

Buchanan was now being led into wider and wider fields of usefulness. He first began to conduct religious services on Sundays in his little schoolhouse. But the attendance increased so much that the meetings had to be conducted in the open air. Then, in 1755, he was recommended by the Church of Scotland Presbytery of Dunkeld to the Committee of the Royal Bounty as a suitable man to be Catechist—a lay religious teacher—for the wide surrounding district. He accepted this additional appointment, and made frequent tours through the neighbouring glens, teaching and preaching in his native Gaelic, of which he had so complete a mastery. His influence as a religious teacher became great in all that region, and it is said that on one occasion two clans who were at deadly feud assembled to hear him preach, and that as he spoke he stood on a great stone in the centre of a stream which separated the rival parties!

This was the river Gaur, and the parties separated by that unbridged water were the tenants of an estate under a native ownership and those living on one of the estates confiscated by the Government on account

of the late rebellion. According to a recent narrator, the Rev John Sinclair, Buchanan “preached so lovingly and so powerfully to those on each side of the river that the people, quite overcome with emotion, are said to have rushed into the stream, and to have embraced one another; and from that day forward a truce of God has existed between the two peoples.”

In the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1761, Dr Hyndman reported that “the country of Rannoch from being possessed by the most lawless and thievish people, is now becoming greatly civilised, and no thefts or robberies are heard of among the inhabitants, 2000 in number.” (MS. report copied by Rev. D. Maclean.)

Buchanan’s intellectual powers were now maturing and the variety of his past experiences stored in a retentive memory, combined with a contemplative habit of mind, created in him a poetic philosophy of no ordinary power. There are indications that before he attained his thirtieth year he had felt the attractions of the gentle art of poetry, and the stirring events of the Rebellion naturally induced many new emotions and new trains of thought. Always a keen and loving observer of nature, he was no less an interested student of humanity, and it is matter for regret that so few of his religious poems and none at all of his compositions on secular subjects have been preserved.

As years went on the unusual stature of the man began to be recognised. For one thing he was a gifted and intelligent student of Gaelic, and for this reason he was chosen by the Rev. James Stewart of Killin to assist him in the preparation of the first edition of the New Testament in that tongue. In 1767 Buchanan therefore went to reside for some months in Edinburgh, revising the proofs of this undertaking, and at the same time, ever eager for knowledge, he attended the University classes for natural philosophy, astronomy, and anatomy. During his residence in the city, he met several well-known authors, and, among others, David Hume, the philosopher and historian.

His countrymen residing in the city, having heard that he was in their midst, induced Buchanan to conduct for their benefit religious services every Sunday in their native tongue. They went further, and set on foot a movement to have him ordained as a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, and although it was found that this could not then be arranged, his ministrations were continued and were very highly valued.

He also took the opportunity to publish a few of his own Gaelic poems. This was towards the end of 1767. A few months thereafter, or in the early summer of 1768, he was recalled to Kinloch Rannoch by the news that his family had been stricken down by an epidemic of fever which prevailed in the district. He went home, and while helping to nurse them he also caught the infection, and died at the early age of fifty-two.

It is gratifying to find that Buchanan’s remarkable powers and his sterling qualities were appreciated by the simple folk in the Highland glens around him. By his neighbours throughout Rannoch he was greatly beloved, and when his death became known it was resolved to give him honourable burial in their midst. But the people of his native Balquhidder were equally resolved that the body should be brought home to his birthplace. Accordingly a band of resolute men set out on the northward march to Rannoch, and on their arrival there it looked as if there might be a fiercer feud for the possession of his body than any he had pacified in his lifetime. Fortunately peaceful counsels prevailed. The men of Rannoch stood gloomily but reverently aside, and the coffin containing the body was borne away through the mountains and interred in the small Buchanan cemetery at Little Leny in Balquhidder.

His widow, with her two sons and two daughters, returned to the family farm at Ardoch, where she lived until her death in 1824. One of the daughters was still alive when Buchanan’s diary was printed in 1836.

In physical appearance Buchanan was tall, blackhaired, dark-complexioned, and large eyed. In his younger days he wore the Highland costume, but after 1745 he had, like the rest of his countrymen, to discard the kilt. During his residence in Rannoch, his usual attire consisted of knee-breeches, a blue coat, and a broad Highland bonnet.

The greatness of Buchanan as a sacred bard has long been appreciated by his Gaelic-speaking countrymen, and his works, now submitted in full to the attention of the English-speaking public, have been a persistent native force in the formation of the Highland character. Dr Duff, the famous missionary to India, acknowledged more than once his spiritual indebtedness to Buchanan. Writing late in life he said—"As a youth I remember hearing large portions of his two most celebrated poems, 'The Skull' and 'The Day of Judgment,' often read and repeated by good people in the parish of Moulin. Some of the sentiments and even expressions have even now stuck to my memory."

Rev. D. Maclean, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland for 1919, writes:—"Assembled townships in Sutherlandshire listened unwearied to the recitations from this and other favourite poets through the long nights of their dreary winters and carried with them into their life of sorrow and need their spirit and sentiment. The lonely shepherd on his mountain round, and the sinewy fisherman bending to his oar, made them the companions of their toil. Over the great oceans expatriated Highlanders carried them to semiscorched Australia and forest-clad Nova Scotia, and there they served as their mentors when pest and fire, frost and want, gave the providence of God the appearance of fatherly forgetfulness."

Among the great poets of the Scottish Gael three are acknowledged to be of outstanding ability — Alexander Macdonald, 1700-1770; Dugald Buchanan, 1716-1768, and Duncan Macintyre, 1724-1812, and it is interesting to note that these three were contemporaries. It would almost seem that at this time (as happened in Athens in the days of Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles), the poetic genius of the race attained its full growth and flowered in these three notable men. Of the three, Buchanan alone chose for his special sphere of work the sublime themes of the spiritual realm, and well he was equipped for the task.

The life of Dugald Buchanan covered an epoch of transition in the Scottish Highlands. The country passed from the traditional period of arms, romance and sentiment, to the modern period of partial education, commonplace work and ordinary respectability. The character and outlook of the people underwent a change, and the new age brought its own difficulties and disadvantages. Certainly it provided new problems for Buchanan, and perhaps the most real service he rendered to his fellows was that, by his teaching and his poems, he helped to create for the new era a better religious and social atmosphere.

We have seen how the man was gradually prepared for his work, and now looking back upon his activities one cannot avoid noting in them two rather remarkable features. One is that, although Buchanan was in temperament a typical Celt, and a great Gaelic bard, he made his countrymen familiar with that form of piety which prevailed in England in the seventeenth century, and which from his day prevailed for more than a hundred years throughout his native glens. The other feature is that, though he was a Celt, Buchanan's religion was singularly free from mysticism or psychical elements of any kind. Among devout Highland ministers of old, visions, predictions, and other revelations of another order of existence have been not infrequent, just as other outward manifestations have been known in Welsh revivals, and still others among English pietists of a certain fervour like George Fox and John Wesley. But in Dugald Buchanan, with all his intensity, there is no indication of anything of this kind, except of course his dreams, which were the reflection of his waking thoughts. In his dramatic dealings with God in "The Cave of the Bock," and in his pictures of employments in the future life, revealed in the appendix to this volume, Buchanan came near the borders of the supernormal, but no further. His religion was as purely inward and spiritual in essence as it was thoroughly practical in its effects.

Buchanan did a great work for his people, but he was greater than his work. His personality was complex and its development followed remarkable lines, revealing qualities singularly appropriate for the work he was destined to do, and suggesting the presence of others of still larger scope. His transparent sincerity and tremendous earnestness, along with a certain greatness of heart, endeared him to his own people, and it may be hoped that, men of other races, reared amid very different surroundings, will find him worthy of serious study.

You can read the entire book at:

<https://electricScotland.com/bible/buchanansacredba00buch.pdf>

END.

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you and that Mothers enjoy their special Mother's Day celebrations on Sunday. I'm told that the Rev. Nola Crewe is doing a special Homily for Mother's Day which you can find on Sunday in her forum at:

<http://www.electricScotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe>

Alastair