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COMFORT IN TROUBLOUS TIMES

In looking back upon events in Britain and other areas of the world during the past year the news has consistently and prominently recorded a great variety of troubles and those who have "come of age" and have remained indifferent and have closed their minds to these troubles are few indeed.

Within our own realm, the seamen's strike, the economic situation with growing unemployment figures, the increase in serious crime, the Rhodesian problem, and the overwhelming and distressing disaster at Aberfan are some of the matters which have contributed to the times being troublous.

As to the world at large, Vietnam is still a battlefield, revolt has occurred in African nations, assassination of a Prime Minister has taken place in Cape Town, Israel continues to be the object of the hatred of some neighbouring Arab states, China and Russia are in political conflict, and in America the Civil Rights question has brought the American negroes and the whites into open conflict again and again. Other troubles there have been and still exist, such as famine in India and elsewhere, with the inevitable suffering and misery.

The United Nations Organisation has continued to be an expensive and ineffectual instrument, more or less, in relation to world affairs. The King of Nations, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not owned nor honoured in its proceedings, and in our own Houses of Parliament there has been a complete lack of official and public acknowledgment of God and His Son Jesus Christ, in prosperity and in these times of difficulty and perplexity.

And all those who live and act without reference to God and His Son Jesus Christ and the Word of God, cannot possibly expect comfort which is worth having, in troublous times. Such may embrace a peace which is no comfort at all, having no divine foundation and which is easily undermined. And the vast majority, it is to be feared, in our own nation, are thrown back upon their own human wisdom and strength when confronted with trouble affecting themselves personally or in their consideration of troubles involving others.

The fact is that in the light of Holy Scripture and the true Christian faith, the children of God, who are such by faith in Christ Jesus, are the only people who are aware of the source of strong consolations in troublous times. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to them the Father of Mercies and the God of All Comfort. And Paul writes in this context, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulations which we endure . . ."

They believe that the Lord reigneth when men and nations rage. As David writes, "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed . . . He

that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision" (Ps. 2; vs. 1, 2, 4). Daniel declared to proud King Nebuchadnezzar, in Babylon "... that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men". And this is a great truth which sustains the believer in looking out upon a world distracted by much evil and trouble. Daniel himself was a captive Jew in Babylon, his own nation being in captivity as a punishment from God because of their national sins. He discerned the righteous hand of God in it all.

The Christian has a "Throne of grace" to come to in troublous times and that by divine direction and invitation. Here, through and in the Lord Jesus Christ they may prayerfully and humbly petition for mercy and grace to help them and others in time of need. The poor, prayerless, spiritually ignorant people of the world know not nor understand that in Christ there are consolations, precious and sweet. These the believer may obtain in the kindness of the Lord when troubles abound in his own experience or around him in the world.

The situation may be such at times and in places, that the Lord's people may have fears for the very existence of the Church and Cause of Christ. But even in the midst of Russia, the Most High will have a remnant according to the election of grace. And when they are enabled to turn their eyes, believingly, to say, the forty-sixth Psalm, there they discover the divine truth which can sustain, strengthen and comfort them, viz. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," and also, "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (vs. 1 and 5).

And again, when men of different countries confront one another and with opposing points of view, endeavour to deal with perplexing and difficult problems affecting their fellow men; the outcome seems so uncertain to the onlooker, as in the case of Rhodesia. Such a situation is a cause of vexation to many. Yet, in face of all this, they who fear the Lord may turn to the truth which declares: "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Ps. 33; v. XI), and by the Word of the Lord their minds are enlightened and their hearts are fortified in belief of the fact that whatever men may or may not do, the counsel of the Lord shall stand and His purposes be fulfilled to all generations.

What a great means of comfort the Lord has placed at the disposal of His believing people in the Holy Scriptures! Therein they can discover divine truths which are capable, with the divine blessing, of comforting their troubled minds in troublous times. "This Word of Thine my comfort is, in mine affliction," writes David.

Further, the Christian has the promise and hope of "the rest that remaineth", where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, beyond this world. Let times be ever so troublesome, they have in their good hope through grace, a secret source of consolation which the world knows nothing of

BRIGHT ORNAMENTS of the CHURCH OF CHRIST ANDREW MELVILLE

By Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, Skye

When John Knox passed away Scotland, no doubt, lost its greatest defender of the Protestant religion and many would bewail his removal as a calamity of the first magnitude, but the Cause of Christ is not dependent on the integrity and abilities of men although He condescends to use men as polished shafts in His hand to fulfil His purpose. This was very evident at the time of the Reformation. The subject of this sketch was the son of Richard Melville, the proprietor of the estate of Baldovy, about a mile to the south-west of Montrose, and was the

youngest of nine sons. He was born in 1545, about three years after Knox publicly professed the Reformed faith. When Andrew Melville was two years old he lost his father, who fell at the Battle of Pinkie. Shortly afterwards he lost his mother, and was left a helpless orphan at an early age, but the Lord manifested Himself as the orphan's help, and made use of his eldest brother, Richard, who had succeeded to the estate, and his like-minded wife, to take care of the orphan, and to minister to his needs. Richard, perceiving that his youngest brother was of a weakly constitution and that he had a taste for learning, sent him to the grammar-school of Montrose, where he made some progress in Latin, a language in which at a later date he became so proficient. Through the instrumentality of John Erskine of Dun, a Greek school was established in Montrose and Andrew Melville took full advantage of the opportunity. The teacher of this school was a learned Frenchman, and Melville availed himself of the opportunity of acquiring a more perfect knowledge of French. From Montrose he went to the University of St. Andrews where he studied logic, rhetoric, ethics, and physics, studying the text books in the original Greek, which evoked the admiration of his professors, for they were only acquainted with a Latin translation. When Melville left the University of St. Andrews he had the character of being "the best philosopher, poet, and Grecian of any young master of the land."

After leaving the University he decided to complete his education on the Continent. At the age of nineteen years he left his native country and began his studies in the University of Paris, which, at the time he entered it, was in its most prosperous state. In this University he made great proficiency in all the branches of education taught there, and in 1566 he entered the University of Poitiers where he became one of the regents, in which situation he remained for three years until the civil war between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics broke out. Poitiers was besieged by the Protestant Admiral Coligny, and defended by the Duke of Guise. After the siege was raised Melville left France and went to Geneva, for the prosecution of his theological studies. On arrival at Geneva he was, through the influence of Beza, appointed to the Chair of Humanity in the Academy, which at that time was vacant. Here, with true literary ardour, he availed himself of the opportunity of attending on the lectures of men who were among the foremost in Europe from the point of view of learning. It was here that he made progress in Oriental literature for which he was afterwards famous. Melville was strongly drawn to Theodore Beza, who was at the time Professor of Divinity in the Academy and a minister of the city, and a close intimacy sprang up between them. Here he also made the acquaintance of many of the learned men of the age, especially after the massacre of the Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. Following on that massacre those who escaped the dagger of the murderer took refuge in Geneva.

Melville was destined, however, to play an important part in the religious and educational life of Scotland, and, through the solicitations of relatives and acquaintances, he returned to his native land in 1574. He was not long permitted to enjoy a life of ease with his relatives in Baldovv. Theodore Beza had written to the General Assembly, which met in August after he arrived in Scotland, informing them of his qualifications. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Principal of Glasgow University which, at the time, was in a languishing condition. It had practically no funds, and there were only two regents, and very few scholars. By the time that Melville finished his second session in Glasgow, his fame had spread throughout the kingdom, students came from all quarters to hear his lectures, and the class-rooms which had so lately been empty could not contain the numbers who sought admission. Along with his other duties it was required of the Principal

to preach on Sabbath in Govan. In the first General Assembly after Melville became Principal of Glasgow University he sat as a member, in virtue of the fact that he was minister of Govan and a professor of divinity, and became a member of a Committee appointed to draw up a form of ecclesiastical policy which would be in accordance with the Word of God and the state of the country. At the next Assembly, which was in the following August, he stated, at some length, his own views as to the unscripturalness of Episcopacy. The Assembly accepted the Report of this Committee and formally abolished the episcopal office. Another fruit of the labours of this Committee was the production of the Second Book of Discipline, which entered upon matters which were left out by the First Book of Discipline. As a result of the Second Book of Discipline the episcopal office was abolished and it was enacted that the government of the Church was to be in the hands of pastors and elders. For his share in this work Melville suffered a good deal from the hatred of those whose aim was to set up prelacy.

That Melville could not be swerved from his faithfulness to the Word of God or the government of the Church, by bribery, flattery, or the fear of man, is apparent from his reply to the Regent Morton when the latter found fault with certain things which the General Assembly did, and in a threatening voice said, "There will never be quietness in this country till half-a-dozen of you be hanged or banished the country." Melville's spirited reply was, "Tush, sir, threaten your courtiers after that manner. It is the same to me whether I rot in the air or in the ground. The earth is the Lord's. I have been ready to give my life where it would not have been so well expended, at the pleasure of my God. I have lived out of your country ten years as well as in it. Let God be glorified; it will not be in your power to hang or exile His truth." In 1580 we find that Melville was translated from Glasgow to be Principal of St. Andrews University to the great regret of those who had the good of the former University at heart. To St. Andrews he was accompanied by his nephew, James Melville, who was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages. He had many difficulties to contend with at the beginning of his career in St. Andrews, but by the end of two years those who had been his most bitter opponents became his warmest friends.

When matters had settled down in the University of St. Andrews, Melville was called forth to defend the liberties of the Church. Through Roman Catholic intrigue, King James VI was influenced by several Papists who had found a place in the Court, with the result that the Reformed faith was in imminent danger. Those who were about the King succeeded in restoring Episcopacy. By way of commencing their scheme they offered the vacant See of Glasgow to Robert Montgomery, minister of Stirling. After accepting it he was summoned to the bar of the General Assembly for having accepted that which the Assembly had condemned. Though the Royal authority was interposed on his behalf the Assembly proceeded to deal with the case, and Melville stood forth and presented a libel against him consisting of fifteen articles. The Assembly remitted the process to the Presbytery of Stirling with instructions to them to report their decision to the Synod of Lothian, requiring that Synod to sentence him, if found guilty, according to the laws of the Church. They also prohibited Montgomery from leaving Stirling and enter into the bishopric of Glasgow. The result was that the ministers of Glasgow refused to instal Montgomery and the Synod of Lothian, which proceeded to act on the instructions of the Assembly, were summoned before the Privy Council. They appeared but declined the authority of the Council in ecclesiastical matters. The following year Melville was chosen Moderator of the Assembly, and though a messenger-at-arms charged the Moderator and the Assembly, under pain of rebellion to desist from the prosecution of Montgomery, they,

however, ratified the sentence of the Presbytery of Stirling and declared that Montgomery had incurred the censure of deposition and excommunication. Upon this a war began between the Court and the Church in which Melville stood out as the faithful champion of religious liberty. His outspokenness, in his Assembly sermon, brought him into collision with the King and his Court. On 15th February 1584 he received a charge to appear before the Privy Council on the following Monday to answer for "seditious and treasonable speeches" in a sermon preached on a Fast day a month previous to the citation. He readily appeared and gave a pretty full account of that sermon, but his enemies were determined to put him to death. He was sentenced to be imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle, and it was well-known that he would come out from there to the scaffold. He, himself, decided on flight and arrived safely in Berwick where he was out of reach of the Scottish Privy Council. Thus was driven into exile the most learned man in the kingdom, and the ablest champion of the Church's liberties. From Berwick, he made his way to London where he was instrumental in overturning many of the plans put forward to ruin the Presbyterian Church in Scotland.

After an absence of twenty months Melville returned to Scotland, and at once set about to have the liberties of the Church restored. After a good deal of time had been spent he was restored to his place in the New College. In June 1592 Presbytery was again legally established in Scotland, and General Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries, and Kirk-sessions were ratified. The observance of Easter and Christmas was abolished along with some Acts favouring Popery. However, there were influences at work which had as their aim the overthrowing of the Protestant religion and the Presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland. Jesuits and trafficking priests were working everywhere and King James favoured them so much that the whole kingdom was in danger of being brought to ruin. As a true patriot and one who had the Cause of Christ at heart more than anything else, Melville was a prominent figure in championing that Cause, and this involved him in many a battle with the King. His plainness of speech was far from being relished by his Majesty, so that James was determined that Melville should be debarred from any consultations between the Commissioners of the Church and the King, but Melville was not to be overawed by the expressed desires of the King. The Earl of Huntly, one of the Popish lords who supported these Jesuits, having returned to Scotland, sent his offer of submission to the King for himself and his associates. James convened an extraordinary meeting of the Privy Council and invited some of the ministers, who were considered more pliable than the rest, to attend to give their advice. Melville, though not invited, decided to attend as one of the Commissioners of the General Assembly. The King ordered him to depart, but, pleading the public commission which he had, he refused. When he entered along with the other ministers the King demanded what authority he had to be there. His reply was, "Sir, I have a call from Christ and His Church, who have a special interest in this convention; and I charge you and your estates, in their name, that you favour not their enemies, nor go about to make citizens of those who have traitorously sought to betray their country to the cruel Spaniard to the overthrow of Christ's kingdom." Though ordered to remove, his speech emboldened the other ministers to resist, though unsuccessfully, the proposals of the Court. As a sequel to what the Privy Council did, the General Assembly sent a deputation to the King, but found that he was determined to have his own way. It was on this occasion that Andrew Melville addressed to him the memorable words which, in point of freedom, the like of them never greeted royal ears from a loyal subject. "Sir, we will always humbly reverence your Majesty in public; but since we have this occasion

to be with your Majesty in private, and since you are brought to extreme danger both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the Church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, Sir, as diverse times before I have told you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland; there is King James, the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. Sir, those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His Church have power and authority from Him to govern His spiritual kingdom both jointly and severally; the which no Christian king or prince should control and discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of His church . . . Sir, when you were in your swaddling-clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land in spite of all His enemies: His officers and ministers convened and assembled for the ruling and welfare of His Church, which was ever for your welfare, defence and preservation, when these same enemies were seeking your destruction and cutting off . . ." During the delivery of this confounding speech His Majesty became calmer and at the close of it gave many promises to the Church which were never fulfilled.

From this time on, Melville was engaged in a continuous battle with the Court over the liberties of the Church of Scotland. In 1603 King James succeeded to the throne of England, but his enmity against Andrew Melville did not abate with his residential distance from the scene of that strife which he occasioned. For their adherence to the rights of the Church, eight ministers were banished to the extremities of the Highlands, to the Western Isles, Orkney, and Shetland, and other six were imprisoned for fourteen months in the Castle of Blackness, and then banished to France. At the Parliament held in Perth in August 1606, Andrew Melville appeared before them, on the authority of the Presbytery of St. Andrews, to co-operate with the members of other Presbyteries to see that the Church suffered no injury at that meeting from the Estates. Being told that the Bishops would be restored to the place they had a hundred years ago, the ministers prepared a protest, signed by forty-two of which Melville's name was the first. This was the last appearance which he was permitted to make in his native country. Melville received a letter from the King, commanding him to repair to London before the 15th September. Similar letters were addressed to seven other ministers. The ostensible reason given was to treat with His Majesty and others concerning such things as would tend to settle the peace of the Church. In order to conform them to the worship of the Church of England they were obliged to hear some of the Bishops preach. This had not the desired effect. Melville composed verses, which came into the hands of the King, on the idolatrous nature of the Anglican worship, with the result that he was kept a close prisoner, and was at last sent to the Tower, where the other ministers had no access to him, and where he suffered the greatest privations. The rigors of his confinement were somewhat abated in 1608 when he was removed to a more airy compartment, and allowed the use of writing material. In 1611 he was released from the Tower, at the instance of the Duke of Bouillon, who secured his services for the University of Sedan, in France. There is not much information as to his work in the University of Sedan, or about himself, personally, except what may be gleaned in his letters to his nephew, James Melville. He died at Sedan in 1622, at the advanced age of seventy-seven years, an exile from his native land, and a martyr to the tyranny of King James VI, but a constant upholder of the Church of Scotland in its doctrine, government, and mode of worship.

REV. WILLIAM C. BURNS

Evangelist and Missionary (1815-1868)

By Rev. D. A. MacLean, M.A., Halkirk

(Continued from page 204)

Peking and the Christian Community there proved a congenial atmosphere to William Burns. He laboured faithfully among the people there. While there he translated the "Peep of Day" and the "Pilgrims Progress" into the Peking dialect. His other literary works, a volume of hymns and his translation of the Psalms from Hebrew, were published a year before his death. Once more the missionary was urged by a sense of duty to go forward to a field less cared for. He went to Nieu-chwang and together with one Christian worker and a servant he set up a new home. This was in August 1867. As in all other places he cared for the things of the Lord. He preached not only to the natives but also to the Europeans at the Consulate. His main purpose was to establish a mission in the vast province of Manchuria. "China and its labours, far from ear and eye of man, was his sphere," wrote his brother.

Early in January of the following year William Burns took ill with a cold which brought on fever. From this illness he never recovered. Destitute of all home comfort he lay in helpless weakness in his small compartment, which only contained the form on which he slept, a table, two chairs, two book cases and an open fireplace. To a friend who visited him he said, "I have been thinking that perhaps this is to be my last illness." As a dutiful and loving son he prepared his mother for sad things in the following words, "At the end of last year I got a severe chill which has not yet left the system, producing chilliness and fever every night, and for the last two nights this has been followed by perspiration, which rapidly diminishes the strength. Unless it should please God to rebuke the disease, it is evident what the end must soon be, and I write these lines beforehand to say that I am happy, and ready through the abounding grace of God either to live or to die. May the God of all consolation comfort you when the tidings of my decease shall reach you, and through the redeeming blood of Jesus may we meet with joy before the throne above!" He had the feeling that "the time of his departure was at hand" yet he could say "For me to live is Christ, to die is gain." While in health and strength he served his Master with singleness of heart and in his illness he was resigned to his Master's will whether that be life or death. The earnest simplicity of his faith did not waver—his cheerfulness continued with him even in his sufferings. The outward man was perishing yet the inward man was renewed day by day. The Lord was very near to him and gave liberally to His weak servant. As in health and rigour, he was a source of comfort and encouragement to others, so also in his trouble he was a shining example. He was in the land of his adoption and in the midst of the scenes with which he identified his life and his thoughts were not on himself but upon his work. His native assistant preached in the next room to him. This allowed him to see that the work was proceeding. The Gospel is a treasure which is given through instruments who are themselves earthen vessels. It was so in the case of this missionary. For twenty nine years he travelled over the wide world preaching God's blessed Truth. His work was finished in the church militant. He passed to his rest. "God", he said, "will carry on the good work; Ah! no, I have no fear of that". He never married, he was unburdened

with the cares of this present life; it might with truth be said of him, "He careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord." The closing stages of his earthly pilgrimage were given by his native assistant in a most touching manner; thus—"It was the 28th day of the 7th (Chinese) month when we arrived, and we were five days waiting at Takoo (the port at the mouth of the Tien-tian river). While there we went daily from our boat to preach in the streets. When we went on board the junk, the captain declined to attend our services; but on the third day he and the two cooks joined us. When Mr Burns offered him passage money, the captain said "I know you are not going to seek gain, for in that case you would certainly travel by steamer, or by a foreign sailing vessel". He belongs to a fishing village called Tien-kia-tsui, a few miles north of Takoo on the coast.

We went on well till the 16th day of the 12th month. On this day Mr Burns was taken ill, and lay for ninety four days, when his spirit fled. He had felt pleasure in preaching that day. Many foreigners were present, which rejoiced him. When he came back from the English service, and saw sixty or seventy Chinese pressing in to hear, he said "I will preach to them". He preached for two hours. After this he felt no appetite, took no food, and lay down weary. About eleven o'clock p.m. he waked shaking with cold. For twenty days after this he did not leave the house. When prayer time came, he said, "Come to my bedside, I will still preach to you." So the little band of inquirers gathered with Wang-hwan round the sick missionary, for whom it was appointed that he should soon go home.

When his illness became severe, he made me promise that I would stay at Nieu-chwang. When we left Peking he was afraid, he told me, lest he should take the wrong man, a man different in mind and aim to himself. I said I would certainly stay at Nieu-chwang and carry out his injunctions. "But", he said, "you have no strength or learning, and you must therefore be the more careful to be right, and to do what is right, so as to secure favour from God and approval from man. You must pray much for aid".

At one time when his sickness was severe he lay as if asleep, when in a moment I heard him talking. I asked him what he was saying. He replied, "Ah! did you hear? I was saying over the 121st Psalm. I was speaking with God, not with you". Another time he laughed. I asked him why? He said, "God was speaking with me, and this made my heart glad". "Two days later," he said to me, "God tells me to go. I have some things to say to you. As to my burial, I wish to have no new clothes bought, but to be buried in these". (Referring to his Chinese clothing. The custom of the country is to buy a new suit, and lay the deceased in his coffin with complete dress as if living. It is quite a common thing to draw on the new clothing some hours before the death takes place.) He further said "Do not let the funeral be on Sunday. At the burial read 1 Cor. 15th chapter. Pray with the inquirers. Tell them to be sure to come and see me again in the place to which I am going. Do not weep after my death. Do not pray for me, but pray for the living. Diligently pray and God will certainly send you a missionary."

At another time, when he was a little better, a letter came from his mother. It said, "Do not think of me, but of your work." He told me what his mother said, and her words rejoiced him greatly. He added, "She says I am a knife that must be worn out by cutting, not by rusting." He wished it might be so. He also said, "I am one of four brothers" (or 'I have four brothers') one of them I would

wish to exhort, but I shall not now have the opportunity. I hope others may do so.

He urged me to believe as he did, read diligently as he did and use my mind as he did, "and", said he, "God will help you to preach.

"If you are reproached bear it patiently. To be patient is to glorify God. I was not sorry when in the South the time of suffering came nor should you be. Think of what some missionaries have had to suffer, and such things should rather be rejoiced in as proof of God's care. You can be my substitute when the new missionaries come, I cannot be here to receive them. You can do so, and must act for me. You must have the same heart as I have.

"I felt in Peking that my work there was done. It was a trial to leave friends, yet for the Gospel I could not but go. We shall meet again in heaven, and think of the knife. You must be one of God's knives. If there are enquirers, you must be careful to lead them in the right path, remembering that you are yourself not very strong nor learned. Take care to be diligent. Be indulgent to inquirers, exhort them much, and be very mindful of the example you set them, lest you should dishonour your Saviour and cause sorrow to your pastor and friends. Always think of this.

"I am very happy. I do not fear death. After death there is unspeakable happiness to be hoped for. Do not think I am sad at the thought of dying. I am not at all so. God's promises are true, and I fear not. My work has been little, but I have not knowingly disobeyed God's commands."

The enquirers, five or six in number, went in to see him. He said, "You see in me proof that Christian doctrine is true. I am well supported now, and this strength which is given me, not to shrink at the approach of death, you can take as proof that what I believe is true; my illness, my decaying body, are also a testimony to the truth of the Bible. When I am gone you will have no missionary here. You must therefore pray much and think and read much that you may understand well. I have left friends and home to come here for the sake of this gospel that now supports me. I rely on God now. Listen you to him, and let us resolve all to meet in heaven. Hope for this. Live for this."

In the words of the Psalmist we can say, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." But William Burns was not an ordinary saint, he was a shining light, and was used to turn many from darkness to light. His spiritual children were to be found in three kingdoms when he went to his eternal reward. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Daniel 3. 12). Thus the Lord's servant passed into Glory and came to possess the inheritance which does not fade away. Without doubt he was received as a good and faithful servant. He was an evangelist; everywhere he went he was gentle among the people—they were dear to him. In his work he always set forth Christ as the glad tidings of great joy. He had a deep conviction of sin and saw that sin had alienated him and the whole human race from God. The only remedy was Christ the Son of God in our nature dying for sin. William Burns presented Christ and His saving work as the Saviour who is able to save to the very uttermost. He believed and therefore spoke; he recommended to others the Saviour who was so precious to him and he was successful in his mission

VII. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

The Lord did great things in the past. As we ponder over these matters we might well ask ourselves the question, what now? "Hath

God forgotten to be gracious?" said Asaph in Psalm 77. In Britain to-day the majority live and die ignorant of the Truth and the way of salvation we live in a materialistic age; there is a perpetual hurry of business. This way of life without doubt ruins the soul and the evidence points to the fact that the body is also destroyed. The Word of Truth is neglected in the family as it is in the assembled congregations. Hence the reason for the leanness, coldness, hardness. Our lot is cast in a spiritual wilderness. Are we aware of this? If so, are we actively concerned? When we read the 'Lamentations of Jeremiah', do we compare the past with the present? Without being pessimistic, do we say, "How has the gold become dim?" There is a spiritual famine. It is a famine of the Word of God. What is the remedy? Surely it is a return "to the law and to the testimony" and with this a prayerful desire for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit to revive and to quicken. The instruments God used in our land in the past were men saved by Grace and called to the work of the ministry; men who did "meditate upon these things" and who gave themselves wholly to them. As we have departed from the Truth let us return with humility and repentance. (Hosea 5. 15) If we ignore the Word and its precious instructions, there is no remedy for us. In days of apostacy and declension may our prayer to God be, "Lift up Thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary," and "Arise, for our help, and redeem us for Thy mercies' sake". (Ps. 74.4. and Ps. 44.26).

THE END

SAFETY TO BE FOUND IN CHRIST

"A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—Isaiah 32, v.2.

There is in Christ Jesus abundant foundation of peace and safety for those who are in fear and danger.

The fears and dangers to which men are subject, are of two kinds: temporal and eternal. Men are frequently in distress from fear of temporal evils. We live in an evil world, where we are liable to an abundance of sorrows and calamities. A great part of our lives is spent in sorrowing for present or past evils, and in fearing those which are future. What poor, distressed creatures are we, when God is pleased to send his judgments among us? If He visits a place with mortal and prevailing sickness what terror seizes our hearts! If any person is taken sick and trembles for his life, or if our near friends are at the point of death, or in many other dangers, how fearful is our condition! Now there is sufficient foundation for peace and safety to those exercised with such fears, and brought into such dangers. But Christ is a refuge in all trouble; there is a foundation for rational support and peace in Him, whatever threatens us. He whose heart is fixed, trusting in Christ, need not be afraid of any evil tidings. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem", so Christ is round about them that fear Him . . .

Christ's love, and compassion, and gracious disposition, are such that we may be sure He is inclined to receive all who come to Him. If He should not do it, He would fail of His own undertaking, and also of His promise to the Father and to us; and His wisdom and faithfulness will not allow of that. But He is so full of love and kindness that He is disposed to nothing but to receive and defend us, if we come to Him. Christ is exceedingly ready to pity us, His arms are open to receive us; He delights to receive distressed souls that come to Him, and to protect them; He would gather them as a hen gathereth her

chickens under her wings; it is a work that He exceedingly rejoices in, because He delights in acts of love, and pity and mercy.

I shall take occasion from what has now been said, to invite those who are afraid of God's wrath, to come to Christ Jesus. You are indeed in a dreadful condition. It is dismal to have God's wrath impending over our heads, and not to know how soon it will fall upon us. And you are in some measure sensible that it is a dreadful condition, you are full of fear and trouble, and you know not where to flee for help; your mind is, as it were, tossed with a tempest. But how lamentable it is, that you should spend your life in such a condition, when Christ would shelter you, as a hen shelters her chickens under her wings, if you were but willing; and that you should live such a fearful, distressed life, when there is so much provision made for your safety in Christ Jesus!

How happy would you be if your hearts were but persuaded to close with Jesus Christ! Then you would be out of all danger; whatever storms and tempest were without, you might rest securely within; you might hear the rushing of the wind, and the thunder roar abroad, while you are safe in this hiding-place. O be persuaded to hide yourself in Christ Jesus! What greater assurance of safety can you desire?

—Extracted from "The Select Works of Jonathan Edwards," Volume 2. Obtainable from The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W.1., at 10/6d.

A WARNING FROM 1881

Preaching on Isaiah chapter 26, verse 20 at Fearn, Ross-shire, in the above year Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall said that God's judgment was within the church and would manifest itself in five ways:—

(1) The Lord would remove most of His living witnesses, and great blanks would be left unfilled in the church.

(2) False teaching would take the place of the gospel.

(3) Spiritual discernment would leave the people, and under their darkened understanding they would swallow new teaching as a blind man would swallow a dish of water, whether clean or unclean.

(4) A spirit of wordliness would fill the minds of the people and they would forsake the means of grace. Where hundreds did attend they would be counted only by tens.

(5) The Lord would deny to Scotland the work of the Holy Spirit. Although He promised to leave a seed to serve Him. He did not promise that Scotland would continue to enjoy His favour as in days of old. The wordliness entering in would grieve Him and cause His Holy Spirit to be with-held, and then, His true servants and people would be few.

ANECDOTES

A Lost Opportunity

Dr Chalmers on his return from England, lodged in the house of a nobleman near Peebles. The Doctor was known to excel in conversation as well as in the pulpit. He was the life and soul of the conversation at the nobleman's fireside. The subject was pauperism, its causes and cure. Among the gentlemen present there was a venerable old Highland chieftain, who kept his eyes fastened on Dr Chalmers and listened with intense interest to his communication. The conversation was kept up to a late hour. When the company broke up, they were shown into their apartments. The apartment of the Doctor was directly opposite to that of the old chieftain, who had already retired with his attendant. As the talented divine was undressing himself, he heard an unusual noise in the chieftain's

room; the noise was succeeded by a heavy groan! He hastened into the apartment, which was in a few moments filled with the company, who all rushed in to the relief of the old gentleman. It was a melancholy sight which met their eyes. The venerable white-headed chieftain had fallen into the hands of his attendant. It was evidently apoplexy. He breathed for a few seconds and expired. Dr Chalmers stood in silence, with both hands stretched out, and, bending over the deceased, he was the very picture of distress. He was the first to break silence. "Never in my life", said he in a tremulous voice, "did I see, or did I feel, till this moment, the meaning of that text, 'Preach the word; be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine'. Had I known that my venerable old friend was within a few moments of eternity, I would not have dwelt upon that subject which formed the topic of this evening's conversation. I would have addressed myself earnestly to him. I would have preached unto him and you Jesus Christ and him crucified. I would have urged him and you, with all earnestness befitting the subject, to prepare for eternity. You would have thought it, and you would have pronounced it, out of season. But ah! it would have been in season, both as it respects him and as it respects you."

Rev. Hector McPhail and his Faithful Wife

The Rev Hector McPhail, of Resolis, was a minister for several years before his conversion. He had married a daughter of the godly Mr Balfour, minister of Nigg. She had been one of Mr Porteous's hearers, and had profited greatly by his preaching. Feeling painfully the difference between her husband's doctrine and that to which she had been accustomed, she told him, on a Sabbath morning after their marriage, that her soul was starving, and that, as all must give place to her care for its welfare, she had resolved to go on that day across to Kilmuir. He offered no opposition; he even accompanied her to the ferry. It was a sad journey the pious wife took that day to Kilmuir. Arriving at the manse before the hour for beginning the service in church, Mr Porteous was not a little surprised to see her, and on meeting her, asked very anxiously why she had come. She told him that as her soul was famished at Resolis, she was compelled to come for the bread of life to the place where she had been wont to receive it. Mr Porteous retired to his study, and on rejoining her, said,—"If I am not greatly deceived you will not long have the same reason for leaving Resolis for I expect that the Lord will soon give you, by the hand of your husband, the very finest of the wheat." His expectation was not disappointed. After parting with his wife on that morning, the fact of her desertion of his ministry made a deep impression on Mr McPhail's mind. Conscience testified that she was right; a deep sense of his unfitness for the work of the ministry was produced and a process of conviction then began that extended over several years. At last he resolved to demit his charge, and to declare his resolution of doing so publicly before his congregation. With this view he sent for Mr Fraser, of Alness, to preach on a week-day in his church, and to intimate, after sermon, his resignation of his charge. Mr Fraser came and preached, but with no intention of giving the required intimation. During the sermon delivered on that day Mr McPhail's bonds were loosed, and, before the service was over, he was in no mood to turn his back on the work of preaching Christ to sinners. Full of hope and gladness he escorted Mr Fraser next day to the Alness Ferry, and, on his way back, he called at the house of one of his elders, who had spent many an hour wrestling with the Lord for his minister. "What news,

to day Mr McPhail?" the elder asked. "Good news, Hector McPhail is not to preach any more," his minister replied, "but the Spirit of the Lord is to preach to you through him." "Oh! that is good news, indeed," said the elder in an ecstasy of joy. From that day till his death, Mr McPhail was one of the most faithful, fervent, prayerful, and successful of ministers.

The Conversion of the Haldanes

James Haldane, Esq., pastor of one of the Baptist churches in Edinburgh, was a junior member of a highly respectable family. In his youth he joined the British Navy, and rose to the post of captain in one of his Majesty's war ships. On one occasion, being engaged in a warmly-contested battle, he saw the whole of his men on deck swept off by a tremendous broadside from the enemy. He ordered another company to be "piped up" from below, to take the place of their lost companions. On coming up, they saw the mangled remains strewn upon the deck, and were seized with a sudden and irresistible panic. On seeing this, the captain jumped up, and swore a horrid oath, imprecating the vengeance of Almighty God upon the whole of them, and wishing that they might all sink to hell. An old marine, who was a pious man, stepped up to him, and respectfully touching his hat, said—"Captain, I believe God hears prayer; and if God had heard your prayer just now, what would have become of us?"

Having spoken this, he made a respectful bow, and retired to his place. After the engagement, the captain calmly reflected upon the words of the old marine, and was so deeply affected by them that he devoted his attention to the claims of religion and was subsequently converted to God. Of course he informed his brother Robert of what had taken place; but instead of being gratified by it, his brother was greatly offended, and requested him never to enter his house till he had changed his views. "Very well, Robert," said James, "but I have one comfort in the case, and that is, you cannot prevent my praying for you;" and holding out his hand, he bade him goodbye. His brother Robert was much affected by this; he could not get rid of the idea that his brother was constantly praying for him. He saw the error of his ways, and after much investigation and reflection, became a decided Christian. The brothers Haldane united in good work at home and abroad. By their sacrifices and labours they gave an impetus to evangelical religion in Scotland. They became the fathers of churches, and preachers of the gospel to the poor and those who stood in need of hearing the glad tidings of great joy.

TELEVISION IN THE HOME

By Rev. Wm. MacLean, M.A., New Zealand

The Synod's resolution on TV draws attention to the grave danger to the life and morals of the nation on account of the present character of many of its programmes. It exerts a much more powerful influence upon the viewer than any other entertainment medium, and this power is especially dangerous when television is used in the home, because it is extremely difficult to control its use completely, and in view of this serious risk, the Synod urges its people not to expose themselves nor their children to this evil influence.

Much has been written on the dangers of television on the lines of the Synod's resolution. A few extracts from different sources prove how serious the risk is.

"I will never forget how shocked I was," says one writer on the dangers of television, "when I visited homes in the United States where television had been installed. They told me about the lovely church services that could be seen, about fashion parades, the concerts and other good programmes that could be turned on. But no sooner were the parents out of the room than the children, boys and girls in their 'teens, and those younger still, hurried to the television set and when some of us returned, we found them stretched on the floor, fascinated by what they were seeing. And what was it that they were looking at? A wrestling match where two men were tearing each other to pieces, trying to gouge out each other's eyes, drawing blood, and as they watched and listened to the groans and cries of the wrestlers, they could hardly control themselves. At another time they were watching a boxing match, following every blow with the greatest of interest, watching until one man knocked out the other, every motion and expression visible on the screen.

"At still another time it was a night show, women, for the most part unclad, drinking and smoking, going through sensual dances, every action plainly visible, the entire scene revolting and demoralising. Yes, they could have turned on another programme; they could have looked at something else, but they turned on that in which they were most interested, the scene that fascinated them. It was something they had never seen before. They were now seeing it for the first time. Sin had been brought in to their home and was being displayed before their eyes.

"For generations we have refused to take our children to night clubs, to wrestling matches and boxing bouts. We have never allowed them to see the sinister evil of this world. We have kept them away from the vulgar and the base, and as a result countless numbers of Christians have never seen even once the degrading and loathsome scenes of sin and shame. They have breathed in a pure atmosphere. Now these very scenes are to be brought right into the home, and displayed before the children's eyes. It costs them nothing to see them, except a loss of moral standards. They can turn them on whenever they want to. They can see things that otherwise they never would have seen. In their early life they can now become acquainted with sin in its vilest form. No longer will parents be able to keep them in ignorance of the awful things that go on in this world.

"I do not know the answer, but I am afraid, very much afraid. I have always looked upon the movie world as the most demoralising agency in existence. It alone is responsible for the teen-age gangs of today, and for the terrible things that children have been doing in this generation. But now something much more dangerous is available. The atomic bomb is bad, the hydrogen bomb is frightful, but television is going to be worse than either and far more destructive. It will completely wreck the rising generation, and before long it will turn the United States and Canada into a Sodom and Gomorrah, infinitely worse than the Sodom and Gomorrah of Bible times."

"The television habit grows," writes another, "and industrial surveys show that more and more time will be given to it until it becomes almost an unbreakable obsession."

"Some say that it is just the same as radio (and this is no attempt to excuse the sin on radio), but there is a difference. It is the difference between hearing the voice of a half naked woman and having her prance around before you. It is the difference between hearing about beer and liquor, and of having them set up a bar in your living room and drink before your children. It is the difference between hearing about an adulterous libertine who stole some man's wife, and of having him come into the living room and seduce yours. Yes, there is a great difference. Psychologists say that up to 90% of our thought life is stimulated by what we see. Thus only 10% of our thoughts are aroused by hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting. Television employs the quickest, surest route to the polluting of the mind and the damning of the soul."

There is the matter of economy in question: for is it wise for the Christian steward to spend so much on a TV set and then get so little out of it—even if some programmes are good? Is it worth it before the Lord?

Or again, consider the time element, for one finds that perhaps the greatest single time-robber is the TV! Time passes quickly, and before one is aware of it there is little time left to "redeem the time" by reading the Word of God, and enjoying His presence and speaking to lost souls who have not Christ as Saviour.

FRIENDLY VISITS (1)

By Matthew Henry

Suffer, I beseech you, a word of caution; and take heed that your visits of your friends, and your enquiries into their state be not so mismanaged, as to turn to some ill purpose. This we must not judge of by the common sentiment or fashion of a vain

world; for our Saviour has told us that there is *that which is highly esteemed among men*, perhaps as a mighty accomplishment, and a piece of very good breeding, which yet *is an abomination in the sight of God* (Luke xvi: 15). Let us, therefore, have recourse to the law and to the testimony, and take admonition thence in this case.

1. Let us take heed, that our friendly visits be not the waste and consumption of our precious time. We are entrusted with time as a talent to be traded with for eternity: as we spend our time well or ill, so will our eternity be spent, comfortably or miserably. Every good Christian will therefore endeavour to approve himself a good husband of his time; and that is a piece of *good husbandry*, which is indeed *good divinity*. It is not only necessary that some part of our time be spent in actual preparation for another world, but all our time must be spent with an habitual regard to it. Every hour of the hireling's day must be at the disposal of him who hired him into his vineyard: our time is not our own, for we know in whose hands our times are, and must always live to him, by whom we always live. The wisdom which is from above will therefore direct us, what proportion of time is to be allotted to every service, both of our general and particular calling, so that the several duties we have to perform, and the several enjoyments we have to take the comfort of, may not interfere with or entrench upon one another. *Every thing is beautiful in its season, and to every purpose there is a time*, which the *wise man's heart discerns*. Now if that time be spent in visits, which should be spent in any needful duties relating to life or godliness, then they are not Christian visits. If, under cover of visiting our friends, and seeing how they do, we indulge ourselves in sloth and laziness, and the careless neglect of business and labour, we shall give but a bad account of so many of our hours mis-spent. We may justly say to many, as Pharaoh unjustly said to Moses and the Israelites, *Ye are idle, ye are idle, therefore ye say, let us go and visit our brethren*; nay, it is perhaps pretended, *let us go and do sacrifice* (Exod. v: 17). Such as these the Apostle describes (I Tim. v: 13) who *learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house*, under pretence of friendly visits; and not only idle (for few who are idle are only idle, usually they have other faults; when they have nothing to do, the Devil will find them something to do) they are tatlers also and busy-bodies; idle in good, but busy in evil. But what will they do when God rises up, and shall bring them into judgment, for all their idle visits, and idle follies, and every idle word?

Learn, therefore, to adjust and limit the expense of your time, and be not prodigal of such a talent. When you say that you

will go and visit a friend, ask, Can I afford time for it? Is there not some greater good to be done at the same time, which cannot so well be deferred till another time? Will not the calling be neglected, or some religious duties be prevented by it? And let that be done first, which, all things considered, is most needful—and everything in its own order. And where a visit, which must be made, we fear entrenches too much upon some more necessary business, it will be our wisdom to improve it the more carefully for some very good purpose, that so at least we may effectually save it from being an idle visit.

2. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not the gratification of pride and vain curiosity. They who desire to make a fair show in the flesh (as the Apostle speaks, Gal. vi: 12) visit their friends only that they may see and be seen; that they may show themselves in their best ornaments and accomplishments, and that they may observe what figure other people make, and what they set themselves off by. They go abroad only to learn fashions, and to see how the world goes; like the Athenians, who spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing (Acts xvii: 21) or like Dinah, who went out *to see the daughters of the land* (Gen. xxxiv: 1) to see how they were dressed, what entertainments they gave, and how they lived; only that she might have something to talk of when she came home, either by way of praise or censure. This was all her business; and the sequel of the story shows, that the journey was not for her honour. Yet it is to be feared that many of our visits are made from no better a principle.

Decency indeed is duty: civility must be paid and returned in that which is the current coin of our country. Religion was never intended to destroy good manners, or to make men rude and unfashionable: in matters of common conversation, it is a rule of direction, not a rule of contraries. But in our compliances with the customs and usages of the place we live in, and the persons we converse with, we have need to look well to our spirits, and to keep our hearts with all diligence, lest that which is not only innocent but commendable in itself, arise from a corrupt principle, and so become sin to us. Hezekiah's showing his house and furniture, his armoury and jewels to the King of Babylon's ambassadors, seemed but a piece of common respect, and what is usually done among friends; and yet, because he did it in the pride of his heart, wrath came upon him, and on Judah and Jerusalem for it (II Chron. xxxii: 25) and it is upon record for warning to all, even to those who have escaped the grosser corruptions that are in the world through lust, to take heed lest foolish pride, that root of bitterness, which bears so much gall

and wormwood, make their visits, dress, and compliments a snare to them. Pride is a subtle sin, a sin that most easily besets us, a sin that is apt to mingle itself with our best actions, and like a dead fly it spoils many a pot of precious ointment; we have therefore need to keep a jealous eye, and a strict hand upon the motions of our own souls, as in other instances, so in this of making and receiving visits, *lest being lifted up with pride we fall into the condemnation of the Devil.*

If in our common conversation we are more solicitous to approve ourselves to men, by appearing gay and agreeable, than to approve ourselves to God, either by doing or getting good, surely we forget that fundamental law of our Christianity, *not to live to ourselves, but to Him that died for us, and rose again.* That common principle (which too many govern themselves by more than by the principles of religion) "As good be out of the world as out of the fashion," ought to be of no force with them who know that they are called out of the world, and are not to be conformed to it, nor to walk according to the course of it.

Let us always endeavour, while we accommodate ourselves to the fashions of our country, and of our place in it, yet to be *dead to them*, and observe them with a holy indifferency, as those that seek a better country, that is an heavenly, and belong to it: so we may do what others do, and yet not as most do it. Let the visits we make daily to our God by prayer, be more our care, and more our delight, than any visits we have to make to our friends.

3. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not the cloak and cover of hypocrisy: that they be not such visits as David's enemies made to him (Ps. xli: 6) *If he come to see me he speaketh vanity*, that is, what he says by way of compassion and condolence is all counterfeit and pretended: *His heart gathereth iniquity to itself, when he goeth abroad he telleth it.* A base practice, and that which all, who have any sense of virtue and honour, will cry out shame on. Next to hypocrisy in religion, nothing is worse than hypocrisy in friendship.

It is bad enough if kindness be not designed in our visits, and if we do not truly respect those whom we thus profess a respect for; for love ought to be without dissimulation (Rom. xii: 9) but it is much worse if mischief and unkindness be intended to those whom we pretend to make visits of friendship to; and we go to see them, that we may find some occasion against them, and pick up something to make the matter of their reproach in the next company. Thus to make the shows and ceremonies of friendship serve the designs of malice and ill-will, is to involve ourselves in a double guilt, both the want of charity, and the want of sincerity.

Not that, therefore, when we have conceived a displeasure against any, whom upon the account of relation, communion, neighbourhood, or former acquaintance, we owe respect to, we must presently break off all intercourse and conversation with them, and deny due civilities to them, for fear of hypocrisy in paying them; no, that is to make ill worse: but we must mortify that corrupt passion which is working in us; *not let the sun go down upon our wrath*; forgive the injury whether real or imaginary; be reconciled to our friend, cordially reconciled, and then come and offer our gift to God, and our respects to our friend. We ought carefully to avoid everything that tends to the alienating of the affections of Christians one from another, and the cooling of love; and to devise all means possible for the preserving of true friendship where it is, and the reparation and retrieval of it where it is withering and ready to die.

4. Let us take heed that our friendly visits be not made the opportunities of slandering and tale-bearing. Our rule is, *Speak evil of no man*, not only that evil which is false and altogether groundless; but not that which is true, when our speaking of it will do more hurt than good. If we have not wherewithal to speak well of those we speak of, we had better not say anything of them than say ill: the general law of justice obliges to do as we would be done by; we would not have our own faults and follies, our miscarriages and mismanagements proclaimed in all companies, and made the subject of discourse and remark; let us then treat other people's good name with the same tenderness that we expect and desire our own should be treated with: there is also a particular law of charity, which obliges us to cover even a multitude of sins; to keep that secret which is secret, for we need not make scandals, by divulging that which might be concealed: and to speak of that which cannot be hid, as those that mourn, and not as those who are puffed up; as those who are willing to make the best, and hope the best of every person, and every action, and not as if we were of counsel against the delinquent, and thought ourselves obliged to aggravate the crime, and press for judgment against the criminal.

Nothing is more destructive to love and friendship than tale-bearing is: we have in the Scripture, laws against it (Lev. xix: 16) *Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people*. The Hebrew word here and elsewhere used for a tale-bearer properly signifies a pedlar or petty chapman, who buys goods (stolen ones it may be) at one place, and sells them at another, taking care to make his own markets of them; so a tale-bearer makes his visits to pick up at one place, and utter

at another, that which he thinks will lessen his neighbour's reputation, that he may build his own upon the ruin of it. Another law to the same effect we have (Exod. xxiii: 1) *Thou shalt not raise a false report*. The margins read it, *Thou shalt not receive a false report*: for many times, the received in this case is as bad as the thief. We have also Proverbs against it (Prov. xx: 19) *He that goes about (making visits suppose) as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets*; and (Prov. xxvi: 20, 22) *Where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth—and—The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds*. They who make it their business in their visits to carry peevish ill-natured stories and characters from place to place, to the wounding of their neighbours' good name secretly, the propagating of contempts and jealousies, and the sowing of discord, do the Devil's work, and serve his interests more than they are aware of. That great and good man St. Austin ordered the law of his house to be written over his table which forbad all tale-bearers any room there.

Be it known that this table is forbidden the man who delights in injuring the reputation of absent persons.

As a greater than he had done before him (Ps. ci: 5) *Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off*, and I heartily wish that not the persons but the thing might be cut off from all conversation.

You will do me the justice (my brethren) to think that what I might say in these cautions is intended not as an accusation of any, I know the faces of but few of you, much less do I know your faults; but as an admonition to you all, to take heed of those sins, which I know most easily beset us: for *as in water face answers face, so doth the heart of man to man*.

THE TRUTH THAT PAUL PREACHED

By C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

They tell us in these times that the improvements of the ages require improvements in theology. Why, I have heard it said that the way Luther preached would not suit this age. We are too polite! The style of preaching, they say, that did in John Bunyan's day is not in style now. True, they honour these men. They are like the Pharisees—they build the tombs of the prophets that their fathers slew, and so they do confess that they are their fathers' sons and like their parents. And men that stand up to preach as those men did, with honest tongues, and know not how to use courtly phrases, are as much condemned now as those men were in their time: because, say they, the world is marching on and the gospel must march too!

No, sirs, the old gospel is the same; not one of her stakes must be removed, not one of the cords be loosened. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Theology has nothing new in it except that which is false. The preaching of Paul must be the preaching of the minister today. There is no advancement here. We may advance in our knowledge of it; but it stands the same—it is perfect and perfection cannot be better. The old truth that Calvin preached, that Chrysostom preached, that Paul preached is the truth that I must preach today, or else be a liar to my conscience and my God.

I know of no such thing as the paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again. The great mass of our ministers are sound enough in faith, but not sound enough in the way they preach it. Election is not mentioned once in the year in many a pulpit; final perseverance is kept back; the great things of God's law are forgotten, and a kind of mongrel mixture of Arminianism and Calvinism is the delight of the present age. And hence the Lord has forsaken many of His tabernacles and left the house of His covenant; and He will leave it till again the trumpet gives a certain sound. For wherever there is not the old gospel we shall find "Ichabod" written upon the church walls ere long.

The old truth of the Covenanters, the old truth of the Puritans, the old truth of the Apostles, is the only truth that will stand the test of time, and need never be altered to suit a wicked and ungodly generation. Christ Jesus preaches today the same as when he preached upon the mount. He has not changed His doctrines. Men may ridicule and laugh, but still they stand the same—*semper idem* (always the same) written upon every one of them. They shall not be removed or altered.—From Westminster Standard Book-centre Publications, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, N.Z.

OBITUARY

The late Rev. John Martin, Staffin

The lives of the ministers of the Gospel ordinarily secure a lasting remembrance. The loss to the world and to the church when they are removed from time to Eternity is great beyond words. Our loss is their gain. The truth of the doctrine they declared in their labour of love always bears record that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only Saviour of sinners. After their departure from their field of labour to the Mansions above the integrity of their lives and the uprightness of their characters are not forgotten but become the more apparent. In the words of the Truth, "The memory of the just is blessed."

The Reverend John Martin was born in Northton, a village on the west coast of the Island of Harris. Both his parents were of exemplary character and were quiet followers of the Lord. His father Murdo Martin served the Cause of Truth faithfully as a most acceptable missionary. Under the roof of their hospitable home many of the Lord's people were entertained. Their family was religiously trained beside the domestic hearth where religious instruction should begin. We believe the education of the soul for Eternity often begins by the fire-side and many in Glory will praise the Lord for the instruction and prayers of their parents. Those who knew Murdo Martin and his likeminded companion can testify that they gave priority to spiritual matters. To them the Sabbath was a delight and faithfully they taught their family. Family worship morning and evening was the rule among the native population. The value of this religious observance is most important and it leaves its mark. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. 22 v.6.

John Martin knew early in life that he was a lost sinner before God. While he was still a boy at school he used to retire to a private place, there to seek the Lord and search the Scriptures. It is our considered opinion that our friend had the liberty of the Gospel when young in years. Although he did not profess publicly on the side of Christ while young yet one can say that his exemplary life during these years was virtually a profession. From his youth the Lord's people were his chosen company. Like Ruth the language of his heart was, "Thy people shall be my people and thy God my God." Mr. Roderick Ferguson who was missionary then in Northton asked John to become church precentor in that village but being conscious of his own unworthiness he respectfully declined. This sense of unworthiness kept John back for many years and indeed we can say that during that period he was a "Mr. Fearing." However, the call that could not be denied nor resisted came at the March Communion in Finsbay, 1953. Under the preaching of the late Rev. James A. Tallach it could be seen that John Martin got a measure of assurance that is only known to a few in this generation. Like the Ethiopian eunuch "he went on his way rejoicing" and that joy continued with him for a season. At this time he made known his mind to his near friends and said that he intended to profess publicly on the side of Christ at the next Communion season. In June of the same year he was received as a member in full communion at the Tarbert Communion. At that time John Ch. 21 vv. 15, 16 & 17 were made very precious to him. In January 1954 he came before the Kirk-Session and offered himself as a student for the ministry of the church. He was recommended and at the following meeting of Presbytery he was received.

As a student he was diligent and passed all his examinations. In September 1960 Mr. Martin was ordained and inducted in Staffin, Skye. On the morning he left Harris, at family worship he beautifully sang part of Psalm 16. Special note was taken of how he precented in Gaelic the words:

"Unto me happily the lines
in pleasant places fell:"

Mr. Martin had a most retentive memory and could quote exactly much of which he read or heard. He had a special gift for telling stories and he could entertain the company by relating anecdotes of the Godly of a bygone age.

John Martin was a man of deep experience, a keen student of the Bible and given much to secret prayer. As a preacher of the Gospel he was mighty and was able to draw out of his own experiences. He could aptly use illustrations and could hold the attention of his audience. He knew the evil of his own heart and this brought him often to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He was often tempted and tried; this caused him to walk softly before his God and always to cast his concerns upon Him who is able to keep His people from falling. As a minister and pastor he was most diligent and faithful and was able to comfort the Lord's people with the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God. Our friend desired to see the Cause of Truth prospering in Staffin and elsewhere. His affectionate and kindly disposition won the respect of the people of all denominations.

The sudden end came in December 1964. On his return from the Theological Conference at Inverness, our friend passed from time to Eternity at the wheel of his car about four miles from his home. Little did we think when we journeyed part of the way together the previous evening that we would never meet again in this world. God's ways are not our ways and while we expected our friend to labour for many years more the Lord took him. We are left to say with the Psalmist:

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Mr. Martin's ministry in Staffin was short but happy and pleasant.

To his bereaved widow and two infant daughters we extend our heartfelt sympathy as also to his sisters who lost a dutiful brother. May the Covenant God of Israel be their help and stay at all times. We also extend our sympathy to the Staffin congregation and the elder Mr. Murdo Matheson who was Mr. Martin's bosom friend; and desire that the Lord would raise them up another pastor who would feed them with knowledge and understanding.

"Help, Lord, for the Godly man ceaseth: for the faithful fail from the children of men." Ps. 12 v.1.

D. A. MACLEAN.

COS-CHEUMABH IONGANTACH AR RÌGH

Leis an Urr. Domhnall Corbet, Cean Loch Buirbhìdh

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 220)

Caib. III

Bha aon àite anns an Eilean Sgitheanach anns am b'abhaist do'n mhinistear a chaidh ainmeachadh, a bhi searmonachadh. B'e so Sgìr Dhuirinish ann an ceann a tuath an eilein. Bha nighean bheag do'm b' ainm Màiri Nic Bheathain a fuireach an sin, agus bha i ann a measg an luchd-eisdeachd an uair mu dheireadh a bha e 's àit. Bha i aig an àm

mu thimchioll aon bhliadhna deug a dh'aois. Ann a bhi'g eisdeachd ris bha h-aire gu sònraichte air a tarruig a dh'ionnsuidh a cheann teagaisg. Bha e ann an Salm lxviii.19-20. "Beannaichte gu'n robh an Tighearn, a tha gach là g'ar cumail suas, Dia ar slàinte! Selah. Is e ar Dia-ne Dia na slàinte; agus do'n Tighearn Dia buinidh an t-slighe o'n bhàs." Fodh'n t-searmon so thoisich a h-inntinn òg air smuainteachadh, agus be'n da chuspair a lion a smuaintean uile—bas, agus an t-saorsa is urrain Dia a thoirt. B'é a h-obair a bhi buachaileachd ghabhar, agus 'n uair a bhithidh i mach leis an treud latha an deigh latha, bha i beachd-smuainteachadh air na nithean so; thuair i e eucomasach ni air bith eile a dheanamh; ge b'e co choinnicheadh i, cheasnaicheadh i iad mu'n Dia sin a b'urrair saoradh bho ghiallaibh a bhàis, agus 'n uair a thigeadh i dhachaidh air an oidhche b'é so cuspairean a còmhraidh. Dh'fhag a ministeir, a shearmonaich mar so r'a coguis, an t-àit an ùine ghoirid, agus cha'n fhac i riabh tuilleadh e. Cha tug ministeir na sgìreachd dha'm buineadh i cuideachadh air bith dhith, oir, an deigh dhà bhi còmhraidh rithe, dh'aontaich a le beachd a pàrantan agus a coimhearsnaich gu'n robh a reusan air geilleadh. Gidheadh leig iad leatha a bhi buachaileachd an treud ghabhar, agus mar sin bha i gabhail gach cothrom air ceisdean a chur ris gach neach a thigeadh an rathad, mu na nithean a bu mhotha bha togail a h-aire. An deigh leantuinn mar so air son ùine àraidh, agus gun neach fhaotainn a b'urrair innse dhith cia mar a gheibheadh i eolas air "Iehobhah" da'm buin "làn-theasairginn o'n bhàs," (mar a tha e anns na Salm Ghaidhlig ann an rann) agus a faireachadh nì's motha agus nì's motha a feum air gu'm b'urrair i ràdh, "Is e ar Dia-ne Dia na slàinte," thàinig i dh'ionnsuidh a cho-dhùnaidh, cho fad agus a dh'fhanadh i anns an àite 's an robh i, nach ruigidh i air an t-sochair a bha h-anam acrach an geall air. Mar sin rinn i suas a h-inntinn gu'n deanadh i rannsachadh an àit eile.

Aig an àm so bha gach bathar feumail nach robh fàs aig an tigh air a thiort air muin each do'n Eilean Sgitheanach, bho Inbhernis. Na simplidheachd cho-dhùin Màiri Nic Bheathain, bho'n a bhà na h-uibhir de nithean neo-àbhaisteach air am faotainn ann an Inbhernis, gur cinnteach gu'n gabhadh "Iehobhah" a bhi air fhaotainn an sin mar an ceudna. Co-dhiubh rinn i suas a h-inntinn gu'n rannsaicheadh i air son eolas an Tighearn an àite air chor-eigin eile, eadhon ged a dh'fheumadh i Inbhernis fhein a ruigheadh. Cha robh anns na làithean sin aon de na dòighean siubhail bho àit gu àit, a thà againn an diugh, eadhon ann an àiteachan a bha air an suidheachadh ni b' fhàbharaiche na'n dùthaich eadar an t-Eilean Sgitheanach agus ceann-chathair na Gaidhealtachd. Cha robh rathaidean mòra bho àite gu àite dhe'n dùthaich sin, agus, bha mòran de dh'uillt agus de shruthain bhras ann, agus gu'n drochaid air aon dhiubh, agus bha mar an ceudna sruth laidir Chaol Reithe a ruith gu luath eadar an t-Eilean Sgitheanach agus tìr-mòr. Ach cha do ghabh i suim air bith dheth na nithean so uile. Thuair cùram a h-anama buaidh gu h-iomlan air a smuaintean uile, agus air a h-aignuidhean mar an ceudna. 'N uair a rinn i suas a h-inntinn, chrìoslaich sì i fein air son an turais. Cha do chosg a

sgeadachadh mòran smuain dhìth, agus na bu lugha de dh'ùine. Nìdh i a làmhnan 's a h-aodann anns an t-sruthan a bha ruith seachad r'a taobh, rinn i reidh a folt, mar a b'fhearr a dh'fhaodadh i le a meoirean agus cheangail i suas e le crios. Thilg i a tonnag mu a guaillean, ga cheangal mu briollean le dealgan fiodha, agus an sin, ceann-ruisgte agus cas-ruisgte, chaidh i air adhart air tòir a Chuspair air an robh a cridhe air a shuidheachadh.

Nis faodaidh gu'm biodh e ìomchuidh fheorach, C'ar son nach do dh'iarr i cead a pàranntan? Faodaidh mar an ceudna gu'm bi e air a ràdh, do bhrìgh gu'n d'fhalbh i mar so gun suim de'n a choigeamh àithne nach biodh e coltach gu'm faigheadh i am beannachadh a bha a h-anam cho mòr an geall air. Ach comharraicheam a mach nach b'e a coire-se bha'n so gu h-uile. Do bhrìgh gu'm bheil deagh àithne air mar a bha staid chùisean ann an tìr a dùthchais aig an àm so, thà m' tagradh as a leth nach robh i riamh air a teagasg gu bhi gabhail eolais air nì air bith do Fhirinn Dhé; agus mar an ceudna, am fios cinnteach a bha aic cìod e thachradh na'm foillsicheadh i a rùn dhoibh-san a bha thaobh nàduir nan luchd-gleidhidh oirre, oir, gu dearbh, cheangladh iad i eadar lamhan agus chasan, agus dhruideadh iad suas i mar neach a bha as a chiall. Mar sin dha taobh-se, cha robh a coire cho an-tromaichte, agus ghabhadh a rùn a bhi air fhìreanachadh. Ann a bhi labhairt mar dhuine, na'n robh i air fuireach far an robh i, dh'fhàsadh i suas cho aineolach air an fhìor Dhia agus an Slànuighear ris na minn a bha 's an treud aice. Mar sin bho bhaile gu baile chaidh Màiri Nic Bheathain air adhart, a cur cheisd ris gach neach a thachradh rithe. Faic a nis i air an t-slighe. Thà cuid ga cur dheth gu crosda; cuid a deanamh fanoid oirre air son a bhi gabhail gnothuch ri nithean nach robh freagarach air son aon dhe h-aois-se. Bhà chuid a bu mhotha ga meas mar neach a bha fodh bhuaidh treun-mhealladh neonach. Gidheadh cha robh eagal air bith gu'm bàsaicheadh i leis an acras, na gu'm bitheadh i aon oidhche as eugmhais leabaidh. Cha robh an sluagh cho tana air feadh na dùthcha an uair sin 's a tha iad a nis. Bha bailtean-beag, anns an robh ceithir na còig, na theagamh fichead teaghlach, beagan astair bho cheile air feadh a chuid a bu mhotha dhe'n t-slighe, ann an àitean far nach eil coltas tighe idir ri fhaicinn a nis. Mar an ceudna b'e am an t-samhraidh a bh'ann, agus anns gach àit air feadh na monaidhean thigeadh i air àiridhean, anns an robh muinntir a buachaileachd an spreidh, agus a frithealadh do'n obair a bha'n cois sin. Cha diùltadh neach air bith coibhneas do chaileag bho chd gun chuideachadh, agus mar sin gheibheadh i co-roinn de urrad de comhfhurtachdan 's a bha aig an t-sluagh. Gu'n teagamh, tharruigeadh am beachd coitchionn a bha 'n a measg, gu'n robh i as a ciall, a mach truas ris an alabanach bho chd, ge b'e cìod e a smuainticheadh daoine dhe na ceisdean a bha i cur, agus eadhon iadsan an toiseach a labhradh gu crosda rithe, thiomachadh iad a ris a chum a cuideachadh air adhart air a turas. Gidheadh, cha'n eil teagamh air bith nach robh iomadh àmhghair agus cruaidh-chàs aice san t-slighe.

(R'a leantuinn.)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Bible in Spain

Under the above heading a report appears in the Trinitarian Bible Society's Quarterly for October-December. The Society's work in sending Bibles and leaflets with selected portions of the Word of God to Spain, the most Roman Catholic Country in Europe, is bearing very encouraging fruit. The Report relates the following from Christians in Spain:

"One little gathering was originally held in a goat shed in secret and in fear, but now the members have a thriving church. In some places the buildings are packed and members go outside so that newcomers may occupy the seats inside. At such times there are hearers standing at the back, on the stairs and in the street outside the open windows in their eagerness to hear the Word of God. The members of one small congregation visited about six hundred homes distributing Gospels and Christian literature. They were denounced from the pulpit of the local Roman Catholic churches and the people were discouraged from attending the Protestant services. During the visitation some of the people were violently hostile, but in spite of all the difficulties there has been some fruit.

"A recent letter told of the fruitfulness of the broadcast ministry which penetrates to many homes otherwise unreached. 'We are thankful to God and very grateful to you for your great help in our work of broadcasting the Good News of the grace and mercy of God. The Bibles and New Testaments which you have sent us have already been distributed among our listeners, some of whom have written to us of the blessing they have experienced through the Word.

" 'This work in Spain is being greatly blessed and in this province we are in contact with about sixty people in different walks of life who are now reading the Scriptures regularly and desire to know all that pertains to their salvation. Each month about five thousand letters are written to addresses all over Spain with the help of a large group of young people who devote their spare time to this task. Many of our hearers and readers are scattered in isolated villages, and have known only what they have been taught by the Roman Church. They are now asking endless questions and earnestly desire to know the truth as it is in Jesus. We are endeavouring to answer them out of the Holy Scriptures."

It is grievous, to think, that in Britain where there is religious liberty and freedom of worship, that so many have turned their back upon the Word and Worship of God. Yet in Spain where there is so much hostility to the Gospel of Christ there is an increasing number thirsting for the truth as contained in the Bible. These people should be remembered in prayer by the Lord's people in Britain.

An Offer by Gideon's International Refused

"The Gideons are an association of Christian business and professional men who believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God,

and have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord. They place Bibles in hotel guest rooms where a succession of readers can find the Word of God. New Testaments are placed alongside beds in hospitals. New Testaments are presented to boys and girls at school who are encouraged to read a portion every day. The association started in 1899, and there are now more than 20,000 Gideons operating in more than 65 countries. Over 60 million Bibles and Testaments have been placed or distributed. They named themselves after Gideon's men who, as the story in the 7th Chapter of Judges relates, were called to do an unusual work of faith for the glory of God." The aforesaid information is given by the Gideons.

They have offered several thousands of well-bound New Testaments to schoolchildren, through education authorities, in different parts of the country; and such have been accepted generally as far as we know. But recently the Aberdeen City Education Committee, by a decision of a sub-committee, refused the offer of hundreds, maybe thousands, of beautifully bound small copies of the New Testament for Aberdeen schoolchildren. Dr Norman T. Walker told this sub-committee "That the preface contained views on the composition and authority of the Bible which were by no means accepted by modern scholars" (Press report). The fact is that before the New Testament there are several pages with points about the Bible, including belief in the inspiration and infallibility of the whole Bible and commendation of the Authorised Version of 1611. And there are several pages on "What the Bible says about"—God; sin; death; Christ and His Person; death and resurrection; Heaven and Hell, etc. Scripture only is quoted under these headings. Other quotes are simple Scriptural statements.

The report of the refusal of the offer states that the offer had been considered at meetings at which representatives of the various churches had been present. The qualified members of the committee thought that many of the views expressed were controversial and would not be accepted by modern Bible scholars. And so modern scholars keep the gift of a New Testament from hundreds of children in the city of Aberdeen. A deplorable decision! A member of Gideon's International said he could not understand the committee's attitude. Regarding the preface he said: "It contained details of what the Bible was about. . . We are not trying to influence anyone . . . Anyone who is in good standing in his Church and believes in the Word of God can join our organisation." Strangely enough, a similar offer had been accepted by Aberdeenshire Education Committee and in the town of Inverness the children were in possession of these Testaments. The modernist has in this case revealed heart opposition to Scriptural and evangelical teaching and views.

Under-age Drinking in the North of Scotland

At the close of a sitting of the High Court, in Inverness, recently, the Judge, Lord Cameron, referred to the fact ". . . that in certain parts of the North of Scotland there was the very gravest laxity in the enforcement of licensing laws on the part of certain certificate-holders." His Lordship also said: "It had been distressing to see and hear young girls and boys coming into the witness-box and clearly admitting consumption of large quantities of alcoholic liquor." Lord Cameron warned those responsible for any laxity in complying with the law.

But not only are those who sell liquor responsible today for young boys and girls being given to drink, but also parents who fail to exercise proper authority and influence over them in the home by way of example, teaching and discipline. We are conscious that it is easy to criticise, but surely there is something radically amiss in the home life of many young people when excessive drinking can be repeated by them. The Bible, the moral law and Christian principles of conduct, can be ignored and sneered at today by many adults and young people; but character and happiness cannot be attained without due regard to what the Christian religion requires and by the grace of God bestows upon believers of the Gospel of Christ.

The Disaster at Aberfan

As readers know, on the 21st of October, a great disaster overwhelmed the Welsh township of Aberfan, Glamorgan, when hundreds of thousands of tons of coal dust and earth avalanched into the valley where Aberfan lies. About 200 lives were lost under this avalanche, most of them primary schoolchildren, but including teachers and other adults. It is one thing when war sweeps away many lives, but people are to some extent more amazed and affected by large loss of life, especially children, in circumstances which are ordinarily quiet and peaceful. The people throughout the nation were stirred with sorrow for the bereaved and afflicted. Their need now, as then, is what God alone can deal with, in the case of those who turn to Him through the Lord Jesus Christ in such a time of trouble. God is the God of all grace and of all comfort through and in Jesus Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; and is able to succour them that are tempted. Distress and grief and bereavement in providence can only be truly eased by the strong consolations of grace in Christ Jesus. We trust and pray that many, yea all, in Aberfan, shall experience divine comfort and blessing. The attitude to this disaster on the part of many may be in line with the question put at the time to a clergyman, viz.: "How can God allow this thing to happen?" This is certainly a difficult and delicate question to answer. God reigneth over all; but does not give account of all His doings. In keeping to Words of Scripture, we read that after Job lost his possessions, and his servants and his sons were slain and killed, he said, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the Name of the Lord." He also said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God: and shall not we receive evil?" Job also said, "Who will say unto Him, what doest Thou?" God's express purposes in such calamities are often completely hidden. Asuph writes in Psalm 77: "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." We do well to heed the words of the preacher in Ecclesiastes, viz.: "In the day of adversity consider."

Sex and Morality Report

Readers have by now been made aware of the Report on "Sex and Morality," issued by a working party appointed by The British Council of Churches. The Report was published and sold to the public at the end of October, and it is maintained by Scottish members of the Council aforesaid, that the Report should not have been issued to the public at all before being submitted to the whole Council. This is no doubt a correct view as to procedure, but maybe this hasty act has brought to light evil, erroneous and corrupt views on Sex and Morality held by professed Church men and Church women. We are thus once again warned of the dangerous state of religion and morals in the church as well as in the Nation today. It is good for all those who love the Lord, His Word and His

Law to be warned against the enemies of truth and righteousness in the land.

The working party who drew up this Report were thirteen in number comprised of four clergymen, three medical men, two teachers etc. There were three women in the party. The Report runs to 77 pages and deals with the following terms of reference: "To prepare a statement of the Christian case for abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage and faithfulness within marriage taking full account of responsible criticism, and to suggest means whereby the Christian position may be effectively presented to the various sections of the community."

Before having read the report, we read the speech of Rev. Alec Shillinglaw, Church of Scotland minister, of Newtown St Boswells, Roxburgh-shire upon the content and substance of this Report. The speech was delivered before a meeting of the British Council of Churches held at Lambeth on 25th October, 1966, when this already published Report was presented for consideration. Rev. A. Shillinglaw's speech was an enlightened, frank, untrammelled, and Scriptural exposure and out and out condemnation of the Report. Some of his observations were as follows: "In this report Satan is dressed up as a friend of God, and a friend of man": "The Report was repeating heresies as old as the Christian Church:" "How dare a working party in the name of Christ give counsel to men and women which may lead them to the brink of hell:" "God is not mocked. The god of this report is an idol—the projection of our own sinful desires:" He said that after reading the Report, he felt as if he were in a fog, "We are enshrouded in a moral, spiritual and theological fog. This booklet contains a travesty of Christian doctrines." Mr Shillinglaw said much more to the same effect.

Having now read the Report, we whole-heartedly concur with every word spoken by Rev. A. Shillinglaw. His reference to feeling himself in a fog, exactly expresses our own feelings in endeavouring to follow much of the subtle argumentation employed by the working party. We do hope that Mr Shillinglaw will bring all his present criticisms of this obnoxious Report, and fuller criticism, into any debate which may be held in his own church General Assembly. We expect that in due course, the Religion and Morals Committee of our own Church, will express its views on this Report which has received such wide publicity. It may well be entitled "The Sex and Immorality Report."

CHURCH NOTES

Communions

January—Fifth Sabbath, Inverness, Auckland. *February*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; third, Stornoway; fourth, North Uist, Kyle of Lochalsh. *March*—First Sabbath, Ullapool; second, Ness, Portree and Tarbert; third, Finsbay; fourth, Kinlochbervie, London and North Tolsta. *April*—First Sabbath, Achmore, Portnalong, Stoer and Fort-William; second, Fearn, Gisborne, N.Z.; third, Greenock; fourth, Glasgow, Wick. *May*—First Sabbath, Kames and Oban; second, Scourie; third, Edinburgh and Broadford. *June*—First Sabbath, Applecross and Auckland; second, Shieldaig; third, Lochcarron, Glendale, Helmsdale, Dornoch and Uig; fourth, Gairloch and Inverness. *July*—First Sabbath, Lairg, Raasay and Beaully; second, Staffin, Tomatin and Tain; third, Halkirk, Rogart, Flashadder and Daviot; fourth, Bracadale, North Uist and Plockton; fifth, Achmore. *August*—First Sabbath, Dingwall; second, Portree and Stratherrick; third, Bonar, Finsbay and Laide; fourth, Stornoway, Thurso and Vatten. *September*—First Sabbath, Ullapool, Breasclete; second, Strathy; third, Tarbert, Stoer and Vancouver (Canada); fourth, Applecross. *October*—First Sabbath, Tolsta, Lochcarron, Fort-

William; second, Dumbarton, Gairloch and Ness; fourth, Gisborne, N.Z., Greenock, Lochinver; fifth, Wick. *November*—First Sabbath. Oban and Raasay; second, Glasgow and Halkirk, third, Edinburgh, Dornoch, Staffin and Uig. *December*—First Sabbath, London.

To All Congregational Treasurers

As it is intended (D.V.) to close the Books for the year ending 31st December, 1966, on 7th January, 1967, the Finance Committee requests all Congregational Treasurers to send in 1966 Funds by that date to the General Treasurer and/or the Publications Treasurer. — Wm. D. Fraser, General Treasurer.

Message to Aberfan, Wales

The following message was sent by wire, on the evening of the Aberfan disaster, the 21st October, 1966:—

Town Clerk,
Merthyr Tydfil,
Glamorgan.

The overwhelming disaster which has overtaken Aberfan as a community with sore bereavement, distress and sorrow—and with the loss of so many young lives—has deeply affected the people of our Church with profound grief. We send our Christian and heartfelt sympathy to all the people of Aberfan, and would direct them to the Word of God — "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46, vi).

On behalf of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,

Rev. A. M. Cattanach, Moderator.

Rev. Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk,

Free Presbyterian Manse, Wick, Caithness.

The late Mr Robert R. Watt, Elder

We herewith briefly record with sorrow the death of our friend, Mr Robert R. Watt, elder, Inverness, which took place at his home, on Tuesday, 18th October 1966. Mr Watt was a man who feared the Lord greatly and had a deep experience of the work of grace in his heart. In his witness and labours for his divine Master, he was active, lively and influenced by a gospel spirit, which caused him to be held in affectionate esteem by all his Christian friends. He had more than ordinary acquaintance with tribulation, but frequently manifested joy in his Redeemer. We extend our sympathy to his widow and family and sisters. A full notice of this eminently worthy man will no doubt appear in due course (D.V.).

Appeal for Doctor and Nurses

The Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee has been giving consideration to the question of extending the medical work connected with Mbumba Hospital to make way for a fully qualified doctor to engage in the medical Missionary work there and beyond.

The Committee would accordingly like to hear from any doctors in the Church who feel their minds being led in the direction of engaging in medical work on the Mission Field. Any doctors, therefore, male or female, fully qualified, or in the process of qualifying, are invited to send their names with particulars of their training to the Clerk of the Committee. There is a wide field connected with Mbumba for any young person eager to exercise his or her skills in attending to the bodily ailments of the Africans, while at the same time seeking to introduce them to the Word of God in which salvation alone is to be found.

There is also an immediate vacancy for a nurse, as well as a need for a replacement for Miss Carmichael, who is due leave early next year.

The Committee will be glad to hear from any nurses having a mind to serve Christ and His Church in this part of the Mission work. They, too, should write the Clerk of this Committee.

Rev. Donald MacLean,
Clerk to the Jewish and Foreign Mission Committee.

Rev. William MacLean's New Address, N.Z.

Rev. William MacLean's address is no longer 4, Mandi Street: but, Free Presbyterian Manse, 14 Thomson Street, Gisborne, N.Z.

Small Type in This Issue of Magazine

The printers have informed us that, owing to a breakdown in the type-setting machinery, smaller type had to be used to get the Magazines out in time. Next month the usual type will be used.

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