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AN OBSCURANTIST AND SECTARIAN ATTITUDE

In the August 1969 number of *The Instructor*, the Youth Magazine of the Free Church of Scotland, there appears an article entitled "This is My Church", with the sub-title — 'An Apologia'. The article purports to be a brief, factual history of The Free Church of Scotland from the Disruption of 1843 onwards. Albeit the controversy over the infamous Declaratory Act of 1892, which Act was confirmed as an Act of the Free Church of Scotland in May, 1893, and which aroused many to separate from the said Declaratory Act Free Church, is almost completely (but not quite) ignored. If we remember rightly, a somewhat similar article on the history of the Free Church of Scotland appeared in *The Instructor*, a year or two ago. In it, the writer just completely ignored the extraordinary period of history embracing the 1892 Declaratory Act and the Separation of the late Rev. Donald Macfarlane — and all who followed him — from the said Declaratory Act Free Church, at its General Assembly in May 1893.

In this latest article the writer avoids, in an unfortunate and blameworthy manner, ignoring altogether the separation from the Free Church of the late Rev. Donald Macfarlane and many others. In leaving his resume of the Disruption, he takes one leap to the events of 1900 affecting the Declaratory Act Free Church and her Union with the United Presbyterian Church.

In dealing with the action adopted by some ministers and elders of the then so-called Free Church, in refusing to enter into the Union with the United Presbyterian Church, the writer pens the following: "... Was the refusal of the Constitutionlists of 1900 to go in with the Union between the Free Church and United Presbyterians wise, charitable and necessary? Were they adopting **an obscurantist, sectarian attitude?** **Had they been they might have seceded with some of their brethren in 1893.** But instead they elected to stay in the house of their fathers and to defend it in 1900 ..."

Here quite clearly the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in separating from the Declaratory Act Free Church of 1892-93, are charged with an obscurantist, sectarian attitude in what they did. Now, an obscurantist attitude is a form of opposition to enquiry or reform, which reform may be desirable. But the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church at that time opposed faithfully and in the light of the Word of God, statements in sections of the Declaratory Act which were clearly contrary to the teaching and doctrine of the Word of God and the professed subordinate standard of the then Free Church, viz., the Westminster Confession of Faith. To indicate briefly but one part of the Act which called for opposition, we quote from the pen of the late Rev. James S. Sinclair, as follows:—

“The closing sentence of this paragraph (of the Act) asserts that the Confession is not to be held as teaching, ‘That God may not extend His mercy for Christ’s sake, and by His Holy Spirit to those who are beyond the reach of these means’, that is, the Gospel, described above (in the Act) as ‘the ordinary means of salvation’. For this statement there is no warrant in Scripture. The persons spoken of as ‘beyond the reach of these means’ are evidently the heathen . . . This clause affirms the very dangerous and pernicious error, that ‘God may extend His mercy’ to those who are without the Gospel.” The late Rev. James S. Sinclair, in a further comment on this section of the Declaratory Act, records that Professor Marcus Dods, a then Professor in the Free Church, declared that there would be many on the right hand at the great day who had had “no knowledge of the historical Christ”.

In the light of the above references to the then Free Church’s attitude to the Word of God and the Confession of Faith, the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church opposed “reform” **anent** how the Confession of Faith was to be understood under the Declaratory Act of 1892-3. The Act contained unsound doctrine. Were the opponents of the Act obscurantists?

Again, that the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church were “sectarian” in 1893 in denouncing the aforesaid Act and separating from the Free Church which had departed from her Constitution, is a rash and foolish charge. The term “sectarian” has an undesirable meaning attached to it. To be a sectarian means to be **bigotedly** devoted to the interests of a sect and to be **narrow** and exclusive. It was all otherwise with the fathers of the Free Presbyterian Church. They were graciously devoted to the Word of God, the Confession of Faith and the **whole Constitution of the Free Church** of Scotland and to the defence and the conserving of the same for themselves and those who would come after them in Scotland. And they were so devoted to

the above, that by the late Rev. Donald Macfarlane's Protest in the Free Church Assembly of May, 1893, and the action of those who followed him, the whole Constitution and principles of the Free Church of 1843 were conserved. And these have been conserved, not by the men who carried on to 1900 and then refused to enter the Union with the United Presbyterian Church, but by the men and women who formed, under the good hand of God, the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, seven years prior to 1900, and to the Most High is all the praise! Was this sectarian in the undesirable sense?

The article in which there appeared those 'references' to which we are objecting is said to be "An Apologia", in other words, "an apologetic writing". And an apologist is "a defender by argument". Has the writer of the article in question felt the need to defend his Church in these days? He has much to say regarding the Free Church and her witness for the Word of God and to the faith today. Whatever Church we belong to, as Christians, we need to concern ourselves not only with doctrine which is of course fundamental, but with **practice** within the church also according to that doctrine.

ORDINATION SERMON

by Rev. Lachlan MacKenzie, Lochcarron

preached at Applecross, 1st July 1793

"And no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron." (Hebrews v. 4)

If people go to perdition in these days it is not for want of ministers. The clergy are likely to become soon as plentiful as the locusts in Egypt, and which of them is the greatest plague of the two, time and the experience of the Church will discover. It was the language of one of the greatest pillars of the Church — "Who is sufficient for these things?" The primitive rulers of the Church were struck with such a sense of the importance and difficulty of the charge, that the people of God had often the greatest struggle before they could prevail upon them to take the charge of souls. Clergymen in those days did not run without being sent; and if they were animated with a desire of preaching the Gospel, they did not by their after conduct give room to others to suspect that they wished to be ordained in order to get "a piece of bread". They did not take this honour to themselves till they were called of God. They did not intrude into the Church, or obtrude themselves upon a Presbytery for ordination, till they were persuaded from the infallible oracles of truth

that God Himself had qualified them for His own work. In one word, they had a concern for their own salvation before they pretended to show the way of salvation to others.

In speaking further upon this subject —

I. I shall, in the first place, show what it is to be called of God to the work of the ministry. That is the qualification necessary for the person whom God is preparing for that work.

II. That no man should usurp this honour without that call.

III. Make some practical improvement.

1st. I shall show what it is to be called of God to the work of the ministry, or the qualifications necessary for the person whom God is preparing for that work. The apostle in this chapter assures us that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself did not assume the honour of being our High Priest till He was called of God, as was Aaron. St. Paul insists very often upon his call to the ministry; and though we are not to expect such an extraordinary call to the ministry as he had, yet, notwithstanding, every true minister of Christ will not rest satisfied till he has a call, not only from the Church, but likewise from God Himself. That this call is thought necessary by the Protestant Church is evident, for in England the Bishop puts the question to the man whom he means to ordain, is he moved by the Holy Ghost to the work of the ministry? And in our form of Church government the Presbytery are to examine him not only touching his learning, but likewise touching the evidences of his calling to the holy ministry, as well as his fair and direct calling to that particular place.

1st. The first part of this call I take to be a serious and wholesome concern for his own salvation. How can a man who never had as much soul exercise as to put him from a diet of meat, pretend to advise others to be serious, and to take salvation to heart as the one thing needful? There is something very absurd in advising others to be serious when a man is not serious himself. Without taking salvation to heart can the minister honestly say what the apostle said, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men?" Can a sinner come to Christ without some degree of terror? If he does not feel terror before he comes, he will taste some after he comes, for even the love of Christ will make sin bitter to the soul. The ordinary and stated method of grace is to give conviction of sin in the first place, and then the comforts of the gospel. The minister must speak from the heart to the heart. If he writes in his sermon what he finds in a book, he gives the experience of another, and not his own. When a man does not give his own experience, but what he finds in a book, what he repeats in that way no more deserves the name of preaching than the prating of a parrot, who is

taught to repeat the Lord's prayer, deserves the name of devotion. He may, like the bird, amuse people, but he can never reach the heart. Borrowed preachings and borrowed prayers are little better than sacrilege. If a man **feels**, he can the more easily pray and preach.

But, in this polite age of the Church, many ministers have got an easy way of eluding the force of such reasoning by calling all the experience of the heart **enthusiasm**. Gracious clergymen have often found this word of very great service to them, because it answers their purpose. If a man happens to have the grace of God, and to speak of it and preach it, the short way to overthrow what he says is to allege that there was a great deal of enthusiasm in his discourse. Nay, it is well known that good men have often been called enthusiasts because they could not drink in company more than their consciences or constitutions could bear. Enthusiasm can have twenty meanings. When a clergyman, therefore, supposes that a man is in the clouds who speaks of the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, does he not give the strongest proof that he can give, that himself is a stranger to that work? He surely does. An honest mind will rather ingeniously deplore his want of God's grace than say that it is only imagination work which others speak of, because himself is a stranger to it. The minister of Christ, on the contrary, will pray to God that he may experience in his soul a saving change from sin to righteousness, that he may be able to comfort others with the comforts with which he himself is comforted of God. He endeavours to believe that he may be able to speak, and, like the apostle when he is converted, he strengthens his brethren. He mentions his own experience of God's goodness, and thus recommends the mercy of God to others. Our Saviour tells us that when the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch, that is, in plain language, when blind ministers lead blind congregations, they both fall into perdition. It is an awful sight to see a minister take the lead of a congregation who never took concern about his own soul. Can he say, "good people I shall show you the way to heaven", when his people might observe that his only concern is how to manage his farm and provide for his family? If that be the road to heaven, they can know it without the help of a minister. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, the true foundation, and the stone which God has laid in Zion. Now, if the minister, instead of preaching free grace through a Redeemer, should deny this doctrine altogether, or which is nearly as dangerous, should mix the endeavours of the creature with the perfect merits of Christ, he lays a false foundation and substitutes something else instead of the Saviour. The man who expects justification and the pardon of sin by the obedience of

Christ and a mixture of his own performances, acts as reasonable a part as the Papist who prays to Christ and to the saints and angels likewise. We think the poor Papist very blind who does not trust in the prayers of Christ alone, but must have recourse to other advocates; and is not the half Protestant equally blind who is not satisfied with the complete obedience of Christ, but together with this, will mix his own performances to render him acceptable to God. Is not trusting in our own endeavours in order to recommend us to God, or to procure His favour, robbing Christ of His glory as a complete Saviour, as sure as praying to a saint is robbing him of his glory as a complete intercessor? The apostle assures us in the Epistle to the Galatians that such as are justified by the law are fallen from grace, and that Christ is of no effect to them. He tells us that such as expect salvation by the law or their own endeavours of obedience are under the curse, because the law requires perfect obedience, "and they continue not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." The law requires perfect obedience. When we expect salvation by a mangled obedience, we become obnoxious to the threatening and are exposed to the curse of the law. But if we expect to mix our own mangled obedience with the complete obedience of Christ, the apostle tells us they will not mix for us. Such an attempt will make Christ of no effect to us. If we obtain salvation, it must be either as a debt owing to our own obedience, or as a free gift owing to the obedience of Christ. When we have done all that we can possibly do, our Saviour teaches us to call ourselves unprofitable servants. And when the minister of Christ gets a view of sin, as it really is in itself, he can freely venture the salvation of his soul upon this bottom, the complete obedience or righteousness of Christ, and dares not venture upon any other. And when he has found rest to his soul, he can recommend the way of salvation to others.

2nd. Another part of the call necessary for a minister is, that he is furnished with those talents which are necessary for a minister of the New Testament. If a person should be a good antiquarian and a complete linguist, yet all this would not qualify him for teaching geometry. A man may have a fund of knowledge, but if he has not the faculty of communicating it, although he should deserve the character of a good man, he cannot properly be called a good clergyman. It is a common expression that a man must be born a poet and not made one. It is equally certain that a man's genius must lead him to the pulpit before he can be useful in that particular line. It is often a complaint with thousands and thousands of the common people that they cannot carry home a word of what such or such a minister said. They are as little edified when he leaves off as when he begins. This

is altogether owing to his manner of speaking; and should the matter be good, it may be spoiled by an awkward, ungracious delivery. When the matter is bad and the doctrine unsound, it is little odds though it should be mangled in the delivery; but what a pity it is that the wholesome food of the gospel should be spoiled in the dressing, and this sometimes happens.

Many other agreeable accomplishments in a clergyman will not make up for the want of this absolutely necessary one. I mean the faculty of communicating his knowledge. If a gentleman wishes to get a person to serve him in the quality of an overseer, though he could do twenty other things, yet, if he tells his master that he has no skill in handling a plough or managing a farm, his master will tell him that he is unfit for what he undertakes. In like manner, when a good Christian is told that a minister can translate a piece of Greek or Latin, that he understands country business, and has great insight into the laws and constitution of his country, he can readily answer that he would much rather him to have skill to handle a text, and preach Christ to his perishing soul. But what peculiarly constitutes a man a minister of the New Testament, is a humble sense of his own insufficiency, and an entire dependence upon the assistance of God's Spirit. The Spirit is promised, and we may look for His assistance in study and composition. He is the Author of every good and holy thought, and He will give the particular doctrines that are fittest for such and such sinners to hear. He can and He will direct our minds in such a way as that we shall fall upon the most useful and most seasonable truths. If there are people who stand in need of comfort, why should we not believe that a minister's mind may be directed to a text that would give him room to preach comfort, and in like manner to other texts suitable to the other different classes that hear him? It is, however, in experimental Divinity as it is in experimental philosophy. If the philosopher is cautious in admitting no principles but such as are founded in experiment; the Christian minister cannot call any doctrine his own, but what he has from experience. If the philosopher is resolute in adopting every such principle, the clergyman has the utmost freedom in preaching those doctrines which he has felt and believed, and to which of consequence he can set his seal. We are only scholars in the school of Christ, and no man can preach properly but from experience. The more the minister's mind is exercised about his everlasting state, the better able he is to speak of this exercise to another, and to give him comfort.

3rd. Again, the person who has this call, is excited by a strong desire in his mind to preach the gospel. If a man desires the office of a bishop, that is a pastor or overseer, he desires a good work.

This desire in the mind of a good man, we may believe, is from God. Actuated by the purest motives, the glory of God, and the good of souls, he is cautious in admitting the suggestions of self-conceit and self-love. At the same time that he wishes to preach the gospel, he sees the difficulty of the charge, and, as he believes, he does not make haste. He examines himself by the Word of God, to see if he finds himself qualified. When such a man as St. Paul asks the question, "Who is sufficient for these things?" it costs him some searchings of heart, and many prayers, whether or not he will engage in the work. Moses' prayer shall often be used upon such an occasion. "If Thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." He knows that the ministry is the work of God, and not of man, and that the Lord never sends any man a warfare upon his own charges. He knows, likewise, that the strong walls of Jericho will not fall by any other means than the trumpets, which are made by Divine appointment. He is conscious that human learning, reason, argument, moral suasion, good advices, promises and threatenings avail nothing without the great spirit of prayer. The sinner is like the monster mentioned in the book of Job, "he esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee, sling stones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble, he laugheth at the shaking of a spear." The Saviour knew perfectly well what he said when he assures us that "no man can come unto him except the Father draw him". "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." "Paul may plant, Apollos may water, it is only God who giveth the increase." Young men are generally very sanguine in their expectations in regard to the good which they hope they shall do to souls. They promise themselves they shall be of great service to the Church. It was said of that amiable reformer Melancthon, that however great his expectations were of doing good to souls, and healing the divisions and breaches of the Church, that he acknowledged at last that old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon. The complaints likewise of old divines make the young soldier afraid. If his object is to gain souls to Christ, he hears with men of experience, who have been in the heat of the battle, that nothing can do this but the power that created heaven and earth. The man, then, who wishes to gain souls will not make use of carnal weapons in the spiritual warfare.

4th. In the next place, the person who has this call from God is actuated by pure and disinterested motives. This is the single eye which the Scripture so often mentions. A person's whole aim is to please God and to gain souls. Such as enter the ministry

are in a peculiar manner the servants of God. Now, the great duty of a servant is to do everything to please his master, and to forward his interest. Should the servant of an earthly master have his own little interest at stake, if he is an honest man, he will take care of his master's interest; but if his own constantly engross his thoughts, he cannot be honest to his master. The Clergy all consecrate themselves to the service of God, and call themselves the servants of Christ. Our Lord tells us that a man cannot serve two masters. When a man becomes a minister, he should **be that, and that only**. But if his heart is engrossed with thoughts about a manse, a glebe, a stipend, and a farm, he serves another master, and cannot attend to the one thing needful. If the heart is full of these things it cannot be full of the love of God at the same time. The apostles, as we find in the sixth chapter of the Acts, could not attend to the daily division of the poor's money. It is not a difficult thing for a man to know whether the gospel or the world take up his thoughts and attention. The chief end of every man is to glorify God, but the minister is called upon in a peculiar manner to glorify God, and to do nothing else. Accordingly, in every Christian country, the state has allowed them a portion yearly, in order to keep them from the world. Now, if it be for the sake of this miserable portion that he preacheth the gospel—"Woe to him". That miserable portion shall be given him, and nothing else. The minister of Christ has God for his portion, and he uses the world as not abusing it.

5th. In the last place, the minister who is called by God, has an exemplary life and conversation (1 Tim. iii). If a man's behaviour be such as that, men would not naturally pitch upon him for a spiritual guide, common sense will not permit us to believe that God would choose him at all. A Presbytery may lay their hands upon his head, but cannot convey the Holy Ghost to him. If all the canonical hands, from the Pope down to the poorest curate or clergyman, were to be laid upon him at once, they cannot bestow grace upon a man who does not see his need of it, or seriously ask it himself.

The Scripture observes that if a man eats and drinks unworthily at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, he eats and drinks damnation to himself. In like manner, I firmly believe that ordination, instead of benefiting an unworthy clergyman, makes him sevenfold more the child of the devil than he was before. But on the other hand, if a man is sincere in his transactions with God, and has been honestly asking grace, he may plead the promise made to the ministers of God, and to the faithful followers of Christ. He will be with them to the end of the world. He will give them his spirit, and bind in heaven what they have bound upon earth. When a man impartially examines himself



by the Word of God, and finds the qualifications which I have been mentioning, he may humbly believe that he has a call from God to preach the gospel. He has taken salvation to heart — he has talents for the pulpit — he has a strong desire excited in his mind to preach the gospel — he has pure motives, and he has a holy life. To such a character I would address myself — Rise and be doing, for God is with thee. Go and preach the everlasting gospel of peace to lost sinners. Such a man needs not ask a voice from heaven, he has a more sure word of prophecy, as the Apostle St. Peter informs us. The Spirit of God will apply and bring the Word of God to his mind. There is an agreement between both. And when this is the case, a man will not be in a hurry to run before God's appointed time. He shall patiently wait till the pillar and cloud go before him, till the Providence of God open a door to him. He knows that if God has use for him, He shall employ him; he knows, likewise, that no mere man can have such love to the gospel as the Saviour Himself. This consideration will check the impatience of his spirit; it will likewise give him comfort in time coming. In things belonging to God, the more we put in His own hands, and the less we put in our own, the better we are sure to succeed. Whenever our will is brought to the will of God — Himself will do for us then.

II. The second thing proposed was, that no man should usurp the honour without the call. The design of the ministry is to bring souls to God, but how can this be the design of the minister who is himself far from God? When God and the minister have two different, and perhaps two contrary objects in view, how can they agree? When God calls any man to the ministry, it is to make him an instrument in calling and converting men from sin to righteousness. But when the young divine has no other object in becoming a minister than to get a good living, and perhaps a good farm, to become rich, and lay by money, will his doctrine do good? I believe not. I shall suppose such a man settled in a parish — can it reasonably be said that himself, and the master whom he pretends to serve, are of one mind? Can he pursue his own little interest and his master's great interest at the same time? No! Can a covetous minister preach upon that text, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," any more than a drunken minister could preach upon these words, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess?" Will not people see the absurdity of such doctrine from such men? And if they conceal such doctrines, are they not unfaithful shepherds? These self-evident truths being taken for granted by all, I think it can easily be proved that when a man has not a call from God, as I have endeavoured to explain it, he should not obtrude himself upon a people, nor should he take the honour, for,

1st. He cannot be useful or do good to souls.

2nd. Consequently he will hurt the people, and at last hurt himself, unless he repent.

1st. He cannot be useful or do good to souls — If he cannot communicate his knowledge, the people go home without instruction. If himself is destitute of the grace of God, and has no desire to obtain it, he will be impatient till he gets out of the pulpit, and whenever that **wearisome** piece of service is over, he can laugh at religion, and ridicule every canting hypocrite that pretends to go a step beyond himself. If he has any engagements, or if he longs for his **dinner**, he looks at his watch oftener than at his Bible. When out of the pulpit his behaviour does not in the smallest degree recommend his doctrine. He is as worldly, as trifling, and sometimes, for fear of being **unsocial**, he is as irregular as another man. That there are some such men, I might have said many such men, in the whole Christian Church, cannot be denied. How then can their doctrine be useful, or do good? Is it not cause of regret that people give scarce measure of the gospel? A man, it may be, receives so many scores of merks or of pounds in the year — and what has the poor parish for that? These clergymen might make the confession which an English cook made to a Scotch gentleman. He was turned off at the end of twelve months, and received twenty guineas for wages. He kept the purse a long time in his hand with the money. He was asked if he was satisfied with what he got. Alas! sir, said he, I have a check of conscience for receiving it, I got twenty guineas for my wages, and did not dress five pounds worth of meat all the time I was in your family. If the minister longs to be out of the Church, is it not natural to suppose that the people will wish to be out likewise? He cannot preach faithfully, because he would condemn himself. His doctrine is not calculated to gain converts. He does not wish them to be over religious, he might find them a little troublesome in that event. They would press him to do his duty, and, if he was a little negligent, might pretend to advise the minister himself. It is not likely, nor do I believe it is possible, that the Holy Ghost would employ himself or his doctrine as a means to convert souls. Will he employ a man's doctrine, who laughs at the work of the Spirit as whimsical notions, to carry on that very work? There is not an instance in all the Book of God of a man converted to God by the ministry of a bad man. It may be said, indeed, that God spoke to Balaam. I would think this argument conclusive if I did not read likewise in Scripture that God spoke repeatedly to the devil — but not with any view to employ him as an instrument in doing good. But should a bad man convert a sinner to God, he could have no comfort from it, any more than the men who fixed the Lord

Jesus Christ to the Cross could have from his death. It was not their own salvation, nor the salvation of the Church, they had in view. A man who is not in earnest about his own salvation, cannot earnestly promote the salvation of another.

2nd. Such a man will consequently hurt the people, and at last hurt himself, unless he repent. He hurts the people — His doctrine is very often dry, and his example is still worse. If he happens sometimes to give a **random** shot, and to preach some animating truths, he spoils the convictions his doctrines raised by his conduct through the week. He destroys with the one hand what he built with the other. And if he lives and dies in this condition, the consequences to him must be awful. But, I have added, unless he repent; and let us make this comfortable supposition, that the Holy Ghost, to whom nothing is impossible, quickens him from on high. When this event takes place, he shall preach the faith which he once destroyed. **And would to God I saw this day in many and many instances.**

I conclude with some practical improvements.

First, as to those who intend the ministry. It is their duty to examine themselves, and be often assiduous at a throne of grace, lest they get a curse instead of a blessing. Let them beg of God to fit them for the work. I would not be very ready to advise a young man to engage. If he is an honest man, he shall sometimes find hard work. However, if he be the friend of Christ, I shall wish him success in the name of the Lord.

Lastly, some of the ministers of Christ are afraid about their call. One thing, however, may give them comfort, viz.: if they seriously wish to promote true religion and constantly depend upon the Saviour, let them pray to God to clear up their call. If a man faithfully improves his talent, whoever hath, to him shall be given. If he is conscious of any want, or if he wish to possess any grace or any spiritual gift, let him ask in faith, and he shall receive. It will give a man comfort at last to find that God has fitted him for the work, and that he made it his business to promote His glory.

May God bless His word. Amen.

EXHORTATION

It is customary to give a long advice to a minister after he is ordained. It must be likewise owned that it is very ordinary for a minister to **forget** the advice. I shall therefore make it short. You are now a minister. Never recommend a duty till you first endeavour to reduce it to practice yourself. Do not mix the two

covenants — they shall not mix for you. Preach your own experience, if you have any; and if you have not, beg God to give you experience. Read the Scriptures, preach Christ **fully**, and deal much in prayer. As the office you have undertaken is great, the danger is equally great if you do not do your duty. A rotten clergyman is a bad member of society; he gives a handle to infidels to laugh at religion; he destroys his flock, and damns his own soul. If a man be honest, God will give him his soul at death; and if he be not, his stipends will be a bitter morsel to him in that hour. The people should obey the minister, and the minister should obey God.

If you be a bad minister y'll go to hell, and if you be a good minister y'll go to heaven. Remember you heard that. You got a good advice, whether you will follow it or not.

REPORT FROM CANADIAN DEPUTY

Rev. A. Murray, M.A.

The first day of June saw a Communion Sabbath in Applecross and in beautiful weather a congregation of about 200 persons had come by land and sea, some to participate in, and others to witness, the solemn event of the commemoration of Christ's death for His Church. In the course of conversation while visiting a home in this congregation on the Saturday previous, the ministers present on that occasion were reminded of the different roads that lay ahead in the Lord's Providence — as Mr Campbell was soon to return to his labours in Rhodesia, Mr MacInnes was later to visit again the friends in Italy, and on that next week I was to leave congregation and home for Canada.

One Wednesday, 4th June I parted with loved ones, as I endeavoured to commend them, the congregation and myself to the One Lord who alone is able to keep all of us wherever our lot may presently be cast under these heavens. In perfect weather, the sea journey to Mallaig and thence by rail to Glasgow, provided pleasant thoughts of the natural beauty of the home country. That night I spent in the hospitable home of our General Treasurer and next day I was further indebted to Mr and Mrs Fraser as they took me by their car to the international airport at Prestwick. Aircraft and flying, notwithstanding the 24 years that have passed since the end of World War II, I find still fascinate, so that it was perhaps with more than ordinary interest that I took my seat in a BOAC Boeing 707, and then we climbed out over the sea north of Ayr to continue our ascent to 35,000 ft. and pass directly above, and with almost perfect visibility, the islands of Arran, Jura, Tiree and Barra. Flying on a set course at high altitude tends to be tedious, but airlines largely succeed in relieving any feeling of boredom by serving excellent meals.

For myself on this occasion there was the special interest to discover that the 'plane's Captain had been at the same 'Pathfinder' base in Lincolnshire where I had also been in 1944, so that he kindly invited me to the flight deck for a time. We were now over Greenland, which was enveloped in cloud and, while a visual look-out was something much insisted upon in the past, the modern airliner possesses a radar scanner which searches the air 140 miles ahead. Also we had taken this northerly route to avoid "jet-streams" — air currents at high altitude of up to 130 knots not appreciated till more recent years — further south over the Atlantic. The Davis Strait was still full of pack-ice in June so that it was not easy to discover where sea ended and the snow-clad mountains of Labrador began. Here we were at the same latitude as Shetland and it was June, but still severe winter by our standards, which calls upon one to remember the benefits which the Gulf Stream brings to our northern homelands; indeed, how all these wonders should cause us to exclaim — "O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Ps. 104 : 24). Toronto, at a latitude of northern Spain, was our destination and there we landed safely — after seven hours aloft in one direct flight. The time was, however, only two hours later (by local time) than when we had left Scotland. One does not readily adjust to this sudden change in the daily routine but I may mention my present thoughts with regard to this phenomenon. Possibly several among us have experienced the difficulty of remembering our New Zealand friends relative to their times of worship and say at Communion seasons especially. The wisdom of God, however, is to be seen in all these things, and the consideration has considerably impressed me — that just as the lamps were always to be kept burning in God's temple at Jerusalem, so even in the Free Presbyterian Church there are some in Africa, Canada and Australia who are engaged in God's worship in public or in private throughout the 24 hours of each day. Like the priests in former days we may each seek to perform the duties of our "course" (cf. Lk. 1 : 5 and 8).

Toronto was to prove a home from home as the welcome I had anticipated was more than realised in fact at the home of my sister-in-law, i.e. Mr and Mrs James Fraser. Their seven children recalled the scene among their Scottish cousins. Mrs Fraser, sen., kindly met me at the airport. It was indeed pleasant after 14 years from the time of my previous visit to these parts to meet former acquaintances and to find that not too much change was evident in our friends in Canada. Of course some who were only children are now almost men and women, and the years again leave large blanks such as Mr Fraser and Mr and

Mrs Rod Campbell, with whom myself and many former deputies had found unfailing hospitality.

On Tuesday of last week, the 17th June, I left Toronto to travel for 5½ hours by bus to the city of Detroit in the United States. There I was met by Mr and Mrs Lawson, to be taken to the same hospitable home where, with my wife and eldest daughter, we had stayed on a previous occasion. Because of the extent of this city it took all of the next day to visit Millers, Campbells and Mrs Mackenzie and family at Grosse Ile, and this was only possible with Mr Lawson as my willing driver. Mrs Mackenzie is now in her 88th year, but although she is recovering from an operation I was pleased to find her looking well.

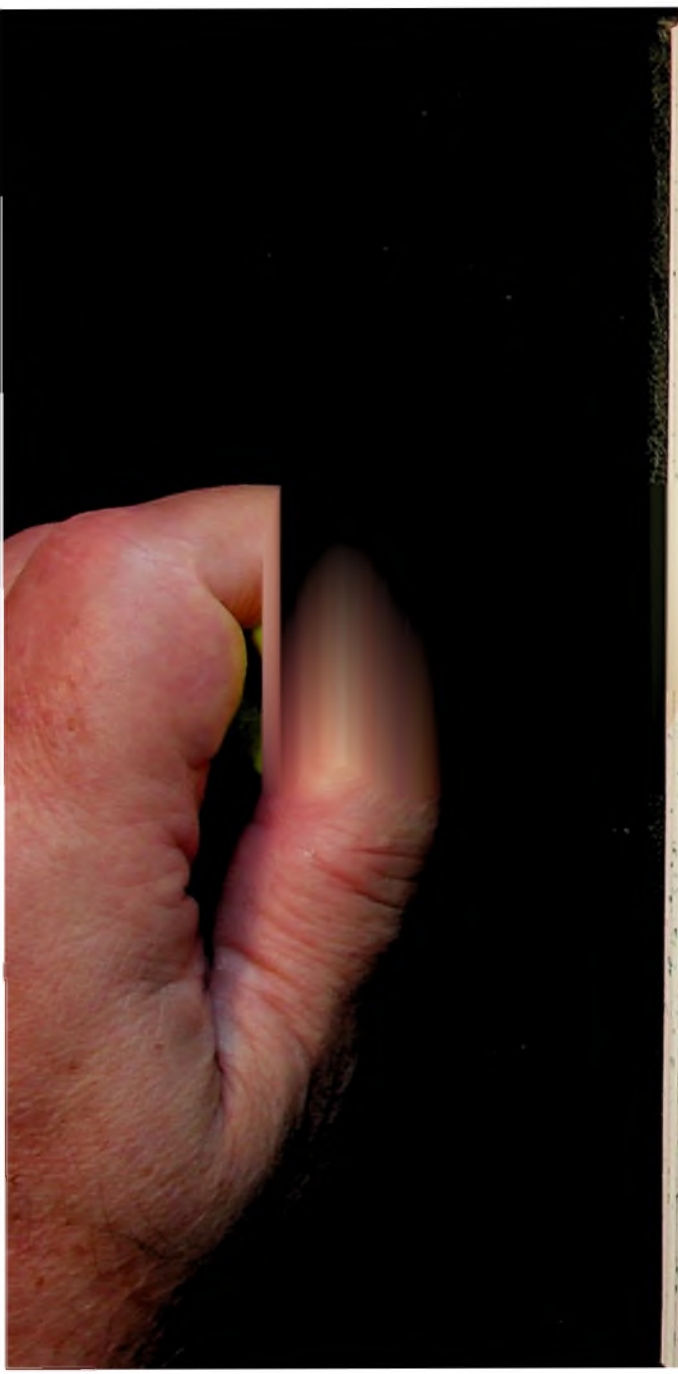
On Thursday 19th, I reached my present abode at Hillsdale, some eighty miles to the south-west of Detroit, the house of Mrs C. MacLennan and her unmarried daughter. I kept services on Thursday and Friday evening, when another branch of the MacLennan family from North Adams were present. On Sabbath I preached to this little group. The expected friends from Detroit did not arrive for one reason or another but, possibly, they may be here next week (D.V.). Mrs MacLennan had notified a number around of these services and her zeal for the things of God's kingdom remains unabated.

On Wednesday of this present week I plan making a brief visit to the De Korne family in Grand Rapids. Next weekend (D.V.) I again intend keeping services at Hillsdale from Thursday till Monday, after which I expect to return to Toronto and in the absence of the minister keep the weekly prayer meeting at Bloor Street. It will be interesting to see if any start has been made in building the new church in Toronto for which I saw the contract signed. In the Lord's good providence the sale of the old property at Bloor Street permits the small congregation to possess new and commodious manse and church properties with adequate parking facilities in a developing area of north-east Toronto. The material side of things is alway necessary and I wish them comparable success in the endearing things of the Spirit.

My main field of labour is, of course, to be Winnipeg and I hold an air ticket to arrive there, if the Lord will, on Friday, July 4th.

THE LATE Mr AIRD GRANT, GRAFTON

The Kirk Session of the Brushgrove-Grafton Congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland record with regret the loss sustained by the congregation through the passing of Mr Aird Grant on the 23rd day of January, 1969, in his 81st year. Although



leading a sober and unblemished life, Mr Grant was about middle age when he underwent a saving change. In due course he was admitted to the Lord's Table, and in the year 1955 was ordained to the office of eldership in the congregation. As an elder he faithfully discharged the duties of his office, and adorned his profession by a life in keeping with the Saviour's character of those who are His disciples indeed, in the world but not of it, pilgrims and strangers seeking a better country that is an heavenly.

Like his late worthy father, Mr Hugh Grant, who also had been an elder in the congregation, Aird Grant was steadfast and unmoveable in upholding the Testimony of the Reconstituted Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia now continued in the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, in defence of the divine inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures against all the Satanic attacks on the same, of the unchanging doctrines of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of purity of worship, the sanctity of the Lord's Day against the wanton profanation of it in a godless age, of Church discipline, and the administration of the two divinely instituted sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, holding the two sacraments in general as seals of the covenant of grace, but not specifically sealing the same measure of privilege, that the qualifications for Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not identical, and that many may be admitted to the former who are not prepared for the latter.

To Mrs Grant and the family and to Miss Margaret Grant the late Mr Grant's Sister, the Kirk Session extend their sympathy in the loss of a devoted husband, father and brother, sincerely praying that they be made partakers of the blessing which David the sweet psalmist of Israel desired for his son Solomon, "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek Him He will be found of thee: but if thou forsake Him, he will cast thee off for ever". (1 Chronicles 29.9).

— Wm. MacLean.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

V — Saul's Withdrawal to Tarsus

Our last meditation closed on the thought that Saul spent fifteen happy days at Jerusalem, in close fellowship with Peter. Truly he did, but there was more than fellowship for Saul to look back upon; there was active work for the Lord Jesus in the capital city; there was growing opposition from one-time friends,

now sworn enemies; and, finally, there was the discipline of having to bow before the fury of that storm, in obedience to the Divine will. These are the three points which constitute the subject-matter of our present meditation. **The narrative basis** we find in **Acts, chapter 9, verses 29 and 30**; **The personal references** we find in **Acts, chapter 22, verses 17 to 21**, and, possibly, in **1 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 15**.

Let us, then, think for a little together on these three points:

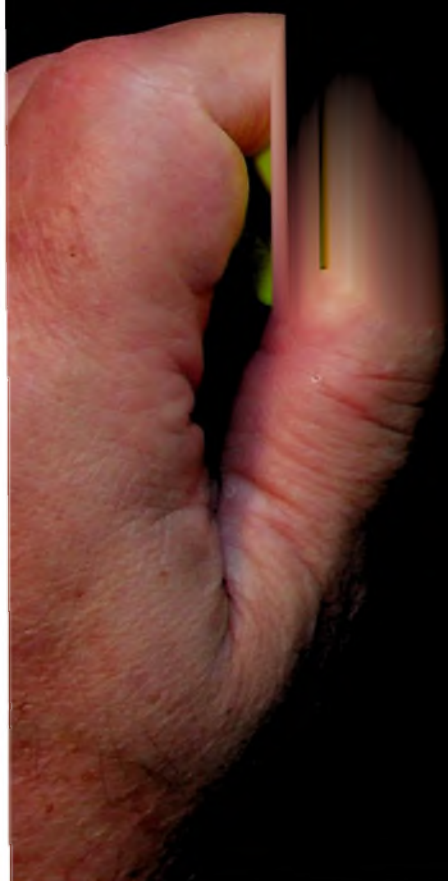
- (a) **Saul preaches Christ at Jerusalem also.**
- (b) **Saul bows before the fury of the storm.**
- (c) **Saul withdraws to his native city.**

Saul preaches Christ at Jerusalem also.

The great work which he had begun at Damascus, Saul now continues at Jerusalem. It is to be his life work henceforth — to preach Christ, and Him Crucified, to his fellow-sinners everywhere. If it was a miracle to see **Saul at Damascus**, preaching that Jesus is the Christ, how much more of a miracle to see him doing the same **at Jerusalem!** **Here he was at the very heart of Judaism**, the very centre from which he himself, not so long ago, had gone forth to persecute the followers of the Nazarene. Who can ever tell what strength was needed by this noble servant of the master, as he rose up to tackle this great task to which he had been committed by the risen Lord Himself? One thing is certain — never in his own strength could Saul have gone out to speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 9: 29), for Saul was one who was made to learn deeply, all his days, that **‘without me, ye can do nothing’**, a word that must be graven, as with a pen of iron, on the table of the hearts of all God’s people. Saul lived to prove, as he says elsewhere, **“when I am weak, then am I strong”** (2 Cor. xii, 10).

The same zeal, the same knowledge; the same dedication and the same earnestness which, we have seen, had characterised his Damascus preaching, would also characterise his first efforts in the ‘city of the great King’. Christ was becoming more and more precious each day to Saul and he longed to impart to others also the great blessing, which he himself had come to enjoy: may it be ours, too, to follow him in this, whether as preachers or people: to commend to others the suitability of the Redeemer and Saviour of sinners!

As was his custom, wherever he went, **Saul not only declared the whole counsel of God: he also entered into discussion** with those to whom he declared these things, and, in the nature of the case, these discussions usually became prolonged and bitter. It was so now; we read: **“And disputed against the Grecians”** — This followed on from speaking boldly in the name of the Lord



Jesus. He 'disputed' with them and against them: for the word itself began with the simple meaning of **'seeking or examining together'** some point or points perhaps, and then came to be used, as here, in the sense of disputing, discussing or debating on these points, with varying degrees of intensity, according to the context. From the sequel here, it is evident that, even if Saul had chosen to begin by 'searching out' the points at issue, from the Scriptures, as to the relationship between Jesus and the Messiah, in a spirit of mutual interest and discussion, very soon such discussion would have degenerated into acrimonious dispute. As Saul, trained so well for such a task at Gamaliel's feet, endued now with the Spirit from on high, waxed bolder and bolder in the discussion, his adversaries found refuge in the only course, which appealed to them, in such circumstances. **They lost complete control of themselves** — their enmity now knew no bounds; if they could not silence him in argument, they could try some other method and this they now proceeded to do. We read: **"they went about to slay him"**. The carnal mind of man is enmity against God indeed, wherever it rears its ugly head, whether in the individual bosom or in society. The storm clouds were soon gathering round the head of 'the young man, called Saul', and the question now to be faced, both by himself and by the church at Jerusalem, was, Shall he weather the storm by resisting, or allow it to pass, by retreating before it? Much would depend upon the answer: much for himself, and for the church.

Let none of us be surprised, then, if we ever find ourselves facing a similar question. If we would truly follow the Lord, follow Him fully as Caleb of old was enabled to do, we too may expect to encounter difficulties in the way, our problems may not take the form which Saul's did, yet, nevertheless, their nature will be essentially the same. The arch-enemy of Truth is always the same and his work is always the same. Saul was to prove, as you, too, will have to prove, dear friend that **'if they have hated me, they will also hate you'**.

Saul bows before the fury of the storm.

As at Damascus, so now at Jerusalem, the witness of Saul did not produce the desired effect. Instead of receiving the Word gladly, with meekness, men were only filled with enmity and rose up to slay the preacher of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The only answer to the situation, as it appeared to the brethren then in Jerusalem, was to bow before the rising fury of the storm. **Discretion was to be the better part of valour:** so they arranged to have Saul taken away from the scene and carried safely to his native place. They seem to have realised that this was the will of God: to this Divine will they would now submit:

in His holy hands they would leave the issue. **"When the brethren knew"** (of this plot to slay Saul) **"they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus"** (v. 30).

As for Saul himself, how did he answer the question above? It would appear that he too realised, for himself, the need to retire from the scene, for the time being at least. Yet he cannot but express his disappointment: it was a bitter blow, when he had perhaps looked for so much. It was going to be hard for him to accept the situation, much later, when writing to the Thessalonian believers, he refers to something, which is usually taken to mean that he is thinking of this period in his life, when he says, **"For ye also have suffered . . . even as they . . . of the Jews, who both killed the Lord Jesus . . . and have persecuted us"** (1 Thess. ii, 14, 15). The last words are the important words in this context: the verb means, literally, **'drove us out', 'pursued us out', or 'chased us out',** by implication **'through persecution'**. In other words, we were compelled to leave: we were left with little alternative. As he looks back, is there any bitterness? Knowing Paul, we can truly say — no, not bitterness; disappointment, perhaps, or sorrow, but not rebellion. He was beginning to learn in those early days, what he afterwards so aptly writes of to his friends in the faith at Philippi — in whatsoever state, to be content. It was, for him, then, another lesson in the school of Christ.

Yet that is not all. He was enabled to bow before the rising storm, with quiet resignation to the will of God, not so much because the brethren constrained him so to do, nor because circumstances left him little alternative, but rather, because the Lord Himself commanded him to go. He received the word to retire from God Himself, and this made the path clear for him. When His Word came, then Saul could, despite all, take up his staff again and make for Tarsus and its solitude, as he had before made for Arabia and its solitude. In his speech to the multitude from the castle stairs, he declares that while he prayed, in the temple at Jerusalem, **he was in a trance and saw the Lord saying unto him, "make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me"** (Acts xxii, 18). This was, for him, the sign to leave: it was a mysterious and holy Providence, yet one which was destined, in the end, to work out for the good of the infant church and the world at large. The Lord had one other word for him then too — **"Depart for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles"** (Acts xxii, 21).

As Saul set out for Tarsus, then, he set out on the road that was to lead him **'far hence unto the Gentiles',** to set the pattern for his future life and ministry, to carry the message of redeeming

love to the corners of the world. Any regrets he might have had in leaving Jerusalem would soon be forgotten as he discerned the hand of his Lord and Master in it all.

May it be ours to realise that all our lives are in God's hands; our going out and coming in, our rising up and sitting down. If we are His, much more are our lives then subject to His guidance, His superintendence and His over-ruling Providence. May we learn, from Saul's experience here, to discern the steps of majesty of our God in Providence, to acquiesce in His Will, even when, at times, we understand it not, and above all, to receive what Saul received, a personal guiding word for every step and every circumstance, that so we might indeed rejoice to do God's will and follow Jesus in the way.

Saul withdraws to his native city.

Saul had endeavoured to carry the Gospel message to his fellow-countrymen, Greek-speaking Jews, who were then dwelling in Jerusalem, the Grecians of our text, as distinct from the Greeks of other passages, who were Greek-speaking Gentiles. His work had now been cut short and he arrived back in Tarsus once more, to spend another period of his life in comparative obscurity. The details of his journey thither from Jerusalem via Caesarea need not detain us, although there are some interesting points raised by some scholars concerning his mode of travel from Caesarea to Tarsus: was it by land or sea? Did he, at that time, visit the 'regions of Syria and Cilicia' to which he refers in *Galatians i, 21*? And did he engage in some missionary work thereabouts, as well as in his native city, by means of which, by the blessing of God, the Holy Spirit, some of those kinsmen and friends of his, of whom he makes mention in *Romans xvi*, were brought into the Kingdom?

Whatever be the case, we may rest assured that Saul returned to Tarsus in a very different frame of mind from that in which he had once left it to travel south to Jerusalem to enter Gamaliel's school and so pursue his formal Jewish education. He had, in the interval, been enrolled in a better school, and sat at better feet, and learned of a better Master. Now he was to know again the need for learning a new obedience and a new discipline. Buried in the obscurity of Tarsus, Saul was to find new strength for the years ahead. The time spent there, as in Arabia, was time well spent. **He had time to reflect; to examine his own heart; to search the Scriptures; and to wait upon the Lord.** It was a time of preparation for future usefulness in greater fields of vision than among the synagogues of Damascus or even Jerusalem itself.

May we also learn in the same spiritual class, and at the same school, the same precious lessons for life and life's journey, from

the same glorious Teacher in Israel! Then, truly, we would not learn in vain. How slow to learn, how ready to forget, how impatient until the lesson is over! Let our prayer then be

**"Teach me, O Lord, the perfect way,
of Thy precepts divine,
And to observe it to the end
I shall my heart incline."** (Ps. cxix. 33)

One final point before we close. When Saul withdrew to the safety and solitude of Tarsus, this was, for him, a second withdrawal from the scenes of labour and activity in service for the Lord. Is there any connecting link between the two withdrawals? Are there points in which they coincide, and points in which they differ?

At God's command, Saul left his post at Damascus, and retired to Arabia: **at His Command again**, he left his post at Jerusalem, and retired to Tarsus. At his **first withdrawal** from service, it would appear that he **conferred not with flesh and blood**; at his **second**, the **brethren had a hand** in constraining him to go. His **first retirement** would appear to have been more for **some edification** than anything else; his **second** would appear to have been due more to **pressure of external circumstances** than anything else. Yet the Lord was, in both, leading in His wondrous love and mercy, both Saul and the church of the first born, into all truth, for His own glory. We shall see, the Lord willing, that the Lord's hand was to be seen in the manner in which he was brought forth from his present retirement, in as wonderful a way as it was to be seen already in respect of his first. Truly, Saul could say of both, what David had said of his own life, long ago,

**"Unto me happily the lines
in pleasant places fell;
Yea, the inheritance I got
in beauty doth excel."** (Ps. xvi. 6)

THOUGHTS ON THE PSALMS

by Rev. Alex. McPherson

(continued from page 118)

PSALM ONE HUNDRED AND TWO

Verse 23. "He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days."

Having pinned his hopes for the future well being and continuity of the Church upon the eternity and faithfulness of its God, the stricken psalmist returns to his own sorrowful case. His journey through life had been checked by weakness, and it appeared now that his life was to be shortened. Many a one has

been faced with this situation, and it has often been a stringent test of faith and piety. It has revealed the measure of submission to God's will. It has stirred up to new fervency the spirit of prayer which had waned into formality and weakness. It has brought low those who had fallen into the habit of thinking that their presence and activities were indispensable. It has brought home to many a true believer how worldly he had been, and how unready to leave all things here and go to the better country.

Verse 24. "I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations."

His case was very bad, yet not so bad that he could not pray about it. So to prayer he goes and pleads that he may not be taken away so soon. We know so little of this man, of what may have depended, humanly speaking, on his life being prolonged. Although great in faith and spiritually ready to go to glory, he may, like Paul, have perceived reasons why it might be better for him to abide in the flesh. So, from the midst of his few, weak days on earth, he looks pleadingly to the eternal fulness of the Most High, the fountain of life.

Verse 25. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thy hands."

Whatever the answer to his prayer was to be, the psalmist left the petition at the throne of grace, and let his thoughts return finally to the subject which was dearer to him than life itself, the building of the Church of God. His thoughts of God as the eternal fountain of life and all energy lead him here to remember his great work of creation as that had a bearing on his care for the Church. Could not He who so easily made heaven and earth, build anew the fallen walls of Zion?

Verses 26, 27. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

No created thing is inherently durable. Divine power maintains it in being until the time comes for it to be dispensed with. That time will come. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The eternal God shall discard these things like some time-worn garment, whereas He, Himself shall never change. In like manner his power laid Jerusalem low, but the immutability of his gracious

purposes would ensure that not only would Zion be rebuilt, but when its usefulness had ended, the true Zion would continue to be built up forever, belonging as it does to that higher order of things described as the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Verse 28. "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

And so with the assurance afforded by faith the good man foresees a bright future for the Church of God. Those who serve Him will have children who will do the same. God will always have a serving seed who in their own day will put their hands obediently, believingly and cheerfully to the work of furthering the prosperity of Zion. God who alone builds up Jerusalem uses such as his agents and instruments and their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. Let us be pleading with Him to use our own children in that way, to teach them his law and declare it to their children that they all might inherit Zion and dwell there as those who love God's name.

POSADH AN ANAMA RI CRIOSD
Leis an Urr. Eidard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuinn bho t.d. 123)

3. Mar a tha Criosd a gabhail tlachd agus a deanamh aoibhneas 'n uair a tha anamaibh air m pòsadh Ris, mar sin air dhoibh a bhi air am pòsadh Ris, tha E gabhail tlachd agus a deanamh aoibhneas anns a phòsadh so gu bràth. Tha fir a pòsadh a leithid so na leithid siud, agus tha iad a deanamh aoibhneas anns an àm a tha làthair, ach cha mhair an t-aoibhneas. Tha e eadar-dhealaichte ri so a thaobh Chriosd, rinn E aoibhneas ann a bhi smuainteachadh air bho'n uile shiorruidheachd: tha E deanamh gàirdeachas ann am bith agus ann an crìochnachadh a nì so agus nì E gòirdeachas ann an crìochnachadh a' nì so ann a' neamh gu bràth. It firinn e, cha'n eil aoibhneas iomlan gus am bi am posadh iomlan; cha mho bhitheas aoibhneas aig crìoch gus a chrìoch sin, nì nach bì gu bràth, mar a nochdas sinn 'n a àite fein. Mar so chì sibh ann an tomhas beag cìod e crìdhe Chriosd, agus cia cho mòr 's a tha e air a shuidheachadh air a ghnothuch so, cho math ris cìod e ghné Fear-pòsda a th'ann, agus cìod e na nithean mòr a tha E deanamh air son a cheile uile. Agus a nis an deigh na h-uile nì, cìod a tha sibh ag ràdh? Am bheil sibh air son Chriosd na nach eil? An teid am pòsadh air adhart

eadar Esan agus bhur'n anamaibh-se na nach teid? Anam ciod e'm freagradh a dh'fheumas mi thoirt do mo Tighearn agus do mo Mhaighsteir a chuir mi dha t-iarruidh? Cha'n eil ach ùine ghoirid gus an gairm E araon thusa agus mise gu cùntas a thaobh na nithean so; agus feumaidh mise a ràdh, Tighearna, bha mi tàladh an anama ud dha t-ionnsuidh, chuir mi ìmpidh air a bhi air a phòsadh Riut; agus cho fad agus a bha mi comasach, nochd mi do mhaise, do shaoibhreas, do ghlòir dhà. Dh'fhosgail mi do chridhe dhà, nochd mi do gràdh, agus cho toileach 's a thà Thu air gu'm biodh e air a phòsadh Riut, le dochas gu'n deanadh còrdan biodh e air a phòsadh Riut, le neart uile dh'asluich mi air, e fein a thoirt suas ann an cùmhnanta pòsaidh Riutsa. Seadh, agus ciod a shruth bh'uaith sin? Tighearna, shaothraich mi gu diamhain, agus chaith mi mo neart gu a ràdh, Tighearna, shaothraich mi gu diamhain, agus chaith mi mo meart gu diamhain, oir chuir e'n suarachas e uile, agus cha bhiodh gnothuch aige, aon chuid Riutsa na ri do ghràdh! O na cuiribh mi gu bhi toirt seachad am freagradh muladach so; a roghainn air a so biodh agam aobhar a ràdh, "Feuch mise agus a chlann a thug Dia dhomh." Feuch bha'n t-anam so, agus an t-anam ud, agus iomadh anam air an cosnadh Dhuit-sa. Amen.

Caib. X. A tha seoladh anamaibh, agus a nochdadh dhoibh an rathad anns an urrain iad ruigheachd air a phòsadh mhilis agus bheannaichte so ri Iosa Criosd.

Pòsadh ri Criosd! Ciod e bu mhìlse? Ciod e b'ion-mhiannaichte? Agus co a thuigeas e fein, nach miannaicheadh e, air thoiseach air nì air bith a bheir an saoghal seachad? Cha'n eil fear-pòsda coltach ri Criosd, agus cha'n eil sonas coltach ri pòsadh Ris. Ach is i a cheisd, Cia mar a ruigeas sinn air a so? Gu fìrinneach, anam, tha'n obair mòr, agus 's e'n Spiorad Naomh a mhàinn a nì, agus is urrain, a bhi ceangal an snaim-pòsaidh eadar Criosd agus thusa; ach tha E'g oibreachadh ann an so, cho math ri cùisean eile, ann agus tre bhi cur am feum mheadhonan. Agus tha iomadh nì gu sònraichte mar fhiachabh ortsas, agus a dh'fheumas a bhi air an deanamh leatsa, ma's ruig thu gu bràth air eolas air a phòsadh bheannaichte so.

Am bu mhath leat a bhi air do phòsadh ri Criosd? Uime sin shaothraich a bhi mothachail gu domhain air cho tur dhealaichte 's a thà thu bh'uaith, mar a tha thì thaobh nàduir; agus mar an ceudna do thruaigh mhuladach a thaobh an dealachaidh so. 'S e mothachadh domhain air ar dealachadh ri Criosd, agus air ar truaigh do bhrìgh an dealachaidh so aon cheum math a dh'ionnsuidh aonaidh agus daimh pòsaidh Ris; agus, os eugmhais an aon, cha'n eil e coltach gu bràth gu'n ruig sinn air an aon eile. Deanamh saothir uime sin air son so.

I. Deanamh saothir gu bhì gu domhain mothachail air bhur dealachadh ri Criosd mar a tha sibh a thaobh nàduir. Gu nàdurra tha sinn uile 'n ar coigrich do Chriosd, 'n ar coigrich do aonadh pòsaidh agus co-chomunn Ris. Cha'n aithne dhuinn ciod a tha nì air bith dhe so a ciallachadh. Mar a bhà e thaobh 'n an Ephesianach, mar so thà e dha'r taobh-ne uile thaobh nàduir; bhà iad, agus thà sinne, "as eugmhais Chriosd, 'n ur coimhich do chomh-fhlàitheachd Israel, agus 'n 'ur coigrich do choimh-cheanglaibh a gheallaidh, as eugmhais dòchais, agus gun Dia anns an t-saoghal." Ephes. ii. 12. Agus cha'n e mhàinn as eugmhais, fad air falbh bh'uaith, mar a tha e leantuinn, rann 13. Faodaidh mì gu cìnnteach a ràdh ris gach duine agus bean ann an staid nàduir mar a tha Peadar ag ràdh ri Simon ann an cùis eile, "Cha'n eil agad cuid na crannchur 's a chùis so." Gnìomh. viii. 21. Cha'n aithne dhuit ciod a tha aonadh agus co-chomunn ris an Iosa mhilis so a ciallachadh. Seadh, cha'n e mhàinn sinn a bhì air ar dealachadh ri Criosd, ach, a bhà air sin, air ar lionadh le naimhdeas Dhà, agus làn de fhuath agus de sheasamh a mach 'n a aghaidh. Tha sinn, mar a tha mhuinntir a thà air an ainmeachadh ann an Lucas xix. 14, dha fhuathachadh agus a diùltadh gu'm biodh E rioghachadh thairis oirne. Gu nàdurra tha sinn ann an naimhdeas do Chriosd, agus dhà na h-uile nì is Leis; ann a' naimhdeas dhà Phearsa, dhà làthaireachd, dhà Spiorad, dhà rioghachd, dhà laghannan, agus dhà òrduighean, dhà ghràsan, dhà fhìreantachd, agus dhà gach nì eile a bhuineas Dhà. Tha a Phearsa tuilleadh 'us naomh air ar son, a làthaireachd tuilleadh 'us glan, a Spiorad ro-dhearbta, a rioghachd tuilleadh 'us spioradail, a lagh agus òrduighean tuilleadh 'us teann, a ghràs tuilleadh 'us soilleir, fhìreantachd tuilleadh agus calg-dhìreach an aghaidh na fein; agus mar sin tha fuath againn do na h-uile nì, agus naimhdeas againn do na h-uile nì, seadh, tha naimhdeas againn do dhearh shlighe na beatha agus na slàinte troimh-san." Thaobh an t-soisgeil is naimhdean iad," a deir an t-Abstol, Rom. xi. 28, nì a thà air a labhairt a thaobh na'n Iudhach, ach a tha fìor a thaobh nan uile mar a tha iad a thaobh nàduir. Bu mhath leinn a bhì beo ach cha'n ann tre Chriosd: Bu mhath leinn a bhì air 'ur tearnadh, ach cha'n ann tre Chriosd. Mar so gu nàdurra tha sinn uile dealaichte ri Criosd; agus cho àrd so tha ar dealachadh ag eirigh, nì a dh'fheumas sinn a bhì gu domhain mothachail air, ma's e agus gu faigh sinn gu bràth aonadh agus co-chomunn Ris ann an daimh pòsaidh: uime sin thugadh so cleachdadh dhuibh ann 'ur smuaintibh, gus am faigh sibh 'ur cridha a toiseachadh air sìleadh agus a taiseachadh thairis air.

LITERARY NOTICES

The Manifest Grace of God: This consists of six Papers read at the Puritan and Reformed Studies Conference, 1968. There are two interesting Papers dealing with Arminianism, one by Rev. John R. de Witt, B.A., and the other by Rev. J. I. Packer, D.Phil., which reveal that Arminianism is not just a simple heresy but an intricate system which is anti-Scriptural. This booklet extends to 95 pages, and may be had from **The Evangelical Magazine**, Providence House, 3 Speke Road, London, S.W. 11, price 5/-.

Westminster Standard Publications — A tract of 27 pages on the Establishment Principle, which concerned the Disruption fathers so deeply, is a useful guide into this subject. The subject in other words is, The Principle of the National Recognition of Religion. The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland holds to this Principle as Scriptural and fundamental relative to the Church of Christ. The other item sent us recently is a sermon by Rev. William MacLean, M.A., on "The good hope and the false hope". The price of these will be indicated on sending orders to Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand.

Katherina Von Bora: This is a booklet on the wife of the great Reformer, Martin Luther, comprising 64 pages, with excellent paper and type, with stiff glossy paper covers. Price 4/- and to be had from the following— Free Presbyterian Bookroom, Pitt Street, Glasgow; Mrs Tallach, Religious Bookroom, Dingwall, Ross-shire; Mrs A. MacLeod, The Haven, Ullapool, Ross-shire; The Religious Bookroom, Fort William; and The Religious Bookshop, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. The Church friend who has undertaken the useful task of issuing this most informative and interesting narrative, gleaned and abbreviated it faithfully from an old book originally written in German, but later translated into English. The story begins with Katherina's youth and life as a nun in Germany prior to the Reformation in its full manifestation. Her marriage to Luther is related and some of the trials they both met with especially from enemies of the truth. After Luther's death, we are told how friends cared for her and her children, and how she wrestled with God to provide for her. This booklet will make an excellent gift to the young, and certainly others also.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Church Unity Move Fails

The Church of England and the Methodist Church agreed to vote separately on first moves toward union between the two Churches. The size of the vote by each Church for this was

agreed upon as 75%. The Methodist Church's was 77% and the Anglican vote was only 69%. So that any action for unity has been dropped, at least for the time being. The Archbishop of Canterbury later lamented, as he would, that the Methodist Church was now the protagonist of Church unity and not his own Church. We wonder if the Methodists know of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Joint Preparatory Commission, set up to find ways by which these two bodies can come together. They should know when we know the facts regarding this Commission, which during the last two years has met in Italy and Malta. This is the Commission which has urged collaboration in the training of clergy, joint use of buildings, free exchange of preachers, which has already taken place in Scotland as well as England, and the drawing up of a liturgy which both could use. Into this 'net' the Archbishop of Canterbury endeavoured to draw the Methodists, who apparently were willing dupes. But a hard core of Anglicans who dislike non-Anglican orders, etc., decided against this. We understand that although the Methodist vote was for unity with the Anglicans, yet a considerable number of Methodists would have formed a continuing denomination of their own. Where in all this activity of an ecclesiastical nature is the concern for adherence to the truth of the Word of God handed down by Reformers and martyrs in England?

The Abortion Act

We do not intend to go into details involved in the freedom given to the medical profession by this evil Act presented to Parliament by a Liberal M.P. But from our reading of press reports, one thing is quite clear to us, that it is assisting a large number of persons, some of whom are very young, to cover their sin of fornication. This sin cannot be hidden from the omniscient God; and further, "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper". There is in all this, encouragement to ignore God and the claims of His divine law; but God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, so shall he also reap. In spite of 'pills' and 'operations', sin is sin and will bring its own consequences if not repented of. Finally, we would state that many members of the medical profession are strongly opposed to the freedom given by the Abortion Act.

Roman Catholic Priests and Marriage

There have been an extraordinary number of reports from all over the world, indicating a large and increasing demand by Romish priests that priests who desire to marry should be permitted by a change in the law of their Church. Such reports have come from America, Brazil, Switzerland, Holland and Rome.

For instance, "A study of 95 Roman Catholic seminaries has indicated that about half of the United States' future priests opposed Church law forbidding marriage for clergy". The Pope, who falsely claims to be the successor of the Apostle Peter, ignores the recorded fact in the Bible that the Apostle Peter was married. Paul, in writing to Timothy (2nd Epistle: chap. 4) says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . . Forbidding to marry . . .". When the great Reformer, Martin Luther, abandoned the Church of the Pope, he married. His wife, Katherina, did not impede, but graciously assisted her husband in his witness for Truth in difficult times for them both.

The Moon

The landing on the moon by American astronauts is now an accomplished and amazing fact. A highly significant result of the examination by scientists of the samples of moon 'dust' brought back by the astronauts is related thus:— "Scientists studying samples . . . have discovered that there are glass bubbles, tubes, veins and even areas of smooth glass coating on the lunar surface." Scientists have already expressed their views as to this discovery, and suggest that the high proportion of tiny glass marbles probably formed by the heat generated by meteorites crashing into the lunar surface. Although we claim no scientific knowledge, yet we prefer to think that the glass content of the lunar surface was part of the divine Creator's work when He created the moon to give light by night — reflected light from the Sun.

CHURCH NOTES

Synod Proceedings 1969

The Synod Proceedings for 1969 are now ready for sale and distribution. This annual Church publication contains an account of the Public Meetings of Synod of May 1969, including Synod resolutions, decisions and discussions. Also included, as formerly, are all the Reports of Church Standing Committees, and the Financial Statement in detail of the Church's finances for 1968. Price per copy 3/- and postage 8d. Copies can be had from Mr R. W. M. MacKenzie, C.A., 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness. Quantities will be sent to congregations as formerly. If congregations wish to alter the number of "Proceedings" required, this should be intimated to Mr R. W. M. Mackenzie at his address.

— Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk of Synod.

Church Hall Opened at Aberdeen

On Tuesday evening, 29th July, the small hall recently acquired

at Aberdeen was officially opened by the Moderator of the Northern Presbytery, Rev. A. MacPherson, who preached to a congregation of about 50 from the words spoken to Zerubbabel in Zechariah iv, verse 6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." This message, which brought such encouragement and hope to the small remnant of the Lord's people in the prophet's day, was applied by the speaker with fresh emphasis to the true church today, in similar conditions of weakness and distress. The clerk, Rev. A. F. MacKay, then spoke of the pleasure this new development in the history of the F.P. Church gave them all, in that the Church's witness had now been extended to Aberdeen. This was mainly due to the efforts of Dr James Tallach and his brother, Dr Cameron Tallach, sons of our late esteemed minister at Stornoway, Rev. J. A. Tallach, who as students organised and conducted the first F.P. service at Aberdeen.

The district of the east coast where Aberdeen lies offers little evidence of any strong attachment to the Gospel, and Aberdeen itself has never provided congenial soil where in the past the word of God has taken root. At the time of the Reformation of the 16th century the Aberdeen doctors resisted all attempts to establish the Reformed faith in their midst. Samuel Rutherford spoke of this place to which he had been banished for his opposition to episcopacy as a prison in the bleak city on the North Sea. A few stars shone for brief periods to relieve the surrounding gloom of Moderatism, such as Dr James Kidd at Gilconston Chapel and Rev. Gavin Perker at the Bon Accord Free Church. The Free Presbyterian Church was attracted to this part of the North as a result of post war conditions, especially the educational policy of the Government. The Education Minister refused demands for the building of new universities in Scotland to meet the increased flow of students who were confidently expected to enter our universities after the war, and insisted that by enlarging the existing universities at the four Scottish centres sufficient accommodation would be provided. The late Principal Taylor of Aberdeen University also supported this mistaken policy. Places in our universities became increasingly difficult to obtain, and students from our church families had to go to other university centres than those of their choice, such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, where we have settled ministers. At Aberdeen students of our church approached the Northern Presbytery for permission to arrange services in connection with the F.P. Church, which was readily granted, and for a time the families of the church in the city and the students met in a school room, but it became apparent that a settled place of worship of our own in a convenient locality was the only solution. After inspecting several

premises which were for sale, the small room which was at last chosen was purchased for £900. A loan for this amount was made available to the Presbytery by the Inverness Building Society. It is gratifying to be able to say, however, that the response from our church people to an appeal for aid in the F.P. Magazine was so generous and prompt that it was unnecessary to call for the loan. Sufficient funds came in almost to meet the purchase price, and the deficit of £100 was generously loaned interest free by a friend.

The result is that the small church hall at the official service was opened without the need of obtaining a loan and with no debt on the building itself. To meet the requirements of the planning authority of the city, however, extensive alterations were necessary which entailed additional expenditure of about £500, which is still required to meet the total cost. We have no doubt that the friends interested in Aberdeen throughout the church will continue their aid.

The new church hall is situated at the corner of Summerfield Terrace and Park Street, within easy distance of the main thoroughfares of Aberdeen, at the east end of Union Street, attractively furnished with accommodation to seat comfortably about 35, although the room was not unduly taxed to take the 50 who attended on the opening night. Here regular services will (D.V.) be held on Sabbath and weekday, in a settled centre where our people and, when the university opens, our students, may meet to worship God. It is an indication of the interest that the new hall has created in the neighbourhood that already about a dozen children have asked that a Sabbath School be opened. We know that our people will be glad to learn of the success of this venture, and we hope and pray that the cause at Aberdeen will flourish, now that a promising start has been made, and under the Lord's blessing the hall become the birth-place of many precious souls. We may conclude by saying in the words of the patriarch: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". — A.F.M.

Communions in Kames Congregation

We are asked by Kames Kirk Session to state that their May Communion date is changed to the **second** Sabbath of that month. Further, a second Communion is now to be held on the third Sabbath of October (D.V.).

Bracadale Church Appeal Fund

All contributions to above fund should be sent to Mr D. Y. MacKinnon, Struan, or Mr Donald Morrison, 4 Satran, Skye.

— Fraser MacDonald.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer

The Synod at its last meeting decided that Wednesday, 15th October, or Thursday, 16th October (D.V.) be set apart in the congregations of the Church as a day of humiliation and prayer in order to confess our guilt as a nation in our gross backsliding from the true worship and from the law of God and to seek the outpouring of God's Spirit upon our nation unto repentance.

— Robert R. Sinclair, Clerk of Synod.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DONATIONS

The General Treasurer, Mr Wm. D. Fraser, 20 Daleview Avenue, Kelvindale, Glasgow, W.2, acknowledges the following donations with sincere thanks:

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund — Anon., Inverness, £5; Friend, £17.5/-; Mrs Smith, Golspie, per R.W.M.M., £10.

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The Librarian thankfully acknowledges the following donations:

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Church Book Room — Anon., £1.3.4; Miss A. Macleod, Ness, £1.2.6.

Free Distribution Magazine Fund — Anon., 5/-.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:

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Greenock — For Church Interior Decorating — **Two Friends**, Greenock, £20; **Two Friends**, Tarbert, Harris, £5. per Rev. **L. MacLeod**; Friend, Greenock, £4.

Raasay — Anon., Northton, Harris, £1 for **Home Mission**; £1 for Foreign Mission; £1 for Congregational Fund ("A Righteous Man's Memorial"); A Lover of the Cause, Rev. Mr J. MacLean, Missionary, £1 for Communion Expenses.

Beauly Church Building Fund — M. Livingstone, Lochcarron, per Mrs Cameron Mackintosh, £2; Anon. Friend, per Rev. D. A. MacFarlane, £5; Miss Johnstone, W. Balblair, £1; Miss A.C., North Tolsta, £5; Tomatin Friend, £5; Friend, per Mr J. MacLennan, 10/-; Tomatin Friends, £12; F. Macdonald, Fearn, £1; R. W. H. K. Inverness, £5 (last two per Mr W. MacKenzie); Miss Gibb, Culbokie, £1; Miss Urquhart, £1 (last two per Mr A. MacLennan; Envelope in Collection Plate, £5.

Bracadale — Repairs Fund — 1st John, ch. 3 v. 18, £1; Friend, Skye, £20 (both per Mr D. MacAskill).

Uig — Stornoway Friend, £3 for Car Maintenance Fund, £2 for Communion Expenses; Stornoway Friend, £5 for Church Repairs (all per Rev. D. J. MacAskill).

Applecross — Sustentation Fund — Anon, £3; Friend, Applecross, £5 (both per C. Gillies).

Portree — Mr Donald Macdonald, 11 Martin Crescent, Portree, £1 for Sustentation Fund.

Inverness — Anon., £50 for Foreign Mission, £50 for Home Mission; Mrs I.M., Glenmoriston, £2 for Foreign Mission Fund.

Home of Rest — £100 from the estate of the late Miss E. Murray, Rogart; A London Friend, per Rev. A.F.M., £5; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £5; E. Morrison, Kinlochbervie, £2, per R.W.M.M.

Mr Wm. Mackenzie, 7 Crown Drive, Inverness, Treasurer of **Aberdeen Church Building Fund**, acknowledges with thanks — F. Macdonald, Fearn, £1; Glasgow Friend, £3; Alex. Forgie (8th donation), £30; **Two Friends**, Inverness, £5; Anon., per Rev. F. Tallach, £5; Mrs Macdonald, Vancouver, £5; A.N., Glasgow, £1; F.B. and I.B., Inverness, £2; "Who Knows", Fearn, £5; A.F.McD., Drumnadrochit, £2; Collection at Church Opening, £48.10/-; Anon., £300.