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Moderator's Message

The opening once more of another year in the kindness of divine providence provides an appropriate reason for reviewing the Lord's goodness to our Church in the past months, and for recalling grounds for confidence in facing the future.

Mention falls to be made first of all of the change in the conduct of the Church's Magazine which takes place with this present issue. In relinquishing the work of editor after 20 years of faithful unremitting service Rev. R. R. Sinclair, our highly respected minister at Wick, deservedly earns the gratitude of our people throughout the Church and of the host of friends he made through the pages of the Magazine. When he was appointed by the Synod to take over the Free Presbyterian Magazine, Mr Sinclair was faced with the difficult task of maintaining the traditions and upholding the high standards, set by his two eminent predecessors, who for long successive periods held with distinction the tenure of this office, and gained for the Church Magazine of a small denomination, such as ours, a highly respected place in the religious world. His worthy father, Rev. Jas. S. Sinclair, was perhaps the ideal editor, equipped with a richly furnished mind, fine judgment, and a graceful, flowing literary style. He was succeeded by Rev. D. Beaton, whose wide acquaintance with the history and literature of the Reformed Church and scholarly presentation of his views, were well known. Mr Sinclair, nevertheless, made his mark perhaps in what he made the outstanding feature of the Magazine, during his years as editor, in the comments on current affairs. Here he showed fine discrimination and expressed himself with conciseness and vigour. He placed his finger on the moral and religious pulse of the nation with remarkable accuracy and his remarks, always apt and necessary, were often reproduced in religious journals of other countries.

Mr Sinclair's waygoing is accompanied by the Church's sincere thanks for all that he was able to achieve in maintaining the wit-

ness of the Free Presbyterian Church in difficult times, expounding the doctrines of the Reformed Faith, and promoting vital godliness throughout the country. As Rev. D. B. MacLeod, our minister in London, takes over control of the Church's Magazine, we offer him our best wishes for success and the Lord's help in carrying on the work of his three predecessors.

The times in which we live make the Church's task very difficult. The present period of our nation's history may well be described in the Apostle's words as "perilous times". The spirit of pleasure-loving is prevalent in the life of our people as seen in the pursuit of gambling in all its forms, drunkenness and drug addiction, the mania for sport which weekly attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators, and the decline in moral standards, which have earned for us the name of the "permissive society". The outbreak of violence, instigated by a salacious literature and filthy radio and television programmes, has now overflowed into the public streets in noisy demonstrations and in ugly strike scenes at factory gates, ship yards and places of business. The rise of lawlessness has now reached the stage when the authority of the Government is being openly challenged. The increase of ungodliness in all ranks of society, and the prevalence of spurious religion are marked features of our national life. These are the signs which create profound uneasiness. The professing church has shown little evidence of possessing any wisdom in facing the moral and religious problems of our nation, but ignoring her duty of proclaiming the full doctrines of grace, pursues her way unperturbed, spending her strength and resources on the ecumenical mirage of one world wide Church. In these conditions of unsettlement and strife, the papal church is relentlessly engaged in destroying the Protestantism of the nation and recovering for the mediaeval hierarchy of Rome the ground lost at the time of the Reformation.

Our duty as a Church in the present time of deep-seated declension and ungodliness, therefore, is to hold fast the testimony handed down to us by the fathers of the Separation of 1893. The Protest and Separation which were so necessary 77 years ago are even more so today. We must never allow ourselves to become ashamed of mentioning the achievements of our worthy Church Fathers, or of re-stating, as though this were irrelevant history of the past, the cause of the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church, for the fruits of the Declaratory Act of 1892 are with us in the professing church in this country today. "Other men laboured and ye have entered into their labours". At great suffering and sacrifice to themselves such men as Rev. D. MacFarlane and Rev. D. MacDonald especially, for they parted with manses, congregations and salaries, later joined by other early leaders of our Church, bore the malice and persecution of their enemies in order

to secure a sound Gospel Church, in which we might worship God with a free conscience, and maintain a pure scriptural testimony in the midst of abounding declension. In doing so, they had particularly before them, the future generations of our people. We remember with what solemn feelings some of these noble men would give out to the congregation at public worship the first verses of Psalm 78, particularly the words:

His testimony and his law,
In Israel he did place,
And charged our father it to show
To their succeeding race.

We have inherited a responsible heritage, and we are called to hand down to our descendants, pure and unsullied, these same doctrines and practices we received from them. Better days, we believe, will yet return, but through this period "of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy", let us stand fast without wavering and without change, uninfluenced by the abounding back-sliding in doctrine and practice that surrounds us. This is a responsibility we dare not neglect. "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" — 2 Tim. 1, verse 14.

For the present, the work of the Gospel is steadily and faithfully being carried on throughout our Church by our ministers and office-bearers, some in more populous areas and others in lonely and obscure parts of the country. The eye of the Lord is upon every part of His vineyard, to keep it day and night lest any hurt it, and to protect His cause from bitter and hostile enemies. The Holy Spirit is today largely withdrawn from our nation because of our sins, and even in His general restraining grace, He is a stranger in the land. Communion seasons become in such a time precious to His people for they may confer with one another and strengthen each other's hands in the Lord. The great encouragement is, however, that the glorious doctrines of divine grace are fully and faithfully proclaimed on Sabbath and week-day, and for this blessing, as long as the Lord preserves peace and religious liberty to us in this land, we have great reason for thankfulness. For the future ministry of the Church, there is encouraging provision in a succession of well trained, god-fearing students, and the prospects are likewise heartening in the congregations overseas, where we have now settled ministers, in the mission field of Rhodesia, in Canada and New Zealand, as well as the scattered communities in the United States and Australia. For the coming year, therefore, we pray that the Lord may bless our Church at home and abroad, and establish her in the present grace in which she stands, and that He may hasten the glorious days when, as the

dim lamp which hung in the tabernacle broke through the frail covering which surrounded it and shone to the ends of the world, the light of the Lord's glory may cover the earth.

Thou Shalt Not Remember . . . (Deut. 8, 2.)

The journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness were intended to be instructive to them — and to us. At the end of the wilderness journey, but before they crossed Jordan to the promised land, we find Moses addressing them in these words: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee."

There was much connected with the wilderness journey, the remembrance of which was fitted to humble them and make them feel ashamed — their sins, their unbelief, their rebellion and obstinacy, and their unthankfulness. Their many backslidings in the wilderness were sore reminders to them of what they were in themselves and of what they would be if left to themselves.

Yet there were also considerations to encourage them as they recalled the Lord's dealings with them during their wilderness journey. They would be reminded of the patience and long-suffering of God with them over such a long period of time. They could recall the faithfulness of God to His promises. The sin and guilt was on their side; He was still the covenant-keeping God of Jacob. The memory of "that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water," but in which the Lord had so miraculously sustained and preserved them, would confirm to them that the wilderness was the Lord's appointed way for them, and was therefore the right way. (Ps. 107, 7.) They would remember, too, the daily manna intended to make them never forget that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

As we enter a new year we are reminded that we, too, are on a journey in the wilderness of this world. In the light of the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness, it ought to be our concern to know if the Lord is leading us as He led His people Israel of old. If the Lord is our God then He is assuredly leading us, for it is true of His people that "He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by springs of water shall He guide them." (Is. 49, 10.) He who found Israel in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness, also led him about, instructed him, kept him as the apple of His eye. (Deut. 32, 10.) He is the same God still. He will never leave nor forsake His people. But He will show them, as He showed Israel of old, what is in their hearts.

I would now ask — Is the Lord thus leading and instructing you? Are you seeing His hand in all His dealings with you? If

you are Christ's then this will be so. Are you not finding out daily the corruption, deadness and hardness of your own heart? Do you not find enough in yourself to humble you and make you ashamed? Are you not constantly in need of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of atonement? Are you not in some measure at least aware, and becoming more aware, of what the outcome would be if you were left to yourself? Are you not in utter despair as far as any hope in yourself is concerned, and are you not closed into Christ as your only hope for time and eternity? Is He not all your salvation and all your desire? Have you not to acknowledge much of the Lord's goodness, long-suffering and mercy in His dealings with your own soul? As you look back have you not to say "hitherto hath the Lord helped us"? Surely then at the outset of another year you have a song of praise upon your lips and in your heart to the One who has carried you thus far, saying with the psalmist:

I will sing to the Lord most high,
so long as I shall live;
And while I being have I shall
to my God praises give. (Ps. 104, 34. Met. Ver.).

You who read this, however, may still be living without God and without hope in the world, unconcerned as to the things of eternity and your interest in the Gospel of God's dear Son. To you the Lord says: "Consider your ways." Time is short; eternity is long. Beware lest the Avenger of blood overtake you while you are still out of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only refuge for poor, lost, guilty sinners. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plan; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." (Gen. 19, 17.) Flee to Christ to cover you. Let seeking Christ be your main pursuit. At the footstool of mercy and grace seek the life and salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Who can tell but the year 1970 will be the opening of an era of blessing and good to your soul?

May we all be enabled by divine grace to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith." (Heb. 12: 1, 2.) Only in this way shall we enjoy a happy new year and, what is ultimately of far more consequence, a blessed eternity.

The New Year

by Rev. James S. Sinclair

The New Year should be spent with reflection on the past. The devil and the flesh do their best to make men forget the past. Our

years pass away, and we hasten onwards towards eternity. The great adversary likes men to forget this, and cheers them up with the hope of many days to come. We also naturally shrink from thoughts of a near eternity, and drown such in the interests and pleasures of the moment. It becomes us, however, to consider how long we have lived in this world, and that every year is bringing us nearer and nearer eternity, an eternity either of happiness or woe. It is our duty, therefore, to reflect upon our past sins. The Word of God and true experience declare that we are transgressors even from the womb. Every year, therefore, adds a new instalment of countless sins to a former too large record. If we are still in an unregenerate condition all these sins are against us in the book of God's remembrance. Strange it is that they who, more than others, should seek for godly sorrow and repentance on a new year's day are the loudest in their shouts of laughter, mirth and frivolity. On the other hand, if we are among the true seekers after God, then it would be very comely on our part to consider our past sins, and seek the Spirit of God to convince us of their vileness and guilt that, by His grace, we might flee to the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The forgiveness of all our past sins would be a precious gift from heaven on a new year's day. It becomes us, also, to reflect upon our past mercies. The mercies of God have been showered upon us from our birth. We have been born in sin, but yet are not in hell. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." We have been born in a land where the Bible is to be found, and where the Gospel is preached. Many have had upbringing in Christian families. During the past we have had many privileges which, when contrasted with our deserts as sinners, might make us marvel at the boundless mercy and forbearance of a holy God. Some have tasted in truth that the Lord is gracious, and have got a faith's glimpse of Christ and the glorious redemption He purchased for sinners with His precious blood. Surely such, if any, should recount with adoring wonder and praise past mercies.

The New Year ought to be spent with reflection upon the present and future. What are our present needs? Some are concerned about temporal necessities, and no other. Let these straits be an occasion for approach to a throne of grace, so as to obtain pardon for sin, a new heart, and a saving interest in Christ, who has secured temporal as well as spiritual mercies for His people. It is a leading mark of the true people of God that they cry continually, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." They seek not only forgiveness for past sin, but also a clean heart. They seek after holiness of heart and life. It is by the Spirit's infusion of new grace into the soul time after time

that the believer is renewed in holiness and righteousness. The true believer also feels, as a present need, the necessity of a new sight of Christ in His glory and suitableness as a Saviour. It is this that makes the soul happy. It is this that makes the world and its vain pleasures sink out of sight. "Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." What should be our reflections for the future? If we are still in our sins we ought to consider that the messenger of death may come at any moment, and if death find us out of Christ then we shall be cast into never-ending misery. We ought to remember that "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." The future will bring new privileges and new responsibilities. How shall we meet these in a way glorifying to God if we are without Christ? Get a saving knowledge of Christ and your privileges will prove a blessing, and not a curse, and your responsibilities, while continuing the same, will yet be but a light burden, for Christ is willing to carry the burdens of those who put their trust in Him. Again, if we have reason to believe, that we were once brought as poor sinners to the feet of Christ, let us seek for the future that we live more a life of faith upon the Son of God, and strive after greater attainments in the life of grace than anything known in past experience. Verily, it is to be feared in these days that we are like the door upon its hinges, moving to and fro, but making no progress, the same today as yesterday, the same year after year. This ought not so to be. An outpouring of the Spirit of God is much needed, and everyone who has the least desire for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom in the souls of men should labour and pray for this issue.

It may be said, in the last place, that the New Year should be spent with reflections upon the state of the public cause of Christ. Scotland in the past has been the scene of "years of the right hand of the Most High," years in which the glory of the Lord shone forth in the conversion of sinners and in the edification of His true people. The Lord was pleased to raise up many noble witnesses for Himself who were the ornament and strength of society. During recent years He has removed the greater number of these fathers and mothers in Israel to the Church triumphant. Truly, the land mourneth and the vine languisheth. Many parts of the country where there were clusters of trees of righteousness are now bare and desolate. The stillness of death reigns where the voice of melody and health was wont to be heard. People talk of advancement in these days! If there is advancement it is largely

the advancement of the tide of spiritual death, profanity, and atheism. Dangerous errors in doctrine and practice have flowed into the professing Church to a greater extent than in any previous age. The Word of God, as far as many are concerned, has been torn from their hands and cast in tatters upon the downward stream by the very men who should have esteemed it as the most precious earthly treasure. The prospect for the future is, therefore, truly dark for the generation. Many call light darkness, and darkness light, and so delude themselves to their everlasting shame. It becomes us, at the present season, to mourn this state of things, and to seek for the returning power and presence of Jehovah to our land.

In conclusion, we desire to say that however gross the darkness that prevails, and however strong the tide of error that surges on many hands, let us not forget, in view of another year, that the Lord who sits on high is more of might by far than all the billows of sin and wickedness. He will make all things redound to His own glory. He will not lose one of His elect people. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," saith Christ. His purposes shall stand fast for ever. Difficulties may arise, and difficulties have arisen that give occasion to enemies even to mock us as a Church, who profess to maintain a pure testimony for Christ. We have reason to mourn for our sins that such an occasion should have existed. But let there not be discouragement. The Lord is able to make darkness light before us and crooked things straight. May He do so to the praise of His glorious grace!

Notes of a Sermon

by Rev. D. M. Macleod, Auckland, New Zealand

Text: "Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (He is the God,) which is in Jerusalem." Ezra 1, v. 1-3.)

In 2nd Chronicles, chapter 36, an account is given of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The house

of God was burnt with fire, old and young were slain and the land was left desolate. All this had come upon them for their sins. They had departed from the Lord, the fountain of living water, and they had hewn out for themselves broken cisterns which could hold no water. Their wickedness is clearly revealed in the words: "Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place; But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets . . ." Jeremiah was one of the Lord's messengers, a faithful prophet whom the Lord had sent to them with His own precious Word. It is painfully evident that they hated him and they hated the Word which he declared to them. While God had a controversy with His people, and sin cannot be unpunished, yet the prophets were commissioned to make known that God had a purpose of mercy towards His people. "For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good Word toward you, in causing you to return to this place . . . Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you."

In endeavouring to consider the words before us, we would, as enabled, notice the following:—

- (1) The Word of the Lord.
- (2) The fulfilling of the Word of the Lord.
- (3) The Proclamation made.

(1) The Word of the Lord.

The Psalmist speaks of the great and precious privileges which Israel enjoyed, and which distinguished her from other nations. Among the inestimable blessings which God bestowed upon His people was the giving of His Word. "He showeth His Word unto Jacob, His statutes and His judgments unto Israel." (Psalm 147, v. 19.) In the verse before us we find that the Lord had given His Word to Jeremiah, and the prophet received that Word to declare it to the people. The Word which he published "by mouth" was the Word of the living God, as the Word which he wrote was the inspired Word of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." (2 Timothy 3, v. 16.) It is therefore necessary for us to consider that the Word which he declared was the Word of One Who is unchangeable. He is a God of Truth and He cannot deny Himself. His Word cannot fall to the ground. Every jot and tittle

must be fulfilled because God is faithful to Himself and to His Covenant. What God has spoken must be fulfilled, for His counsel shall stand and He shall do all His pleasure. God Who cannot lie has given great and precious promises to His people and these are found written in His Word. He has made Himself known as a "just God and Saviour", and therefore as One Who "will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him." It is impossible that His Word would fail or that He would alter what proceeds from His mouth. Although the powers of darkness seek the overthrow of the gracious purposes of God, they must utterly fail because the blessed Redeemer, as God's King "must reign until all His enemies are made His footstool." The Word of the Lord therefore must stand, and the purposes of His heart must be accomplished. Nothing can frustrate His designs, and how encouraging to the people of God it is, that His sovereign dominion in fulfilling these, is emphasised in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The Lord reveals in His Word that He exercises Himself towards sinners in a most holy and righteous way. His Word therefore will be fulfilled, either in mercy or in judgment towards all the children of men. None can say unto Him, What doest Thou? How clearly we find in His Word that He exercises His love and mercy towards some, while He visits others with His wrath on account of their sins. As in the case before us, Jeremiah received the Word of the Lord and he made known to his fellow sinners the mind and will of God. He knew the Truth and while he could not see the fulfilment of the Word of the Lord in every detail, yet he believed that the Truth would be fulfilled in God's time and way. We are to bear in mind that the principles of God's government are always the same. What is written in the Word is for our learning, and now, as always, "It shall be well with the righteous, and it shall be ill with the wicked". What we have, then, in the Bible, is the Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit of God and therefore, infallible and inerrant. If it were the word of a creature however exalted, we might feel that we could afford to ignore it, but when it is the Word of God then it is binding upon all, and if we ignore it we must suffer the consequences. God is not mocked and it is by His Word that we shall be judged at the Last Day. Sinners do ignore the Word of God. They treat it with the utmost contempt and despise the threatenings and the promises contained therein. They trample upon His Law and they despise the Gospel. Their treatment of the Word of God reveals the natural depravity of the human heart, and can in no way affect the reality of the things threatened or of the things promised. We have a clear case of man's rebellion and sin in Zedekiah's refusal to obey the Word of God. "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah speaking from

the mouth of the Lord." He hardened his heart and he stiffened his neck and refused to turn to the Lord. "The wicked shall be turned into hell" for "the wages of sin is death."

How are we affected by the Word of God? Are we too, hardening our hearts? Do we refuse to return unto the Lord? Do we feel that there are occasions when we are free to disobey the Word of God? Do we argue in this way, "Is it not a small matter? Can I not be excused in complying with the world to this extent? Why should I be bound continually by the Word of God, so that my secret faults and my presumptuous sins are brought into judgment? Why should I not be allowed a little licence to indulge in certain sins?" The Word of God does not allow the least departure from the ways of God. "Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come," because every sin is a violation of God's Law which is "just and holy and good". To us the Lord says, "If ye love Me keep My commandments." His commandments are not grievous. "Great peace have they who love Thy Law." There is a reward for those who by grace seek to give loving obedience to the Word of God. Such seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit in the Truth and thus to walk according to the principles of the Word of God. The Lord's people are painfully aware of a warfare in their souls and on that account often have the cry of the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death." How precious in their experience it is to be enabled by grace to say also, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The people of God will be chastised for their sins, but how awful must be the portion of those who go on in sin and are to be punished for their sins in hell for ever.

It was true with regard to the people addressed by Jeremiah that while they rejected the Word of God which he proclaimed, and abused him for his faithfulness, they accepted false teachers. Those who misinterpreted the Word of God and who deceived them were highly esteemed by them. What words can express the solemnity of their position! The false prophets brought forward their own opinions and views and wickedly misrepresented the Truth. Is it not all too plain that in our day also there are those who profess to be the ministers of Christ, who show clearly by their deceitful handling of the Word of God that they are in fact the servants of Satan. We should therefore be on our guard against those who misrepresent the Word of God. We must assuredly err if we misinterpret or misapply the Scriptures. Some of you no doubt meet with those who in their false zeal will endeavour to show that certain mistranslations and archaisms occur in the Bible which you have, and desire you to use a 'more superior and trustworthy translation'. They are all too ready to introduce you to

their "Bible". We can assure you that, in the estimation of those most competent to judge, the Authorised Version is the most pure rendering of the Word of God in the English Language — "translated out of the original tongues." Let us seek to be thankful to the Lord for this precious Word of His, and be ready to support those who endeavour to spread the Word of God. That is why we, as a Church, support the Trinitarian Bible Society which publishes the Authorised Version, and only the A.V. of the Scripture in the English language. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me."

(2) The Fulfilling of the Word of the Lord

We have already referred to the truth that the Word of God cannot fall to the ground — that His Word cannot pass away without being fulfilled. "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever" and "He hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass." All that He fulfils in time He purposed to do from eternity. As He rules over all He has the power to accomplish what is according to His mind and will. Nothing can possibly occur to render null and void what He, in His infinite wisdom, has devised. The fulfilling of the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah was of the Lord and for the glory of His great Name. "His Name alone is excellent". He fulfils His Word according to His sovereign will and pleasure. God is altogether free and therefore the fulfilling of His Word does not depend upon any of His creatures. Men in their folly imagine that they are wiser than God and would dictate to Him. They think that God should act in ways which would be pleasing to them and that would gratify their carnal inclinations, but He is to be glorified in all His works and He acts according to the good pleasure of His will. All the records which we have in the Scriptures, of providence and grace, are the manifestations of God's fulfilling His eternal purposes. It is He who raised one up and cast another down. He raised the "the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people," and He it was Who poured contempt upon princes.

In the inscrutable providence of God, Cyrus was chosen to be an instrument in fulfilling the Word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah. The Lord stirred up the spirit of this king of Persia so that he made a certain proclamation at a definite time when that which the prophet predicted was to be fulfilled. We have the precise time given, "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia." It could not be otherwise. The hour had struck, the day of deliverance had come, the time which the Lord had set. Have we not this most solemnly revealed by the Son of God that a time had been

fixed, an hour appointed in the divine decree, when He should die and when He should be glorified? "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." That Cyrus before he was born was chosen by God to be an instrument in fulfilling His will can be seen in the prophecies of Isaiah. The sovereignty of God is surely evident in the choice which He made, and it is true to say that He is free to use instruments and He is free to dispense with instruments in accomplishing His will. This teaches us that His "judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?" We should also learn to be humble before the Lord and seek grace to be submissive to His sovereign will in all things. How great is our need that Christ as the King of His Church would subdue our wills!

The Word of God shows how the Lord can use the most insignificant instruments to fulfil His pleasure. Locusts were used to plague Egypt! He also uses the elements to fulfil His Word. "The winds and the waves obey Him." However insignificant or however powerful the instruments may appear, it is for us to consider the hand of the Lord in it all. In order that the Word of the Lord would be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia. "This was the doing of the Lord." It did not happen by chance. It was ordained by God and consequently we find that this heathen monarch submits to God's authority. He actually performs the duty which was required of him. Again we come to observe in connection with the death of Christ that wicked men were instrumental in fulfilling the purpose of God, as we read, "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." While they were fulfilling the Scriptures, yet it is clear that they were guilty before God of killing the Prince of Life. May we be found fleeing to Him for mercy and for forgiveness.

(3) The Proclamation

We would notice in connection with this proclamation that the Lord was graciously pleased to use it in the fulfilment of His Word. Cyrus made the proclamation and also put it in writing. It was to stand. You remember that such documents were usually sealed, and the decrees of the Medes and Persians altered not. The thing was settled as far as they were concerned and no authority could interfere with their decree! The Lord, of course, to show that He ruled in the affairs of men, often overthrew their proud decrees. This, however, is a remarkable proclamation. It is remarkable in many ways. How wonderful that such a proclamation should be

made at such a time and by the king of Persia! Are not the words used so altogether suitable for such an occasion? Are they not words which are fitted to convey to those for whom they are intended an impression of their great importance? Was it not a declaration of liberty to the captives? Did it not tell of the goodness of God? Was there not in this a gracious intimation for those who loved God and who thought upon His Name that He was the Covenant keeping God? Could they not discern in this remarkable providence that "faithful is He who has promised Who also will do it?" Again, behind it and through it could they not see the Lord "Who will not chide continually nor keep His anger still"?

Cyrus was bound to obey, and in a wonderful way he acknowledges God in His providence. The Lord had given him the kingdoms over which he ruled, and he was answerable to God for the exercise of that power which God had given him. "The powers that be are ordained of God". When we think of the state of the world today, it is all too apparent that the authority of God is not acknowledged. The Lordship of Christ over the nations is not recognised. His Name is every day blasphemed.

Cyrus further acknowledges that the Lord, even Jehovah, Israel's own God, had **charged** him to build an house for Him at Jerusalem — the place where He had put His Name — and the Lord would choose Jerusalem again. The king of Persia does not quarrel with what the Lord required of him.

We go on to notice that this proclamation was made in such a way that the people of Judah, who were in Babylon, would hear it. It was publicly proclaimed, and the people whom it concerned were identified as, **the Lord's people**. They were a people apart — separate from others. This certainly applies to the true Israel of God. They are in the world but not of it. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord". To the people of God was this word sent. Wherever their lot was cast, whatever their form of occupation, whatever may have been their attainments or lack of them, this proclamation in a very special way affected them most intimately, most personally. The Lord was fulfilling His Word and they were now being addressed in the holy and wise providence of God, the God of their fathers, about things of the utmost importance and concern. Jeremiah had spoken in the Name of the Lord concerning repentance and concerning restoration. Had not they heard that the Lord would yet cause the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose? Was not this the time which the Lord had set? The words were plain, "Who is there among you of all His people?" Where are the Lord's people? Who is on the Lord's side? We can see that while it is addressed to "all His people" that it is also very personal. Some might say that it was

not time for the house of the Lord to be built, and others might have other reasons for not answering the call which they heard, but it was not for one to say, "And what shall this man do?" Rather were they called upon to follow the Lord.

With regard to ourselves, where do we stand? Are we on the Lord's side? Have we been born again? Do we seek the prosperity of Sion? Do we desire that the Cause of the Lord would be built up in this place? That there would be added to the church such as would shine as lights in the world to the praise of Christ.

Cyrus not only mentions this peculiar people whom God chose as His own, and for whom God had done so much in days past and Who was doing wonders for them still, but he desires that the Lord who is their God, would be with them now. That the people of God have been blessed by the Lord and greatly blessed cannot be denied. It is true, however, that the people of God are a poor and needy people and they are conscious of their need of the Lord's blessing day by day. Not only do they desire the blessing of forgiveness of sins but they desire the blessing of the Lord to enrich them with His gracious presence, His guidance and His keeping. We need to pray that the Lord Himself would go before us and that He would keep us from evil in this dark and cloudy day.

They were to go up to Jerusalem to build the house of God. That was indeed a great and honourable work, but they were to proceed in a spirit of true humility and dependence upon the Lord. They were to engage in the Lord's service as those who were set free to serve the Lord. They were to honour the Lord by serving Him in sincerity and in truth — as to the Lord and not to man. We do find that they went up according to the Word of the Lord and although they met with great opposition, still the Lord favoured them, and the day came when the temple was built and the Name of the Lord was magnified.

We too are required to serve the Lord and seek His glory. We should seek to maintain the cause of Truth in our midst, and should seek to have this zeal which others had for the glory of God, and prayerfully to do what the Lord requires, not grudgingly, nor of necessity, but cheerfully, as to the Lord and not to men, seeking the glory of His Name and the everlasting good of never-dying souls and the destruction of the powers of darkness. Have we that spirit today, that God's Name would be glorified, His cause built up and sinners added to the Church, Christ having in all things the pre-eminence, for the government is upon His shoulders and **He must reign** until all His enemies are made His footstool.

Doctrines of the Christian Faith

by Rev. Donald MacLean, Glasgow

I. The Idea of Theological Science

In writing a series of articles on the doctrines of Christianity, it will be useful to give a preliminary survey of the general idea of Theological Science.

The word "Theology" is a compound of two Greek words which means "a discourse concerning God". Theology is concerned, therefore, with discovering and setting forth all that can be known of God and, as the subject matter transcends all other forms of knowledge as the heavens are above the earth, theology has sometimes been termed the "Queen of the Sciences". It is a matter of great regret that the development of theology in modern times has led to the loss of this crown in the world of learning, while among ordinary people, the subject has been regarded with distaste as either irrelevant to their lives and prospects or without a solid foundation for its credibility.

The development referred to may be briefly summed up by saying that instead of God in His existence and activities being the subject matter of theology, the emphasis shifted to the consideration of the religious phenomenon manifested by humanity at large, or observable in the souls of believers. Dogmas were no longer authoritative statements made about God, but conceptions of religious experiences felt by men and set forth as formal statements. As, therefore, the shifting sands of religious consciousness became the material for theological study, the science lost its scope and authority, its teachings became uncertain, and its glory and beauty departed.

Wherever the true Church of Christ is to be found, theology will continue to have its proper place and function. Like every other science, it divides itself up naturally and usefully into its various sections or disciplines, having in view a full-orbed presentation of the subject matter, which is the knowledge of God.

The first discipline is called **Apologetics**, which prepares the way for all theology by dealing with the presuppositions upon which true theology is based — that there is a God, that man has a religious nature, that God has revealed Himself, and that such a revelation is contained in the Scriptures. Apology is not the same thing. Apology means the defence of a particular part of Christianity against attack from those outside the Church. As indicated above, the sweep of Apologetics is much broader and leads to the Scriptures being placed in our hands for our reverent study.

Exegetical Theology is the discipline which takes the Scriptures and investigates their meaning. This involves the study of the Scriptures in the original tongues to discover their meaning and interpretation. In this way a body of truth is built up, and the gradual development of revealed truth traced through different biblical writers and stages.

Historical Theology embraces a new sphere of study. It investigates the progressive realisation of Christianity in the lives, worship and thoughts of men, and gives a history of Christianity. This history includes the attempts made in Christian worship and creed-making by men in the past, and points to the value as well as to the failures of such attempts.

Systematic Theology is concerned with setting forth in a systematic way what is known of God. It gathers up into one the knowledge found in the Scriptures given to it by Apologetics, having its meaning and interpretation expounded by the exegete, while being warned and encouraged by the historian. Systematics stands thus at the apex of the mountain from which it has a good vantage point to survey the whole landscape of revealed truth and place it in scientific form.

Practical or Pastoral Theology deals with the application of the truths set forth by Systematic Theology in the lives of men, and their existence together in the Church of God.

In some circles there is an outcry against theology and a loud call to get back to what are called the "simplicities" of the Bible. Despite its claim to spirituality, this idea is both unspiritual and unintelligent. In discarding the wisdom of the past, it chooses to ignore the labours of eminent men raised up by God for the very purpose of expounding divine Truth which forms the basis for the abiding faith of the living Church of God. It is true that modern theology, being so largely dependent on various modern philosophies and critical techniques, makes difficult reading. This is due to the widespread forsaking of biblical categories. If a firm hold is kept of Scripture, there is no need to be darkening counsel in this way. Of the Divine Redeemer whose thoughts are a great deep we read that "the common people heard him gladly".

Since theology deals with the things of God, it is essential that the theologian be spiritually enlightened by the Spirit of God. No gifts of any other description can make up for this fundamental lack. The unregenerate man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. Indeed, they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. When therefore such a man enters the realm of theology and proceeds to write on these subjects, nothing can be expected but the fruits

of spiritual darkness. On the other hand, one whose eyes have been anointed with the divine eye-salve sees, appreciates and loves the truths of Jehovah and writes about them with energy and affection.

"How sweet unto my taste, O Lord
are all thy words of truth!

Yea, I do find them sweeter far
than honey to my mouth."

(Ps. 119 : 103.)

Posadh an Anama ri Crìosd

Leis an Urr. Eideard Pearce (A.D. 1672)

(Air a leantuin bho t.d. 243)

3. 'S e th'ann a bhi deanamh dìmeas agus a diùltadh Chrìosd, ach peachadh an aghaidh àithne anns am bheil uile àitheantan Dhé air an gabhail a stigh; mar sin ann am briseadh an aon so, tha sinn a briseadh a h-uile àithne; agus o cia cho mòr 's dh'fheumas am peachadh so a bhi! Tha bhi gabhail ri Crìosd a gabhail a stigh ann a h-uile nì a tha Dia ag àithne agus ag iarraidh oirne. Is e so àithne-san air a leithid de dhòigh agus a bhi toirt ùmhlachd dhith, tha sinn a toirt ùmhlachd Dha àitheantan uile; agus ann a bhi toirt eas-ùmhlachd dhith gu'm bheil sinn a toirt eas-ùmhlachd dhoibh uile: agus mar sin tha E dha mheas. Tha so soilleir bho Eoin vi. 28, 29. "Cìod a nì sinn," tha iad ag ràdh, "chùm as gu'n oibrich sinn oibre Dhé?" Tha Crìosd ag ràdh, "Is i so oibre Dhé, gu'n creid sibh anns an tì a chuir e uaith." Thugaibh fa'n ear, tha iad a labhairt mu "oibrich" mur mu mhòran: bu mhaith leo fios a bhi aca cìod iad na h-oibrich so uile a bha Dia ag iarraidh, agus cìod e farsuinneachd agus leud no h-àithne, agus tha Crìosd 'n a fhreagairt, dha'n toirt uile gu aon, agus 's e sin creidimh, leis am bheil E nochdadh, mar a tha'n a h-uile nì diamhain as eugmhais creidimh, mar sin 's e creidimh na h-uile nì a tha Dia ag iarraidh. "'S e oibrich Dhé," tha E'g ràdh; mar gu'n abradh E, So e uile ann an aon; a bhi annam-sa agus a gabhail rium, tha sin a gabhail a stigh na h-uile. Agus a reir sin, a luchd mo ghràidh, 's e th'ann a bhi diùltadh a thròcair agus a ghràidh, a bhi briseadh na h-uile a dh'aon bheum, agus a bhi treigsinn na h-uile còmhnaidh; 's e th'ann a bhi deanamh ceannairc an aghaidh, agus a dòrtadh tarcuis air uile inntinn agus toil Dhé còmhlaidh, agus an an suspainn a bhi diùltadh gach dleasdanas agus ùmhlachd Dhá. Freagarach dha so tha nì a labhair duine ionnsuichte air an earrann sin, Eoin xvi. 8, 9. "Tha Crìosd ann an so," tha e'g ràdh, "a gairm eas-creidimh na pheacadh a muigh 's a mach do-bhr/gh gu'm bheil am sin a

gabhadh a stigh am gach uile pheacadh. Oh cia mor am peacadh uime sin a dh'fheumas a bhi ann an so !

4. Tha bhi deanamh dimeas Air agus a bhi diùltadh Chrìosd na pheacadh an aghaidh àithne anns am bheil mòran gràidh. Tha gràdh ann an uile àitheantan Dhé; tha iad air an deilbh Leis air son ar maith, mar a tha'n a Sgrìobtur an ag innse dhuinn; ach gu h-àraidh an àithne so Aige, gu'n gabhadh-mid agus gu'n greimicheadh-mid r'a Mhac. Oir ciod a tha 's an àithne so ach àithne dhuinn a bhi air 'ur tearnadh, àithne dhuinn a bhi sona? Ciod a tha'n so, ach àithne dhuinn a bhi beo gu bràth, agus a bhi gu sìorruidh air ar beannachadh gu bràth Ann agus Leis Fein? Agus oh! cia mòr am peacadh a dh'fheumas a bhi ann am briseadh a leithid sin a dh'àithne! An d'àithne Dia dhuinn nì cruaidh agus duilich, nì a bhodh ag oibreachadh a chùim ar cron, agus cha'n ann a chùim ar maith, bu nì air choireigin sin; ach 'n uair a tha E'g àithne dhuinn nì a bhiodh a chùim ar sonais, agus a bhi sona anns an dòigh is fearr, o cia mòr am peacadh a dh'fheumas a bhi ann a bhi briseadh a leithid sin a dh'àithne!

2. Thugaibh fa'n ear, is e peacadh mòr a th'ann a bhi deanamh dimeas agus a bhi dìrltadh Chrìosd, n a tha ann an dòigh shònraichte a toirt eas-urram Dhà, agus a dòrtadh tarcuis Air, agus uime sin tha e'n a pheacadh mòr. Mar is motha an tarcuis a tha peacadh air bith a dòrtadh air Chrìosd, is ann is motha am peacadh sin. Nis, ciod e'm peacadh is motha tha toirt eas-urram do Chrìosd, na a dòrtadh an tarcuis is motha Air, na bhì deanamh dimeas Air agus dha dhiùltadh 'n uair a tha E dha thairgse Fein, a deanamh? 'S e so am peacadh a tha toirt a chrùn bha'r ceann Chrìosd, agus dha thilgeadh anns an duslach. Tha e, anns gach dòigh, agus anns a h-uile seadh, a tilgeadh tarcuis mhòr Air.

(1) Tha'm peacadh so a masluchadh agus a tilgeadh tarcuis air Pearsa Chrìosd. The Pearsa Chrìosd gu neo-chriochnach maiseach, agus a reir sin, feumaidh a bhi masluchadh agus a bhi deanamh tarcuis air a Phearsa, a bhi'n a pheacadh mòr, agus a bhi tarruing cionta mòr; agus tha bhi dha dhiùltadh a deanamh so; nì a tha air ainmeachadh mar a bhi a saltairt fodh'n a casan Mac Dhé, nì a tha dearbhadh an tarcuis is motha is urrain a bhi air a smuainteachadh, Eabh. x, 29. Tha h-uile diùltadh air Chrìosd a giùlain na cainte sin ann: "Cha'n eil sgeimh na grinneas aige, gu'n amhairceamaid air; nì motha tha maise aige, gu'n iarramaid e." Isaiah lii, 2. Tha e'n a chuspar anns nach eil luach air bith, na nì air son a' miannaicheadh sinn E. O ciod e'n tarcuis a tha'n so a bhi air a thilgeadh air Chrìosd! Agus cia cho mòr 's tha e toirt eas-urram Dhà!!

(2) Tha'm peacadh so a deanamh tarcuis agus a dòrtadh tàmailt air obair, dreuchd, agus gabhail os laimh Chrìosd mar Eadar-mheadhonair, air gach nì a rinn agus a dh'fhuiling E; le uile

shaoibhreas a ghràis agus a ghràidh a bha air fhoillseachadh annta. Do bhrìgh sin tha e air ainmeachadh, mar a bhi saltairt Mhic Dhé fòdh'r casan, mar a bhi meas fhuil mar nì cumanta agus mì-naomh, nì gu'n luach, gu'n fheum, gu'n bhrìgh, gu'n oirdheirceas, Eabh. x, 29. Is nì mòr, a mhuinntir mo ghràidh, a bhi ann an obair agus gabhail os laimh Chrìosd, mar ar 'n eadar-mheadhonair; agus 's mòr a bha na nithean araon a rinn E agus a dh'fhuiling E ann a bhi crìochnachadh agus a gabhail os laimh na h-obair sin; is mòr, mar an ceudna, a bha a ghràs agus a ghràdh dhuinn uile, agus a reir sin, feumaidh gur mòr ar peacadh agus ar cionta, ann a bhi dòrtadh tarcuis Air, nì a tha sinn a deanamh le bhi dha dhiùltadh. Le so tha sinn a dòrtadh tarcuis air a ghnìomharan uile, agus a dhreuchdan uile, mar Eadar-mheadhonair, air uile eufachdan, agus na h-uile nì a choisinn E, air uile ghràs agus a ghràdh ann a bhi dòrtadh fhala agus a bàsachadh air an son. Tha sinn le so ag ràdh nach eil aon chuid Chrìosd na nì air bith a cheannaich E, airidh air gabhail Ris na greim a dheanamh Air. Gu'm b'fhearr leinn nach d'fhuair E bàs riamh, nach d'thàinig E riamh gu bhi 'n a Eadar-mheadhonair eadar Dia agus sinne, gu'n do chum E fhuil aige Fein, agus cha d'thoir sinn taing Dhà air son a dòrtadh; nach eil feum againn air-san na nì air bith a bhuinneas Dhà. Le so tha sinn ag ràdh, ann an suspainn, nach eil anns an t-soisgeul uile ach mealladh, breug, agus faonais; Gur e Maighstear cruaidh a th'ann an Chrìosd, agus gu'm bheil E riaghladh gu geur-theann; gu'm bheil slàinte 'n a nì air bheag luach, agus mar sin air adhart. O cìod e'n tarcuis gràineil a tha'n so air Chrìosd!

Tha'm peacadh so gu soilleir a deanamh roghainn do ana-miann bochd, iosal, salach, air thoiseach air Chrìosd agus uile shaoibh-reasan agus ionmhasan. Agus oh! cìod e'n tarcuis Air a tha'n so! Ca'r son a tha daoine a diùltadh Chrìosd agus tairgseachan a ghràidh? Is cinnteach gur ann air sgàth, agus air son gràidh do ana-miann air choireiginn, aon, ana-miann na feola, ana-miann na sùla, na uamhar na beatha; agus ma's ann air son sin, an sin le bhi dha dhiùltadh, tha iad da-rìreadh a roghnachadh an ana-miann sin air thoiseach Air, agus uile ionmhasan a ghràis agus a ghràidh. Agus mar sin da-rìreadh chì thù ann a'Mata xxii, 1-7, mar a tha e mar an ceudna ann an Lùcas xiv, 18-29, far am bheil Chrìosd dha thairgse Fein maille ri uile ionmhasan do pheacaich bhochd, a tha fathasd a cur an suarachas agus a diùltadh arson Esan agus a mhaitheasan. Agus c'ar son? tha fearann aig aon, tha malairt aig aon eile; agus aig na h-uile tha cùraman feolmhor r'a chuimhneachadh. 'S e suim na h-uile, tha ana-miann aca r'a shàsachadh; agus uime sin feumaidh Chrìosd agus uile ionmhasan a ghràidh a bhi air an diùltadh. Le bhi diùltadh Chrìosd, tha sinn cho maith ri bhi'g ràdh, gu'm bheil barrachd maith, barrachd

millseachd, barrachd sonais ann an ana-miann, ann am beagan sòlais agus buannachd fheolmhor shaoghalta na tha ann an Criosd agus na h-uile nì is Leis.

(R'a leantuinn.)

New Year Message to Friends Overseas

We are passing another milestone on life's journey as we enter 1970. May it be made a year with many tokens of the Lord's favour in providence and in grace to you all.

The Lord's Cause is much despised in all lands, but we pray the Lord to arise and give prosperity to Zion. Thus will Zion's children be joyful in their King. (Psalm 102, 13-17.)

Many of you may not be able to attend the public means of grace but you have the private means of grace, such as the infallible Word of God, and a praying spirit should be sought for a blessing on it. The increasing circulation of the Authorised Version of the Scriptures in many lands by the Trinitarian Bible Society, London, and others, gladdens our hearts. There are also many valuable new books obtainable published by our Church, the Banner of Truth and others, which are helpful in face of the much heretical, soul-destroying literature of today.

Our Church Magazine has been instructive and helpful to many under the retiring Editor, Rev. R. R. Sinclair. We expect it will continue to be so under the new Editor, Rev. D. B. Macleod, M.A., as it was under the previous editors, who were all closely related to him.

A Scottish worthy was heard saying, "Oh for an hour of Luther's hatchet and Calvin's mighty axe", meaning the axe of Truth to the forest of error, superstition, modernism, Romanism, etc.

We endeavour to remember you in prayer, and if you visit Scotland we would wish for you the same as an English merchant got long ago when he visited St. Andrews. He said, "I went to St. Andrews where I heard a sweet, majestic-looking man (R. Blair), and he showed me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little, fair man (Rutherford) and he showed me the loveliness of Christ."

There is continual cause for thankfulness to the Lord in the raising of young men to study for the work of the ministry at home and abroad. Your prayers are desired that they "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine". (2 Tim. 4, v. 2.)

The command is given, "Go ye into all the world, and preach

the gospel to **every creature**". (Mark 16, v. 15.) Several have gone to our **Church Mission in Southern Rhodesia**, where there is much activity in love to the salvation of souls. May they experience an outpouring of the **Holy Spirit** to convince and convert.

I remember with pleasure the six months I was in Canada and U.S.A. as **Church Deputy** in 1930. To you, and ministers and friends in New Zealand and Australia and Italy, I extend christian greetings and best wishes.

Although far separate, we have the throne of grace at which to meet, and there let us be active, looking unto Jesus the Giver of all blessings, who alone can pardon us our sins.

"Be of good courage, and He strength
unto your heart shall send,
All ye whose hope and confidence
doth on the Lord depend. (Psalm 31, v. 24.)

WM. GRANT.

Book Review

Calvin on the Sciences by Nigel Lee, Th.D. **Sovereign Grace Union**. Price 2/6. Post 4d.

This booklet will be of interest to those of our readers who meet with the common notion that Calvin and Calvinism means that no interest is to be taken in any subject outside Christianity and that Calvin had no interest in the proper development of the sciences. It is indeed true that Christianity based on the Scripture is the main thing, but it is equally true that its basic principles apply to all areas of life.

Dr Lee traces Calvin's views on the sciences through quotations from the **Institutes** and **Commentaries**. His view evidently is that man in his first creation was given dominion over the creatures and "should regard himself as the steward of God in all things he possesses." Although he lost this dominion through the Fall and this happy condition became ruined, God still calls him to the philosophic and scientific task, for "there is no part of our life, and no action so minute that it ought not to be directed to the glory of God."

Calvin makes it plain that "no science is truly and justly so called but that which instructs us in the confidence and fear of God: that is, in godliness." Consequently, if "the liberal arts and all the sciences . . . set themselves in opposition to Christ, they must be looked upon as dangerous pests and, if they strive to accomplish anything of themselves, as the worst of all hindrances."

This is well said and rebukes the secularistic approach in these fields at the present time. He also teaches that however common grace may be, saving grace is absolutely necessary for the pursuit of true science.

Dr Lee goes on to give Calvin's views on Theological Science, the principles of Philosophy, and the Special Sciences, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, logic, history, etc. The booklet is by no means an exhaustive treatment of Calvin's views but does indicate his line of approach and some of his thoughts on these matters. Above all, the booklet does show how completely the mind of this remarkable man of God was dominated by what has sometimes been called his favourite motto: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

The booklet can be obtained from the Book Room, 160 Pitt Street, Glasgow.

D.M.

Notes and Comments

Sabbath Sport Again

The question of letting school buildings for Sabbath activities was raised in the Caithness Education Committee at Wick last month for the second time in a month and this time the application was successful. The Wick High School gymnasium was granted for coaching in badminton on Saturday and Sabbath by a previous decision of sub-committee who have evidently full powers to decide, and the County Education Committee were powerless to interfere. Earlier in the month a similar application for Sabbath sport was turned down at Halkirk by another sub-committee in the county. Our Wick minister, Rev. R. R. Sinclair, made a strong plea in defence of the Sabbath on the ground that in a Christian nation Christian principles, including the sanctifying of God's Holy Day, should be applied and that violation of these principles is calculated to undermine the authority of religion and of the Church.

A determined effort is being made today in our country to destroy the Christian Sabbath both in Parliament and local councils. The Sabbath has its foundations in the Word of God, but our people are no longer noted for reverent observance of the Lord's Day, because we are no longer a Bible loving nation. Sport and the entertainment industry are becoming as great a menace to the Christian Sabbath as the commercial interests which are out to make merchandise of the Lord's Day. The enemies of the Sabbath are becoming bolder and more aggressive in their

attacks upon the sanctity of the Sabbath, but God is not mocked and in the day of reckoning, a terrible harvest will be reaped by our nation which no longer pays any heed to the command: "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy". C.

Atheistic Russia

Reports reaching this country in recent months indicate that all is not going well with Communistic Russia's policies for the suppression of religion in the Soviet Union. According to the 'Times', London, certain Soviet Communist party organisations were attacked in the front page editorial of a Moscow party newspaper, 'Leninskoye Znamo', for not taking a strong enough line against religion. Russia is officially an atheistic state, but nominally at least religious freedom is guaranteed under Soviet law. Churches and religious organisations must swear loyalty to the state and obtain permission to engage in religious work, but the constitution of the Communist Party demands that all party members must be atheists. Evidently too much tolerance is being shown by party organisations towards religion and even towards their own members who engage in public worship. The newspaper declares that atheistic education and scientific propaganda against religion are being disseminated, but that in many districts propaganda and work by party members have little effect, and goes on to recognise the fact that "religious superstition and prejudice" still exist among large sections of the people. 'Leninskoye Znamo' said that religion "moulds in believers a non-scientific, idealistic outlook, and educates people to be passive and set their hopes on supernatural forces and diverts them from earthly matters. The influence of religion prevents them from fully showing their creative forces and strength in public life, and from becoming active members of society."

The Soviet Union is a member of the United Nations Organisation and has signed the Declaration of Human Rights, among them the right of everyone to full religious liberty. The claim is made, therefore, that full religious liberty is allowed under Soviet law, but wide room is possible for the interpretation of religious freedom such as is allowed by Communistic Russia. Every denomination must register with the Soviet authorities before being allowed to function, and many churches such as the Pentecostals have been refused registration and have been outlawed. No new religious congregation has been registered since 1948, and the number of these outlawed churches is on the increase, many of them driven underground. Under its political laws, also Bibles are forbidden to enter the country. The Lord, however, still has His people scattered throughout the Soviet Union and Commu-

nistic Russia is discovering as did the Roman persecutors of the early Church that religion will outlast the fury of the oppressor.

C.

The Death Penalty

In 1965 an Act of Parliament was passed abolishing the death penalty for an experimental period of five years. This Act was due to lapse on July 31st, 1970. The Government, anxious to have the death penalty permanently abolished, and unwilling to wait the expiry of the full experimental period, have tabled a motion in the House of Commons which will force Parliament to come to a decision on this matter before the end of 1969. Taking into consideration the large section of M.P.s who are opposed to the death penalty, and the fact that the only alternative put before Parliament is a return to the altogether unsatisfactory Homicide Act of 1957, there is little doubt what the outcome will be. Apart from Divine intervention, capital punishment will be permanently abolished. It is quite evident that we have, as a nation, forsaken the Word of God as our guide in spiritual and moral matters. We must, as a consequence, reap the fruit of our sin in increased lawlessness and God's righteous judgments against us. "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." Is. 59, 14.

"Chair of St. Peter"

The trafficking in relics for which the papal church is notorious received a setback when it was announced at a recent press conference by Mgr. Michele Maccorrone, president of the Pontifical Committee on Historical Sciences that the old wooden chair, known as the "chair of St. Peter", could not have been used by Peter after all. For the past 700 years this relic has been widely regarded in papal circles with the utmost veneration, and was yearly put on show on St. Peter's Feast Day in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, as the chair used by Peter when installed to office as the first pope and by subsequent popes at their coronation. When suspicions were raised over the authentic nature of these claims, a commission of experts, including scholars, scientists, and engineers, was appointed last year by the pope to examine the whole question. When the chair was taken out of its ornate bronze casing, which was made by the sculptor, Bernini, in the 17th century, and subjected to intense scientific scrutiny, the experts expressed the opinion that this was the chair brought to Rome by King Charles, the Bald, for his coronation in A.D. 875. At a later date 18 ornamental ivory panels depicting the tasks of Hercules and other mythical scenes of monster animals were added. Because of its wide use at papal coronations, the historical association with

Peter was confidently claimed for the chair, but like many more of Rome's fraudulent statements it is now seen to be completely untenable. At present the chair is in the special Vatican workshop, where the ancient wood is being impregnated against attacks by parasites and insects, where it also awaits the decision regarding its disposal. The papal authorities now face the awkward decision either to restore the chair to its bronze casing and put it back to its place in the Basilica or relegate it to the Vatican museum as an historical curiosity.

This way of disposing of another exploded papal myth might also be applied to the equally mythical claim that the bones of Peter have been unearthed from under the reputed site of Peter's tomb in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. Papal leaders are confident that this is an authentic find, but with nothing stronger than tradition and assured statements to support the claim.

At another interview given on B.B.C. Television, Rome's unscrupulous methods and cynical attitude to her own past history were clearly revealed. Cardinal Heenan made the extraordinary remark when interviewed by Robin Day on B.B.C. Television that the chairman of the Council of Jerusalem was Peter, and when challenged by hearers and by the Protestant Truth Society, gave the completely dishonest answer: "Of those listening to 'Panorama' last Monday only a small proportion will have any Christian convictions. I am sure that even fewer will care who was chairman of the Jerusalem meeting. In fact, it is most unlikely that there was any chairman at all. The host, of course, was St. James, the local Bishop". Rome is always ready to trade upon the prevailing ignorance of Protestants on religious matters by making specious and unfounded statements, such as this, in the hope that although these statements may be discredited when examined, some of her propaganda will stick. C.

Church Notes

The Magazine

As has already been intimated in the Magazine, Rev. R. R. Sinclair resigned at last Synod as Editor of the Free Presbyterian Magazine. His resignation was accepted with regret. On assuming the responsibilities of editorship, I would like to pay tribute to the former Editor, who, for the long period of twenty years, faithfully carried on this work in addition to other heavy burdens. He is due a debt of thanks for his long continued labours in this field. We trust that Mr Sinclair's work for the Magazine is by no means finished and that articles from his pen will appear in many

future issues of the Magazine (D.V.). We are very glad to include an appreciation of his work by Rev. John Colquhoun, Glendale, who himself ably supported Mr Sinclair in his task during these twenty years.

I feel very unfit for the task which the Church has laid upon me, but desire to undertake this work in the strength of Divine grace. The Lord alone is able to give all needed grace and wisdom and strength. "My grace," He says, "is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." I would value the prayers of the Lord's people. I hope that the Magazine will continue to be edifying to the godly, arousing to the careless, and instructive to all classes of readers. My desire is that the Lord may bless the reading of it to many souls. I warmly invite the active co-operation of the ministers, laymen and membership of the Church in the task of producing each month a Magazine worthy of our Church and its witness.

D. B. MACLEOD.

Appreciation

Readers of the Free Presbyterian Magazine learned with regret that the Rev. R. R. Sinclair, Wick, had laid aside his editorial pen. Mr Sinclair became Editor of the Magazine in 1949, when the late Rev. D. Beaton resigned, and continued as Editor till December 1969, which is a long period in the life of a Magazine. Looking through its pages during that period we see that many subjects have been dealt with, and that many of the literary contributors have gone the way of all the earth, reminding us that here we have no continuing city. Many matters which were intimately connected with the life of the Church arose during the period of Mr Sinclair's editorship, and were dealt with fairly and fully in the pages of the Magazine. His readers are indebted to him for an impartial view of church matters, and for the clarity with which he reported them.

He was on good terms with those who contributed to the Magazine and always welcome their contributions when these were suitable. He regretted that these contributions were not more numerous, as this often caused him to have recourse to reprinting extracts from divines of the past. However, he succeeded in conserving the status of the Magazine as the official organ of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the only representative in Scotland of the Church of the Reformation as settled in 1560 and of the Disruption Church of 1843 in doctrine, worship and practice. This was apparent to the readers of the Magazine in spite of the pretensions of other claimants to that position.

Now that Mr Sinclair has laid aside the editorial toga he will have more leisure, and it is to be hoped that part of that leisure

will be employed in sending contributions to the Magazine. The Motto of the Magazine, which was employed at the beginning of its existence by Mr Sinclair's father, the late Rev. James S. Sinclair, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee. that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Psalm 60, 4., is still the motto, and is most suitable as the Church which has issued it for over seventy-three years is still "Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice." Mr Sinclair kept that before his mind during the years of his editorship, so that while articles appeared which, from a religious point of view, were of interest to readers of other denominations, the Magazine existed, in a special manner, as the Magazine of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, setting forth the doctrine, worship and practice of the Church of the Reformation.

J. C.

Readers' Questions

If readers of the Magazine have questions on religious topics which they would like answered in the pages of the Magazine, they are invited to send them to the Editor, 13 Prince of Wales Mansions, London, S.W.11. The name and address of sender, not for publication, must be included. It will be understood that the selection of questions to be answered must be left with the Editor and the Panel which will answer them. If the response to this request is sufficiently large and sustained, "Your Questions Answered" could become a regular feature in the Magazine, and, we trust, be of benefit to all our readers.

Jewish and Foreign Missions Committee

The Committee have been giving consideration to the necessity of having some suitable person with professional training in business and administration on their staff in Southern Rhodesia.

With the arrival of Dr Tallach and the consequent extension of the Hospital by the addition of a theatre and x-ray units and the expansion of Mission work generally, the need for such a person becomes imperative so that other members of the staff, including Dr Tallach, can be set free to carry on their respective tasks unhampered by the necessity of spending time on administrative details for which they have received no training.

The post would include the Clerkship of the Field Committee which is responsible for the efficient running of the Hospital, Schools and Transport together with the post of Treasurer involving the handling of all finance and the keeping of complete sets of books.

The normal three year contract with paid passage to and from Rhodesia and six month's paid leave at the conclusion of the

contract would be offered to a successful applicant. The question of salary would naturally depend on qualifications and circumstances.

The Committee would be glad to hear from any person in the Church with a genuine spiritual interest in missionary work and possessing the necessary qualifications who feels led to serve the Mission in this capacity.

Applications should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee, Rev. Donald MacLean, 13 Kingsborough Gardens, Glasgow W.2.

Aberdeen Church—Debt Paid

Our small place of worship situated at the corner of Summerfield Terrace and Park Road, Aberdeen, is now clear of debt. The final figure which includes the purchase price of £900, internal alterations and seating, and the somewhat heavy expenses of making the adjustments required by the city planning authority, came to £2000. It is remarkable that in the Lord's providence this result should have been achieved so quickly. The first donation for the purchase of the property came in on 20th December 1968, and before a year had fully elapsed, the whole debt of £2000 had been paid off. At the outset, arrangements had been made by the Northern Presbytery to raise the purchase price by way of loan, but the negotiations had barely been completed when it became apparent that the loan need not be called for. The result is that a most attractive, pleasantly furnished room, large enough to seat up to 50 people without undue discomfort, in an accessible part of the city has now been provided, and here our Aberdeen people and the students attending University attend for public worship. We may add that the services are well attended, particularly by our students at Aberdeen, who are finding in the service of our own Church a centre of church life which to some extent compensates for the loss of home life with its comforts and privileges.

We wish to intimate, therefore, that the Aberdeen Building Fund is now closed. Expenses in providing supply for Aberdeen are quite heavy, and donations for this purpose will always be gladly received and acknowledged.

We wish to thank our people throughout the Church most sincerely for their generous help and to recognise once again the good hand of our merciful God upon us in granting success to this Church venture.

A. F. M.

Rev. Fraser Tallach's Illness

We are happy to be able to report that Rev. Fraser Tallach who underwent a kidney transplant operation at the end of November has made good progress and is now out of hospital. There

is much cause for thankfulness to the Lord for bringing Mr Tallach and also his brother safely through the transplant operation. We hope and pray that the Lord will continue His kindness to them and that they will be restored to a measure of health and strength, and to usefulness in the Lord's Cause. We deeply sympathise with the family in the time of great anxiety through which they have had to pass, but trust that they have found out anew that the Lord is a present help in trouble.

Deputy to Canada and the U.S.A

News has reached us of Rev. Alex. Muurray's safe arrival in this country on 9th December 1969, after six months as the Church's Deputy to Canada and the U.S.A. We would thankfully acknowledge the Lord's kindness to Mr Murray in His protecting care over him during his visit abroad and in bringing him back in safety to his congregation and family again. May his labours on the North American Continent be followed with a rich blessing from the Lord to the good of many souls, so that the cause of Christ may be built up in that part of His vineyard.

Scourie Church Renovation Appeal

The Northern Presbytery have given their cordial approval to this which has served the congregation from its inception, and it is still in a remarkable state of preservation. Nevertheless, the years have weakened it to the extent that it must be renovated at once if it is to remain serviceable. It has been decided to strengthen the walls with permanent materials and put on a new roof. With a few other replacements, the building will be classifiable as permanent and should serve the congregation for a long time to come. The Northern Presbytery have given their cordial approval to this appeal. Readers may remember that in the last few years our loyal and energetic people in Scourie and Kinlochbervie have built an excellent manse, and bought and renovated a fine Church in Kinlochbervie, largely by their own efforts. Already they have contributed heartily to the latest project, but as it is to cost £1000 we appeal once again to friends throughout the Church to give their generous support to the renovation of this place of worship.

On behalf of the Deacon's Court,

Alex. McPherson, Interim Moderator.

Acknowledgment of Donations

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

Sustentation Fund — Jas. MacLeod, Kerracher, £10; A Friend, South Harris, £55; Mrs MacIver, late of Tolsta, £3; Misses K. & J. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £2; Neil Beaton, £10; M. R. MacKay, Fiscary, £2; Neil MacLennan, Lochmaddy, £1; Mrs E. M. MacKellar, Tarbert, Argyll, £5 (last three per R.W.M.M.).

Home Mission — Mrs MacIver, late of Tolsta, £1; Misses K. & J. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £2.

Jewish & Foreign Mission Fund — Mrs MacIver, late of Tolsta, £1; Misses K. & J. MacKinnon, West Tarbert, £2; In loving memory of A.P.W., £5; "Australia", £17.10.8; Jas. MacLeod, Kerracher, £3; A.F.McD., Drumnadrochit, £2; "In memory" E.M.M., £10; Mr Dan Breuker, Michigan, £8.6.0 (per R.W.M.M.).

Dominions & Overseas Fund — Rev. H.R.M., Radcliffe, £2; Miss I. MacD., Eston, £9.12.4.

China Mission Fund — Miss I. MacD., Eston, £9.12.3.

On behalf of Auckland Manse Fund — Wellwisher, £15; Anon., Helmsdale postmark, £5.

On behalf of Trinitarian Bible Society — Mrs MacIver, late of Tolsta, 10/-; Kinlochbervie Congregation, £6; Portree Congregation, £52.10.9.

The General Treasurer also acknowledges from "Psalm 127, v. 1" the sum of £100 to be used for the purposes stated.

The Publications Treasurer, Mr R. W. M. Mackenzie, C.A., 10 Beaufort Road, Inverness, acknowledges with sincere thanks the following donations:

Free Distribution Magazine Fund — Alex. Forgie, Falkirk, 16/-; Anon. (per Miss I.G.), 7/-; A. Corbett, Inverness, 18/-; Mr John MacLean, San Francisco, 18/-; Neil MacLennan, Lochmaddy, £1; Wm. MacKinnon, Broadford, £1.7/-; Miss E. Nicholson, Inellan, £3.18/-; Mr I. F. Beaton, Maturi, N.Z., £1.4/-; London Congregation (per W.D.F.), £8.10/-; Mrs D. MacLeod, Stornoway, 3/-; D.B., Michigan, £1; Mrs MacLennan, Hillsdale, £7.

Publications Fund — London Congregation (per W.D.F.), £8.10/-; M.L., East Kilbride, 5/-; Mrs MacLennan, Hillsdale, £7.

Welfare of Youth Fund — London Congregation (per W.D.F.), £15; Staffin Congregation, £5; Mrs MacLennan, Hillsdale, £8.3/-.

On behalf of Trinitarian Bible Society — Raasay Congregation, Harvest Thanksgiving Collection, £19.8.3; Stratherrick Congregation, £32.10/-; Scourie Congregation, £4.

Mr W. MacKenzie, 7 Crown Drive, Inverness, Treasurer, **Aberdeen Building Fund**, acknowledges with grateful thanks: — A. McPhee, Oban, £5; A. McLeod, Swainbost, Ness, £2; Kyle Friends, £5; A.F.McD., Drumnadrochit, £1; M.M., Inverness, £2; In Glendale Plate (per A.McL.), £5; "In Memory" E.M.M., £10; In Inverness Plate, £2; Mrs Smith, Golspie, £5; A Friend, Skye (per Rev. F.McD.), £2; Aberdeen Congregation (per Dr C. Tallach), £60; M.McD., £1.

Home of Rest Fund — In loving memory of A.P.W., £5; George Gillies, Raasay, £3 (per R.W.M.M.); Mrs MacAulay, Inverness, £50.

The Treasurers of the following Congregations acknowledge with sincere thanks:—

Applecross — Mr and Mrs M. Gillanders (per R. Gillanders), £5 for Congregational Purposes.

Bracadale — Church Repairs Fund: A Friend (per Mr D. MacAskill), £10; Collected by book, "Carbost" (per Mr J. MacAskill), £111; Mrs D. Graham, 24 Fraser Crescent, Portree, £23.11/-; R.N.C., Inverness, £5; Friend, D.M.K., £1; Mr J. M. Campbell, Glenfield, Struan, £100 (last four

per Mr D. Y. Mackinnon); Collected by book, "Portnalong" (per Mr P. K. MacAskill), £55.10/-.

St. Jude's, Glasgow — Fabric Fund: Anon., £2; Anon., £2; Anon., £1; Anon., 10/-; J.M., Glasgow, £2; Anon., £1. Congregational Buses: K.M., Cardonald, £1.10/-; Mrs P., Glasgow, 10/-; "In Memory" E.M.M., £5; "Anon.", £1; K.M., Glasgow, £1.10/-; Anon., Glasgow, £1. General Building Fund: P.W., £1. Dominion and Overseas Fund: Anon., £2; Anon., 10/-. China Mission: Anon., £5. Communion Expenses: A.W., Glasgow, £1; A Friend (per Rev. D. McL.), £5; M.S., Glasgow, £2. Congregational Expenses: "Two Uig Friends" (per Rev. D. McL.), £5; "Anon.", £5; J. McL., Bishop-ton (per Rev. D. McL.), £5; L. McPh. (per Rev. D. McL.), £5. Home Mission: A.K. McL., Glasgow, £1.

Portree — Communion Expenses: Anon. in plate, £15; Friend, Dunvegan, £5; Two Raasay Friends, £1 each. Sustentation Fund, 1969: Anon., £100. Manse Stove: In plate, £65. Trinitarian Bible Society: Envelope in plate, £5.

Lewis — Congregational Funds: Friend, £25; Miss C. Mackay, Dun Birisay, £10. Friends, Kentucky, £20 for Congregational Funds, £10 for Sustentation Fund, £15 for Foreign Mission Fund, £10 for Dominion and Overseas Fund, and £5 for Trinitarian Bible Society.

North Harris — Congregational Purposes: Anon., £5 (per Rev. A. MacKay). Communion Expenses: Mrs Allan MacLeod, Meavaig, £3; Mr John MacInnes, 2 Kyles, Scalpay, £2.

Raasay — Mr and Mrs D. Gillies, Penifiler, £4 for Church Carpet and £1 for Church Repairs; Friend, Raasay, £4 for Carpet and £1 for Church Repairs; Friend, Portree, £1 for Carpet and £1 for Church Repairs; Two Friends, Raasay, £2 for Church Carpet (per John M. MacLeod, Elder); Mrs M. Finlayson, Millplace, 10/- for Trinitarian Bible Society (per Treasurer).

Scourie — The congregation acknowledges with grateful thanks the Anonymous Gift of Bibles to the Scourie Church.

Watnish — Friend, in loving memory of my parents, £3 for Sustentation Fund.

Greenock — Church Interior Decorating: Friend, Uig, Lewis, £3; Friend, Glasgow, £1 (per Rev. L. MacLeod); Adherent, Greenock, £25.

Beaully — Church Building Fund: R. Gillanders, Applecross, £2 (per Mrs C. Mackintosh); I.M.H., £5 (per Rev. D. A. MacFarlane); Anon., Edinburgh, £10 (per Miss J. S. Graham); Harris Friend, £5 (per Miss Ross); Mrs R. Gillies, Harris, £3; Mrs MacLennan, Ardneaskan, £5 (per Mr A. MacLennan). Mission House Repairs: Beaully Friend, £26.

Broadford — Manse Building Fund: Friend, Ardneaskan, £2; A Friend, £5 (both per Mr D. MacKay); Kyle Friends, £10 (per Mr L. MacKinnon); Anon., Broadford, £15.

Gairloch — Car Fund: Friend at Communion, £2; Friend, South Side, £5; Mrs McP., Inverasdale, £1.

Kyle — Mrs MacIver, late of Tolsta, £2.

Lochcarron — Anon., Inverness, £5 for Communion Expenses.

Oban — Anonymous, £10 for Sustentation Fund.

Auckland Manse Fund — The estate of late Alex. MacLean, Sandringham, \$200; Mr L. Gillanders, Stratford, \$400; Anon., Auckland, \$100; J. Nicolson, Christchurch, \$20; Vancouver Congregation, \$700 (Canadian) (per Rev. Dr Macdonald); Wellwisher, £15.

London — Congregational Fund: Mrs G. C. Crookran, £3. Manse and Church Building Fund: Strict Baptist Pastor, Broadford, £1 (per Dr R. K. MacCuish); D.M.K., Inverasdale, £1 (per Rev. D. B. Macleod). Communion Expenses: Mr Ewan Munro, Glenmoriston, £2.

Glendale — A Friend, £15 (per Rev. J.C.), for Congregational Funds; Absent Subscriber, £1 for Sustentation Fund and £2 for Door Collection.

Inverness — Church Extension Fund: Mrs Matheson, 20 Heathmount Road, Kyle, £2; Daviot Friend, £5 (both per Rev. A. F. MacKay).

The Librarian thankfully acknowledges the following donation:—Church Book Room: Mrs Nicolson, Lochs, 14/-; Miss A. Macleod, Ness, £1.11.7.